

# RAPID LEXICAL CHANGE AND ABERRANT MELANESIAN LANGUAGES: SENSENG AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Ann Chowning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Almost twenty years ago, arguing against blind reliance on lexicostatistics, Grace suggested that some of those Melanesian languages which "show very few identifiable cognates with other AN languages ... are characterized by very low rates of retention (in the lexicostatistical sense), by complicated sound changes, or by both" (1964:366). More recently, he has pointed out that the situation is probably much more complex, with "many different kinds of aberrancy" (1981: 256). I agree with that suggestion, but in this paper wish to deal primarily with one of the possibilities he raised in his earlier paper. We now have examples of languages in which the sound changes do indeed make it difficult for a casual observer to recognise AN forms; see, for example, Lynch's work (1975) on Lenakel of Vanuatu. An example of rapid lexical change within this century has been documented by Lithgow (1973), who touches very briefly on some of the causes, including the modern phenomenon of influence from a mission language, but does not discuss any of them in detail. Meanwhile, however, several writers have discussed one particular cause that is known (or sometimes assumed) to have affected retention rates in some Oceanic languages and that may have done so in many more. This results from temporary or permanent tabus on the use of certain personal names, which Clark called a "widespread Polynesian linguistic practice", and to which he attributed depression of cognate percentages in several Polynesian languages, particularly Tuamotuan and Tahitian (1979:265-266). In an article published earlier, describing how name avoidance operates in Kwaio of Malaita, Keesing and Fifi'i (1969:155) suggested that perhaps it "was characteristic of some or all early Austronesian speakers in the Pacific", and went on to mention "the possibility that the process has significantly accelerated vocabulary differentiation between genetically related languages", causing various problems for those attempting to classify them. For example, "such tabooing could create a spurious impression of long divergence or skew datings, or in some cases even hide genetic connections." More recently, Simons has discussed the effects of name tabu in two regions, Santa Cruz as well as Malaita. He mentions a problem not discussed in detail by Keesing and Fifi'i, the likelihood that languages so affected will develop many true synonyms, influencing not only cognacy rates (if all synonyms are not recorded by an investigator) but the establishment of dialect-language boundaries (since substitute forms are so often borrowed) (Simons 1982:162-167).

---

Andrew Pawley and Lois Carrington, eds *Austronesian linguistics at the 15th Pacific Science Congress*, 169-198. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-88, 1985.

© Ann Chowning

169

In the same paper, noting that in the discussion of name tabus in *The Golden Bough* most of the examples (so it seems) were from AN languages, and surveying the reported incidence of different types of word tabus reported for AN and NAN-speakers over a wide area, Simons concludes that: "For the Proto-Austronesian speech community, there was ... a name taboo between parents-in-law and children-in-law"; that five other kinds of 'name taboos' can be reconstructed for "Proto-Oceanic or at least major subgroups of it"; and that "All of these name taboos extended to a taboo on the common use of words occurring in the name" (1982:187). My reading of Frazer does not support Simons' suggestion that most of Frazer's examples came from AN languages, and Simons' own survey makes it clear that most types of tabus on personal names and other words are well recorded for NAN languages and languages outside Oceania. In particular, as anthropologists have noted since the 19th century (Tylor 1870:146-150), name tabus are found throughout the world, and have been shown to affect everyday vocabulary in societies as far from Oceania as the Caribbean and Imperial China (Jameson 1956:782; Metraux 1956:783). If name tabus are typically Oceanic, they are hardly peculiar to that region. Nevertheless, it may be that in many parts of the Pacific local conditions - geographic, demographic, and cultural - made it particularly likely that they could so affect the general lexicon (rather than individual usage) as to make the language as a whole seem to have split off early from other related languages; seem possibly to have been affected by contact with speakers of very different languages (see Clark 1979:265; Grace 1981:256); or seem possibly not to be AN at all. However much their vocabulary may have been affected by word tabus, no one appears to have denied that Tuamotuan, Tahitian, and Kwaio are AN languages, but a number of linguists (Loukotka 1957, Capell 1971, and most recently Blust 1981) have been reluctant to grant that status to the languages that I am about to discuss.<sup>1</sup> I am arguing first that they are AN but have undergone an exceptional amount of lexical replacement; second that name tabus may have been the reason for rapid lexical change in the past, as they are today; and third, along with Simons, that other aberrant Melanesian, as well as Polynesian, languages may well have lost AN content for the same reason.

## 2. PASISMANUA LANGUAGES

The languages concerned are those in what I have labelled the Pasismanua division of the Whiteman group, located around but mostly south of the Whiteman Range in south-west New Britain. From west of the Alimbit to east of the entire Whiteman range, they consist of Miu, Kaulong, Sengseng (Asengseng)<sup>2</sup>, Karore<sup>3</sup>, and what Johnston calls Psohoh, a dialect chain extending from Getmatta in the south to Bao in the north (see maps in Chowning 1976 and Johnston 1980b). Johnston has recently (1983) added Uvol to this subgroup, which corresponds to his Western Whiteman, but I find the evidence for its inclusion unacceptable. I shall therefore confine myself to the languages just named, but concentrate on those for which I have the most information, Sengseng (studied by myself) and Kaulong (studied by Goodale and more recently by C. and L. Throop).<sup>4</sup> Most of my data are taken from three Sengseng villages in which I lived, and from the two Kaulong villages in which Goodale lived, supplemented by information from other parts of the area.

Sengseng, distributed along either side of the Andru River east of Kandrian, is flanked by Kaulong to the east and Karore (another Pasismanua language) to the west, with uninhabited bush behind it, but Arawe languages are spoken on

small islands located just off the coast at the eastern end of the Sengseng area. By contrast, Kaulong is flanked on the south and west by Arawe languages which are also spoken on the mainland of New Britain (see maps in Chowning 1969 and 1976). Arawe languages were, then, the only other ones in direct contact with Pasismanua languages other than Miu, the westernmost language, in the period immediately preceding European contact, although it is probably safe to say that trade brought many of the western Pasismanua-speakers into contact with speakers of Lamogai languages (see Chowning 1978a).

Throughout south-west New Britain, groups in the interior traditionally lived in very small settlements scattered widely over the countryside, a fact that explains their comparatively late contact with the outside world. An effect of government patrols and pressures from missionaries and others such as cult leaders has been to encourage (or force) people to build larger consolidated villages and also to move nearer the coast. These shifts have also made it difficult to ascertain the numbers of speakers of each language because so many villages now have mixed populations. Nevertheless, it can be said that numbers ranged from about 3,000 Kaulong speakers down to fewer than 400 for Miu (and undoubtedly still fewer for Karore), in 1980. At the time of this census predominantly Sengseng villages, some of which contained a considerable number of Karore-speakers, had a total population of 865.

Pacification came late to the interior of the Pasismanua. When Goodale and I began fieldwork there in 1962, the interior Kaulong and Sengseng villages had only been brought under government control less than a decade previously, at various times (for different villages) during the 1950s, and Miu was still uncontrolled. With pacification, unmarried men began to go out to work, most commonly only to coastal plantations in neighbouring, usually Arawe-speaking regions, in order to earn enough money to buy foreign goods, particularly steel tools. A few, however, went as far as Rabaul or Manus, lured by access to cheap supplies of goldlip pearl shells, the major form of wealth in the Pasismanua. Only these latter, amounting to just one or two men in each tiny village, learned fluent Pidgin. The other workers picked up a little Pidgin and other words which they thought were Pidgin but which are unknown outside that region, and which presumably come from other New Britain languages (cf. Chowning 1983).

Nearer the coast, pacification and wage labour had begun much earlier, and villages very near the coast and the government station of Kandrian (Moewehafen) also had access to village schools (which as of 1981 had still not been established deep in the interior). In the 1960s, many Pidgin and pseudo-Pidgin words and phrases had entered everyday vocabulary, though some people were unaware of their source,<sup>5</sup> but in the interior only a few young men claimed to speak the language. Children of both sexes were gradually picking up a smattering of Pidgin from the young men, but adult women and men who had not been out to work could not engage in or understand extended discourse in Pidgin. The few who were not monoglot understood or, more rarely, spoke one of the neighbouring south-west New Britain languages, either because of living in a border region or as a consequence of a marriage between speakers of different languages. Descendants of such marriages often maintained connections with foreign kin through extended visits, in the course of which they learned the other languages (whereas the inmarrying spouses I knew did not consciously maintain their own languages, however much they may have served as a source of the innovations to be described below).

Sengseng, Kaulong, and the other Pasismanua languages are very closely related,<sup>6</sup> to such an extent that it can be argued that they are only dialects of the same language, and indeed the Throops have suggested this (1980:228), but I have used the criterion of mutual intelligibility (see Pawley 1981:271), as based on my own experience and statements from local people, and on these grounds have called them different languages. People who live in border areas usually learn to understand the neighbouring language, and some border villages contain many speakers of one of the other languages, either because of inter-marriage or recent migration. (In particular, the Karore-speaking region to the east has been heavily infiltrated by migrants from interior Sengseng villages.) The local people nevertheless firmly identify themselves and each other as speakers of a particular language and quite often of a dialect within it. Many Sengseng and Kaulong specify the differences between their languages in terms of a few common words and phrases, notably K. e mo, S. a moi *you come*; K. maŋ, S. masaŋ *men's house*; K. e-gin, S. e-ki *bird*; K. yok, S. tuwo *father* (address term).<sup>7</sup> That the people who mention these differences have only a superficial knowledge of the other language is shown by their usual failure to note or be aware of semantic differences such as the fact that tuwo is only used for the true *father*, with a special term for the *father's brother*, whereas yok encompasses both, or of other peculiarities such as the fact that the S. word for *bird* has fallen together with the word for *water* while the K. one has not.

Because Kaulong is spoken by a much larger number of people than Sengseng, and the government station, trade stores, and mission station can only be reached through Kaulong territory, it is typically the Sengseng who have a working knowledge of the other language. In border areas and mixed villages, it seems that most people have at least a passive understanding of the other language, as well as some confusion about which words or other forms such as prepositional endings are properly assignable to which language. The same confusion exists regarding dialectical differences. The Sengseng recognise two dialects, those of the 'beach' and the 'bush'. Informants from the village near the coast in which I lived in 1980-1981 described the difference wholly in terms of vocabulary (while quite often telling me that words I had learned in the bush were really Kaulong forms), and never mentioned minor differences in pronunciation, such as a tendency near the beach to voice or trill word-final and preconsonantal /t/ and to produce a bilabial fricative before /u/ rather than the semi-vowel /w/ that appears in the interior. Goodale's Kaulong-speakers from Angelek mentioned four or possibly five dialects of Kaulong, characterised by vocabulary and in at least one case pronunciation. Both Sengseng and Kaulong distinguish this kind of dialectical variation from the differences between their two languages. (On the other hand, although they consider it a separate language, Sengseng-speakers typically characterise Karore only as substituting /r/ for Sengseng /h/.)

### 3. INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE LANGUAGES

In order to justify the inclusion of this paper in this symposium, it is first necessary to indicate why I think that these languages are AN. I first entered the area in 1962 in search of two adjacent groups of AN-speakers who had not yet been converted to Christianity, since the plan was that Goodale and I would carry out a comparative study. I already spoke two AN languages, Lakalai (West Nakanai) of West New Britain and Molima (Morima) of Fergusonson

Island, and apart from my general interest in related languages, thought that another AN one would be easier to learn than most of the reputedly difficult NAN languages of the New Guinea area. In addition, of course, I hoped that my knowledge of Lakalai and Molima would help me with a third language. (I should add that between my third and fourth trips to Sengseng I undertook study of another AN language, Kove of West New Britain, and some of my later comparisons were drawn with it.)

I travelled through Kaulong-speaking territory, where Goodale remained, and on to Sengseng, spending eight weeks in the area and concentrating on collecting linguistic material to be studied before undertaking a second longer trip. Despite the small amount of overt AN forms in the basic vocabulary, I decided almost at once that these were AN languages, but since I have obviously failed to convince a number of other linguists, I need to set out my reasoning in some detail. I was not particularly concerned by the low number of cognates; although Lakalai (like Kove) is an 'exemplary' language (Grace 1971:345; see Chowning 1973), Molima is not. Sengseng, like Kaulong, did contain a number of obvious AN forms in basic vocabulary, and various others looked possible. The obvious ones included some body parts (*mata-eye*;<sup>8</sup> *mamai-tongue*); verbs (*num drink*; *sus suck milk*; *kel dig*); pronouns (*ita we inc.*; *i mata-n its eye*); the principal connective (*ma and*) and the productive causative prefix *pa-*. Of the possibilities, some had an unexpected vowel or consonant — e.g. *moi, me come, hither*; *kliŋa-ear*;<sup>9</sup> *sinaŋ sun*; *sihit sew*; *pima we exc.* — but still looked very likely, while others were more uncertain either because so much of the proto-form was missing, as with *lit skin*, or because the sound shifts seemed particularly unlikely, as with *umat stone* and *e-mut louse* (where *e-* is an article.) (Many of these will be discussed below.) I was particularly struck by the fact that although many of the forms looked AN, they often did not closely resemble Lakalai forms, even though I had some reason to suspect borrowing between the subgroups to which Lakalai and Sengseng belonged, nor did they closely resemble the forms in other nearby languages, with one or two exceptions to be mentioned below. For example, the Lakalai word for *drink* is *liu*, and although it is derived, like the Sengseng one, from PAN \**inum*, obviously a different history is involved. (Here Sengseng resembles Molima, which has *numa*; in both languages, but not in Lakalai, the third person singular nominative pronoun is *i*, and presumably the initial vowel of the verb was assimilated to it.)<sup>10</sup>

The question of whether Sengseng could have acquired its AN component purely by borrowing from other New Britain AN languages will be dealt with in much more detail below, but my impression then as now was that it could not. Furthermore, Sengseng grammar also struck me as fundamentally AN. First, there was no sign of the elaborate system of noun classes reported for some NAN languages of East New Britain, or for Mungen, which is often stated to have been influenced by NAN (see Chowning 1978b:1136). The whole pronominal system, and in the case of the singular and plural, many of the actual forms, fitted well with what I knew of other OC languages, with one major exception, the presence of sex differentiation in third person singular pronouns referring to human beings. Otherwise, familiar features including an inclusive-exclusive distinction; division into singular, dual, paucal, and plural forms; the verb phrase with a subject marker preceding and a direct object pronoun following; and the use of suffixed possessives with body parts and kinship terms along with a set of separable possessives in other cases (see Table 1). In addition to the S-V-O structure of the verb phrase, I found not only the above-mentioned causative *pa-* but the use of reduplication to indicate ongoing action, futurity/intention marked by a particle *ka* (for first person subjects) or *ko* (for the rest)

preceding the verb<sup>11</sup>; completion of action indicated by *kut* (from POC \*qoti?) following the verb; and reciprocity indicated with a suffixed *-val* (see POC \*paRi). The fact that this last is not a prefix was the only unexpected feature; in function, as in shape, it seems like reciprocals in other OC languages (see Chowning 1978b:1174). Verbs are formed in to nouns by suffixing *-ŋin*. I was slow to realise that personal names have prefixes indicating the sex of the person, though the same feature is well known for Tolai. Relativisation is accomplished by devices found in other West New Britain OC languages (Chowning 1978b:1142), but Sengseng lacks some of their other grammatical features, such as infixes, special plural forms, and a suffix indicating transitivity. Nor are there any of the postposed locatives of the kind I was already familiar with from Molima, and was to find in Kove. The only grammatical feature which could be considered NAN is sex gender in pronouns, which is also found in Baining of East New Britain (Wurm 1975:790). Of course, Sengseng, presumably like any other language, has distinctive grammatical features as well, most of which are mentioned in my 1978b paper, but they neither seemed NAN nor made it a difficult language to learn. My problems with the language, apart from those caused by the dearth of people who could translate into Pidgin, derived to a slight degree from phonology and to a greater one from the proliferation of synonyms which will be examined and explained below.

As regards phonology, little difficulty was caused by the consonants apart from occasional failure to detect a final stop.<sup>12</sup> The initial consonant clusters which obviously strike many as NAN, at least superficially, are not difficult to pronounce, in my experience. I did, however, find it hard to differentiate vowels, and to decide how to record them, both in the *e-i* range and in the *o-u* range. Judging from their varying recordings of the same morpheme, other linguists better at phonetics than I have also encountered difficulties. This difficulty extends to languages outside the Pasismanua subgroup. Referring to all the languages of south-west New Britain, and particularly mentioning Combs' inconsistent orthography for Mangsing, Johnston notes that the available word-lists are "highly suspect" in exactly the same range (1983:24). Combs reconstructed seven vowel phonemes for Mangsing (classified by me as related, though distantly, to the Pasismanua languages), and Johnston tentatively did the same for Bebeli, (which he assigns with Mangsing to Eastern Whiteman) and for Psohoh (Johnston 1980b:124,127). That the vowels differ from other Melanesian languages I know is suggested by Sengseng pronunciation of some Pidgin words, such as *bosi* for *pusi cat*. I mention this because sometimes I may postulate that a Sengseng word which I have recorded with /u/ for example, is derived from a proto-form reconstructed with /o/ (as in the *kut- \*qoti* example given above) without trying to account for an actual vowel shift; in some of these cases, I do not trust my own recording. I have never achieved a satisfactory phonemicisation of Sengseng vowels. (Here, for convenience, I have arbitrarily reproduced forms as if there were only five vowels.)

Following my initial visit to Sengseng, I spent a further 18 months there carrying out anthropological fieldwork. The data I collected during that time only strengthened my belief that the language is Austronesian.

#### 4. REFLEXES OF POC AND PAN FORMS

Despite problems, I have taken most of the examples that follow from Sengseng rather than neighbouring languages for three reasons. First, I know where I am likely to make mistakes, and am uncertain about some of the other data.

Second, I have much more material on Sengsen. Third, in general Sengsen manifests medial consonants which are not found in Kaulong, and I assume that the Sengsen form is the more conservative one. Also, Sengsen often has a final /-a/ or /-i/ where Kaulong has /Ø/. Examples include S. -lut-, K. -lu-*sibling opposite sex*; S. ita, K. it *we inc.* (This general shortening of pronouns is perhaps not found in all Kaulong dialects, though it is also reflected in the list in Throop 1980:230.) On the other hand, it must be mentioned that Sengsen differs from related languages to the east and west in having frequently dropped a final -ŋ or -n that appears in many common words, and so is apparently unique in the area in having the words for 'bird' and 'water' fall together (cf. Kaulong e-gin, Karore and Psohoh e-giŋ *bird*; Sengsen e-ki). Other cases in which Sengsen has a shorter form are a few in which Psohoh shows three consonants together, and Sengsen lacks the voiced stop: Psohoh mbrit, Karore mirit, Sengsen mihit *shoulder, wing*.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in at least one common word — Kaulong ploŋ-, Sengsen loŋ *fall* — Kaulong has an initial consonant which Sengsen lacks. Although almost none of the words in which Sengsen lacks phonemes found in other languages have seemed to be OC (or AN) in origin, these variations will be mentioned when they seem to shed some light on the possible history of forms.

#### 4.1 Reflexes of POC (and PAN) consonants in Sengsen

As I have already mentioned, Sengsen and its neighbours are characterised not only by a paucity of AN forms but by a plethora of synonyms. I hope to show that these two phenomena are related, but before doing so it is necessary to tackle two other questions. The first is whether Sengsen in fact contains a higher AN content than appears at first glance, and the second — and much more difficult — is how much of such content can be attributed to borrowing rather than direct inheritance. Simply because few forms are obviously AN in origin, it is difficult to collect enough cases to establish regular sound shifts, and a paucity of data apart from basic vocabulary in other south-west New Britain languages also makes borrowings hard to identify. What follows is perforce tentative.

An examination of the total lexicon makes a few tendencies clear. As far as I can ascertain, Sengsen has not undergone drastic sound shifts, though it is of course possible that I have failed to detect many AN forms. In saying this, I disagree with Johnston 1983, in that I think that many of the forms that he derives from a single Proto-West New Britain proto-form are not even cognate with each other, much less derivable from one that can be called OC. For example, S. pe-luwok *night* cannot possibly come from \*mpoŋi, since pe- is a prefix (translated as Pidgin ples) found in all terms referring to time and weather. Johnston's hypotheses and postulated proto-forms will be discussed further below.

The most common correspondences with the phonemes reconstructed for POC and PAN are shown below.

## 4.1.1 Examples

Most POC forms have been taken from Lincoln 1979. Where one of the meanings assigned to the POC form agrees with the Sengseng item, I have not given glosses for both. Uncertain cases are discussed in more detail. If a proto-form has been reconstructed only for PAN, it is listed after the POC forms. A question mark indicates that I am uncertain about cognacy; "etc." that various other examples could be supplied.

POC \*k usually remains /k/, except in pronouns (see Table 1).

Examples: \*kapi *grasp, etc.*; S. e-kap *tongs*; \*kaRati, S. kalat, klat *bite, bite through*; \*kasi, S. kas *scratch, itch*; \*kati, S. kat *bite*; \*katemo, \*timo, S. katim *native cucumber*; \*keli, S. kel *dig*; \*kimo, S. kikim *blink*; and various other examples of non-initial \*k; \*sakil *stamp, S. sak step on*; \*suki, S. suk *thrust into*; e-suk *digging stick*.

I suspect S. nekoit *octopus* (POC \*kuRita) along with several other nouns (e.g. nepui *paddle*) of being a borrowing because of the unexpected prefix (fossilised article?); in Sengseng, ne/ni is usually an adjectival prefix or relativiser.

S. e-mut (?POC \*kutu) is aberrant. In neighbouring languages the word for *louse* is ɲut, a more plausible derivative, and sometimes, S. /ŋ/ is reflected by Kaulong /m/. At best, this is probably a borrowing.

POC \*m remains S. /m/.

Examples: \*mata, S. mata- *eye*. \*maya, S. mamai- *tongue*; \*ma, S. ma *and*; \*malaque *open space in village*, \*malala *cleared ground, S. mla exposed, in the open (etc.)*; \*inum, S. num *drink*; \*tama, S. tama- *father, etc.*

POC \*n remains /n/.

Examples: \*nunu, S. e-nu *shadow, reflection*; \*pani, S. pan *paint*; \*tunu, S. tun *set fire to*; \*tina, S. tina (address) *mother, etc.*

POC \*ñ is reflected as /n/.

\*-ña, S. -n *third p.s. possessive suffix*; \*ñami, S. manman (with metathesis) *taste* - see Blust 1977), but as /h/ in one case: \*ñamuk, S. humuk *sandfly, mosquito*.

POC \*ŋ usually remains /ŋ/.

Examples: \*saŋa, S. saŋa- *groin, saŋan fork*; \*laŋo, S. e-laŋ *fly*; \*yaŋo, S. yaŋ *yellow*; \*poŋ *foolish, S. poŋoŋon ignorant of it?*

In two words, however, it is reflected as /n/: \*taŋis, S. tinis *weep*; \*ŋas *chew, S. nas chew sugarcane* (Blust 1977). The former is a comparatively rare synonym for S. hau *weep, cry out*, but the latter is the usual form. See note 14.

POC \*p usually remains /p/.

Examples: \*pa-, S. pa- *causative prefix*; \*paRi, S. e-pa *stingray*; \*puti, S. put *pluck*; \*kapi, S. e-kap *tongs, etc.* Sometimes, however, it is reflected as /w/, either an allophone of S. /v/ (a bilabial spirant) or of /u/: \*paRi, S. -val *reciprocal*; \*pale *house, S. a-val hut* (sloping rather than gabled roof). S. /v/ and /w/ are not recorded



in word-final position. A single example of \*p producing S.  $\emptyset$  seems to be S. kau *fine ashes, earth burnt to lime-like consistency, dust* (POC \*kapu). This appears as kau in other SWNB languages (see Johnston 1983). If S. umat *stone*, with metathesis, is from \*patu, it is presumably a borrowing from one of the languages to the east. For discussion of the cases in which \*p may be reflected as /y/, see 4.3.

POC \*s is usually reflected as /s/.

Examples: \*susu, S. sus *suck milk*, sus(u)- *breast*; \*masin *salt*, S. masɨn *salty, tasty*; \*sulu, S. e-sul *torch*; \*somod *dirty*, S. sumuh *dirt*, etc. The one exception noted is -hi, plural marker and possessive (\*sida *they*). For another irregular derivative of this POC proto-form see Lakalai -gi-.

POC \*t usually remains /t/.

Examples (in addition to those above): \*tok *thud, thump*, S. tok *beat a slit gong*; \*toko, S. e-tok *walking stick*; \*tutua, S. tut *beat*; \*saqit, S. sihit *sew*. The only exceptions noted are S. hisik *sea* (see note 15) and possibly hiŋis *cloud, sky* which may represent a borrowing from a language of the Kimbe group (cf. Bali laŋiti) in which /t/ before /i/ shifts towards /s/ (as in Lakalai).

POC \*q is reflected as either /h/ or /k/.

Examples: \*quma, S. kum *work*; \*saqit, S. sihit *sew*; \*muqa, S. muh (for discussion, see 5.3)

As in many languages, reflexes of \*l, \*d, \*R vary, and often not enough examples have been found for a pattern to be established. The most common reflexes are /l/ and /h/.

POC \*l is usually S. /l/.

Examples: \*laŋo, S. e-laŋ *fly*; \*lumut *moss*, S. lumlum *moss on tree*; \*keli, S. kel *dig*; \*sulu, S. e-sul *torch*, etc. But possibly \*l is reflected as /h/ in the second syllable of S. kihon *hear*. See also PAN \*mulut *mouth, snout*, S. muhut *nose, snout*.

POC \*R produces S. /l/ in \*kaRati, S. k(a)lat *bite*, and possibly in \*maiRa(q) *red*, S. m(e)lek *flame, glow*, but /s/ in S. misi *urinate* and ( $\emptyset$ ) in S. nekoit *octopus*, discussed above.

The cognacy of items reflecting POC \*d is uncertain except probably for \*dadasi *peel, scrape*, S. las *undo, flay* (and see also S. la| *scratch*), and POC \*somod *dirty*, S. sumuh *dirt*.

Vowels are usually close to or identical with POC vowels (allowing for my problems in hearing and recording, mentioned above), apart from the effects of umlauting. Sometimes an expected shift has not occurred, as with \*tanum *bury*, S. tanu *cemetery*, suggesting that final consonants had been lost in these cases before the second vowel could affect the first.

Like several other Oceanic languages (including Molima and Kove) /a/ is fronted when immediately following by /i/, and I have assumed that me, mei *come* reflects this process, as possibly does S. m(e)lek *flame, glow* (if it is indeed from \*maiRa(q) - but the final vowel is then

assumed to have been affected by the preceding one). See, however, S. *mamai-tongue*.

It must be added, however, that several possible OC forms have not been put forward because they contain unexpected vowels. These include S. *te faeces* (POC \*taqe), and S. *malel light in weight* (POC \*maRaRa). Sometimes, of course, there is exterior support for an unexpected vowel; S. *tapu grandmother* has an unexpected first vowel that is also found in the Tolai and Kiriwinan words for *grandparent*.

Finally, it should be noted that the special forms *moi come* (2nd p. only) and *lo go* (2nd p. only) may reflect influence from the subject pronoun.

## 4.2 Discussion

In Sengseng the most obvious tendency is a reduction of many roots to monosyllables, typically with the shape CVC or CCVC. In the majority of cases, this is accomplished by dropping the final vowel from a root of the shape CVCV. Here I am assuming that the root was in the form reconstructed for POC, often ending in a vowel, rather than the PAN form reconstructed for many verbs, in particular (see Blust 1977). To take examples of verbs beginning with /k/, which reflects a similar stop in POC, we find: S. *kak broken, as a book* - POC \*kaka; S. *kap pick up, as with tongs*; e-*kap tongs* - POC \*kapi; S. *kas scratch, rub, itch* - POC \*kasi; S. *kel dig* - POC \*keli; S. *kok (or kuk) carry* - POC \*koko; S. *kom clasp* - POC \*komo; S. *kot cut* - POC \*koti.

If the root began with two identical syllables, the first might be dropped. Examples include S. *mak chew betel* (PAN \*mamaq), S. *las undo, skin* (?POC \*dadasi), and *misi urinate* (POC \*mimiR). In the last case, though cognacy is certain, the final vowel casts some doubt on whether the form is directly inherited. See also S. *tut beat, as barkcloth* (POC \*tutua) and *pup break wind* (POC \*puput), which go against the rule just mentioned but do produce a verb of the most common shape.

Some other examples suggest that in other cases, the first syllable might be dropped even when it was not identical with the second. The case of *lit skin* (?PAN \*kulit) has been mentioned above, and other possible examples are S. *suk point to, indicate*; e-*suk index finger* (?POC \*tusuk) and S. *kut tail* (?PAN \*ikuR).

Sengseng nevertheless contains many disyllabic roots which end in vowels. Parts of the body of course take suffixed possessives, and the final vowel of a root may be dropped or retained depending on the form of the possessive pronoun, so that final (and unpronounceable) consonant clusters are avoided. The verb meaning *suck milk* is *sus*, but the similar word for *breast* retains its final vowel in certain contexts: *sus-it our (inc.) breasts*; *susu-n its breast* (note the shortening of these possessive forms). Verbs, and nouns derived from verbs as in some of the examples given above, preceded by one of the noun-markers (e- or a-), are most likely to be monosyllables. In many cases, however, the final consonant of a PAN form has been retained, but if the shape is CVCV and if the two vowels are identical, the first one may be dropped in ordinary rapid speech producing an initial consonant cluster. Examples include S. *kalat, klat cut through, bite* (POC \*kaRati) and perhaps S. *melek, mlek to light, flame* (?POC \*maiRaQ).

When the vowels are not similar, a shift may take place in which \*a in the first syllable shifts to conform to /i/ or /u/ in the second, but only if the word ends in a consonant. Examples are: S. *sihit sew* (\*saqit) (but with a possible doublet *sak tie*); *tinis* (PAN \*taŋis);<sup>14</sup> *hisik sea* (POC \*tasik);<sup>15</sup> possibly S. *hiŋis sky, cloud*, (POC \*laŋit) despite the unexpected final consonant; *humuk gnat, mosquito*, etc. (POC \*ŋamuk); *mutuh mature, old* (POC \*matuqa). This type of umlauting does not necessarily reduce a word to a monosyllable; such reduction can occur with words like *sihit*, because both /h/ and /v/ between like vowels may be dropped in normal speech, but most of the forms just cited would have unpronounceable initial consonant clusters if the first vowel was dropped.

### 4.3 Problematical reflexes

It should be evident from what has been cited so far that PAN forms are relatively easy to identify with a fair degree of certainty. The reflexes mentioned, although they may show inconsistencies probably reflecting borrowing between adjacent languages (see below), are not hard to accept. Another postulated set is perhaps less convincing. One of them rests on the supposition that \*p in some cases became S. /y/. Examples include S. *yak to fly* (POC \*kape, from PAN \*pakpak with metathesis?); S. *e-yah* (rare), *axe*, with doublet *pak cut wood* (POC \*paqa); S. *yaŋyaŋ disperse* (PAN \*paŋpaŋ); and possibly S. *yoŋ together with (another person)* (PAN \*punpun). There can be no doubt that the usual reflex of POC \*p is a bilabial stop (e.g. *pa- causative prefix*; S. *pan to paint* (POC \*pani); S. *put pluck* (POC \*putik)), or occasionally a bilabial spirant or semi-vowel. The reciprocal *-val* (POC \*paŋi) and *a-val hut* (POC \*pale) have already been mentioned; another possibility is *hvok rotten* (POC \*popok; cf. *Miu pohok*; *Karore vrok*). These reflexes of \*p are common in Oceanic languages but to my knowledge a /y/ reflex is not, and I am somewhat more dubious about the proposed cognates in this case. Johnston (1983) has proposed other S. reflexes for his south-west New Britain proto-phonemes \*p and \*mp, such as S. /k/ for the former (one example). The words given as examples, even if genuine reflexes of proto-forms, cannot now be attributed to Oceanic, and do not affect my generalisation.

Many proto-phonemes (though, as usual, not \*m) produce more than one reflex in Sengseng. As far as I know, this is universally true in Oceanic languages, and however much the alternatives may be attributed to borrowing, they do not usually impede classification of the language as AN (see Chowning 1973:197-200 for examples from Lakalai and Kove) unless the variants can plausibly be derived from nearby AN languages, as is the case with NAN Wasi (Peleata) of central New Britain (see Chowning 1969:20). Before dealing in detail with borrowing, however, I want to mention one peculiarity of Sengseng. PAN \*k is almost always reflected by S. /k/; the exceptions are, as in many languages, the pronouns (see Table 1) and one or two cases which are dubious because of the odd reflex, such as *e-mut louse*. By contrast, in a number of cases PAN \*g is reflected by S. /ŋ/: S. *ŋi tooth* (PAN \*gigi(q));<sup>16</sup> S. *ŋilŋil shiny* (PAN \*gilaŋ, \*gilap); S. *kuluŋ, kluŋ thunder* (PAN \*kuDug); S. *ŋep pant* (PAN \*gapay weak); S. *ŋaŋ call, cry out* (PAN \*gaŋ bark). I am not seriously suggesting that Sengseng is not an Oceanic language, but the data seem worth putting on record.

Table 1: Sengseng pronouns

Independent and preverbal (except questions)				
	Singular	Dual	Paucal	Plural
1 inc.	ŋa*	taŋa, toŋ	souka, souk	ita
1 exc.		toha	piok	pima*
2	o, a	mom	miok (also numeral "3")	om, ami*
3m.	vi	hiloŋ	hilok	po
3f.	et			po
3n.	i, li			li
Suffixed possessives				
1 inc.	-ŋo			-it
1 exc.				-pim
2	-ŋon, -p(rare), -m(rare)			-m, -om
3m.	(vi) ... -n			-hi, -po
3f.	(et) ... -n			
3n.	(i, li) ... -n			
Separable possessives				
1 inc.	ta -ŋo	(Dual and paucal are rarely used. Forms are the same as independent ones, with any final /-a/ omitted.)		ta-it
1 exc.				ta-pim
2	ta-p			ta-m, ta-om
3m.	ta-vi, vi ta-n			ta-po
3f.	ta-et, et(i)ta-n			
3n.	ta-n			
Goal				
Same as suffixed forms, except:				
2nd p.s. -ŋon (contrast ta-p <i>your</i> , and ta-ŋon <i>to you</i> ).				
3rd p.s.n. -i, -li, -ni (last only suffixed to a verb ending in /i/). <i>Eat it (vb.i):i-i, i-li, i-ni.</i>				
If a verb has a 3rd p. personal subject and object and they are different, -sun is substituted for the object pronoun: vi hion-sun, <i>he saw the other man.</i>				
Vocative				
2nd p.s.			tatoŋ	
2nd p. dual			hiloŋ	
2nd p. paucal			hilok	
2nd p.pl.m. (and mixed sexes)			apo	
2nd p.pl.f.			epo	
Other special forms				
1st p.s. intensive and interrogative				ŋo
2nd p.s. interrogative				ŋon
1st p. dual interrogative				taŋ

\* For discussion of the distribution of cognate forms in AN languages see Lincoln 1978:940,945.

#### 4.4 Borrowing

As will be explained, the pattern of Sengseng word tabus ensures that a considerable amount of borrowing will take place, and it seems probable that the same situation obtained in the past. The degree to which Pidgin words had entered the language, even at an early stage of contact, also suggests that the Sengseng are exceptionally ready to adopt foreign words and phrases even when they are not replacing those that are tabu (in contrast with, for example, the Lakalai, who were very much slower to accept a substantial amount of Pidgin). The question is then bound to arise of whether the AN component in Sengseng can be wholly attributed to borrowing from neighbouring AN languages. As I pointed out earlier, Sengseng itself is in direct contact with only one other non-Pasmanua language, a local dialect of Arawe (referred to by the Sengseng as the 'island' language). Trade and intermarriage, however, ensure a good deal of boundary crossing, and other Pasmanua languages lie adjacent to those of Lamogai, to the west, and approach the Kimbe languages to the north.

The first point to make is that none of the languages of south-west New Britain, except when directly adjacent to one of the exemplary languages of the north coast, has (on the surface) a higher AN content in the basic vocabulary than does Sengseng. So the AN content of Banaule (Kapore, Bebeli) is relatively high because of the many loan-words from Lakalai (hence Dyen's suggestion that they might belong to the same subgroup - 1965:47-48) and Aria, of the Lamogai languages, shows the same effect because of loans from Kaliai. Both Arawe and Kaulong-Sengseng contain a number of AN forms in the basic vocabulary, but if we consider dialects of Arawe that are not adjacent to Kaulong or Sengseng, the only probable AN forms that have the same shape in both languages are *sinaŋ swi*, *day*, *a-mat snake* and *me come*. The first two of these are found throughout south-west New Britain, and form part of the evidence that led both me and Johnston to suggest genetic relations between the Lamogai, Arawe, and Whiteman languages (see below). (I am omitting forms found only in 'married' speech in the Pasmanua; see below.) Other AN forms in Sengseng vocabulary either are not recorded for Arawe or have such a different shape that borrowing is unlikely. Examples include S. *num*, Arawe in *drink*; S. *tinis*, Arawe *teŋ weep*; and even S. *ita*, Arawe *ta we inc*. In at least one case the Sengseng word is clearly AN while the various Arawe ones are not: S. *hisik sea* beside Arawe *malaŋlo*, *pepek*, *urvu* (from different word-lists). In the case of the word for *sew*, the shape of the Arawe form suggests that it was borrowed from another Pasmanua language, possibly Karore (Arawe *siririne*, Karore *sirit*), whereas the Sengseng form is, as was shown above, regularly derived from \**saqit*.

#### 4.5 Direct inheritance or borrowing: Johnston's PSW

In 1983 Johnston expanded on his own 1982 paper and the 1981 paper by Lynch to suggest that all the languages of south-west New Britain which I had originally (1969) assigned to the Lamogai, Arawe, and Whiteman Families, as well as a few others such as Uvol (see above) derived from a common ancestor which he called Proto-Southwest New Britain (PSW). As I noted above, he includes Uvol in a subgroup (Western Whiteman) with Sengseng and the other Pasmanua languages, an assignment which I reject. Johnston proposed a number of 32 "tentative proto-etyma" for PSW which he derives from POC. Some of these derivations are certainly valid (e.g. PSW \**puri banana*, \**mata eye*, \**monuk bird*) but others seem more dubious (e.g. PSW \**kowozak rat* beside POC \**kunsupe*; PSW \*(z) *umpa big* beside POC \**la(m)pas*, PSW \**elik fish* beside POC \**ikan*).

In addition, numerals and pronouns are assumed to have undergone very peculiar transformations (see below). Of the basic 32 proto-etyma, Sengseng has certain reflexes of seven, one additional in the 'married' vocabulary (see below), and three other possibles, all of which have unexpected shapes: mut *louse* (POC \*kutu), kliŋa *ear* (POC \*taliŋa), and umat *stone* (POC \*patu). Johnston attributes to PSW and ultimately to POC all of these, as well as several other Sengseng words. One of these (kunam *turtle*, derived from POC \*poŋu via PSW \*(p,k)onom) is not on my list, which has only miyat *turtle*. The others are terms which seem unlikely to be of POC origin: S. kive *leg*, which Johnston derives from PSW \*kawe and POC \*waqe; S. vo *mouth*, POC \*awana; S. homan *new* derived from PSW \*taŋan and POC \*tañan (source unexplained); S. hot *neck* [not *throat*, as in Johnston's translation] derived from POC \*qolo; and S. miyaŋa *forehead*, derived from POC \*ndamwa via PSW \*zamwa. In one case, he drops the first syllable from the Pasismanua word for *hand* (S. vili; see Throop and Throop 1980:237), reducing it to li, without explaining what he has done, and then derives it from POC \*lima. One or two of these S. words may indeed be POC in origin, but the enormous irregularities involved seem to rule out most of the others, except as possible borrowings. As will be seen, although I think many Sengseng forms have indeed been borrowed from other languages, the burden of the evidence, as presented above, does not suggest very complicated sound shifts for forms which I assume are directly inherited. For further discussion of Johnston's whole theory, see below.

If Johnston is correct, it remains unlikely that Sengseng acquired most of its AN component by borrowing. The distribution of the languages makes it probable that the 'exemplary' ones of the north coast rather than the aberrant ones of the interior and south coast are the late-comers to New Britain (see Chowning 1976:379-380). Lapita pottery in the Talasea region of the north coast suggests an early AN occupation there, and it may be the present largely interior languages (Lamogai and Whiteman) that represent that occupation rather than the present north coast languages. Blust has suggested (personal communication) that the AN content of Sengseng perhaps derived from a "source language (which was there (but) has since died out or changed location". While admitting this as a possibility, the fact that Sengseng and its neighbours seem so like other Oceanic languages in grammar makes me feel that it is easier to assume that at least some of the content that is not obviously AN came from NAN languages which still exist in pockets throughout New Britain and which are generally believed to have reached the island before the AN ones; Johnston has in fact attributed many lexical peculiarities of his SWNB to borrowings from NAN. The low AN content of these languages would then be explained in terms of the internal changes to be discussed below.

It should be noted that there are cases in which other AN languages of New Britain have presumably borrowed from a Whiteman language. For the present, I will stick to Lakalai, flanked by Whiteman languages, which both Goodenough and I have suggested were spoken on the north coast before the ancestors of the Lakalai arrived there. Among other lexical items shared by Lakalai and Sengseng (and presumably by the intervening languages) are names of several wild trees: Lakalai la-uele, S. e-vel *Canarium almond*; Lakalai la-koi, S. e-koi *wild areca palm*; Lakalai la-salumu, S. sa-nuhum *Ficus*; Lakalai la-ropa, S. e-lop *Pometia pinnata*; and of at least one wild marsupial (Lakalai e-misiki, S. e-smik).<sup>17</sup> In most cases it is impossible to ascertain the direction of the borrowing, but the word for *Ficus* in Sengseng literally means *tree-big* (each Sengseng village was traditionally built around a large strangler fig). In normal pronunciation these are Sengseng sanum, Lakalai salum (Lakalai being a dialect in which /n/

in other Nakanai dialects has become /l/), and it seems clear that a language in which the term is meaningful was the source.

The additional lexical items specifically shared between these languages are of three sorts. Some are common words, not known to be AN, which simply occur in both (e.g., S. *ko*, Lakalai *koko* *defecate*) in which it is impossible to suggest either the source (which of course may be still another language) or the age of the item. (M. Ross has recently suggested, though not in print, that this word derives from POC.) Other words, because of their shape and their existence beside more obviously Sengseng forms, are almost certainly recent borrowings, presumably by Sengseng who have worked on the plantations near Talasea. These include *mahela* *shame* (identical in Lakalai) beside S. *manjin*, possibly formed from the verb *man* *to hurt* (from POC \**manuka*?) with a noun-formative suffix, and *sesele* *truly* (identical in Lakalai) beside various complex Sengseng phrases involving oaths. The third category consists of adverbs, without synonyms in either language, which seem unlikely to be borrowed easily. These include S. *lai*, L. *lalai* *tentatively*; S. *so*, L. *sou* *yet, still*; S. *akai* (pronounced *agai*) *now, at once*; L. *gai* *in the very near future*.<sup>18</sup> At the very least, such shared forms do point to a period of contact between the close relatives of these languages, but note that the AN content of Sengseng is not much altered by such evidence. Perhaps because Tolai (Kuanua), though not an 'exemplary' language, has been much used for the reconstruction of POC, it is worth making the same point about forms which Sengseng shares with it. Tolai is physically very far from the Whiteman languages,<sup>19</sup> with various NAN languages intervening, but shares with Sengseng several forms that are not normally attributed to POC. These include *kul* *buy* (the same in both languages); S. *kila*, Tol. *gila* *ignorant* (the opposite meaning from POC \**kila*); S. *iya-*, Tol. *ia-* *name*; S. *molo*, Tol. *moro* *yellow*; and see also Tol. *kuru* *penis, tail* beside S. *kut* *tail*. Assuming that both languages did not borrow the same forms from intervening NAN languages, they may share some vocabulary that belongs to an early period of the settlement of AN-speakers in New Britain and New Ireland.<sup>20</sup>

## 5. WORD TABUS

I mentioned earlier that Sengseng contains a large number of synonyms, and indicated that some of these may be the result of name tabus, which require substitutes. In many cases the Sengseng and Kaulong speakers are quite aware of the source of borrowings, and in other cases it is possible, with some certainty, to trace the source. Deliberate borrowings and a variety of other ways of replacing vocabulary are all part of the same process, and at this point its operation will be described before the source of some of the substitute terms is dealt with in more detail.

### 5.1 Name tabus

The effects of tabus on personal names for a language in general, rather than simply on individual usage, vary with a number of factors. The most obvious is the degree of resemblance between personal names and other lexical items. Even an extensive set of name tabus will not affect the language if, as in Lakalai, few personal names resemble other words (and if nicknames, which of course do, are not subject to tabu).<sup>21</sup> (For this reason we cannot

directly correlate the existence of name tabus with effects on the lexicon; cf. Simons 1982:183).

In Sengseng, most people have a special individual name; it is rare, though not unknown, to find two people with the same name, or to name one person for another. What I will call the personal name is usually bestowed at birth, though often changed during adolescence, in which case the earlier name is abandoned. The most common personal names consist of one or two syllables usually followed by *-li*, for males, and *-me*, for females. The tabus do not apply to these common last syllables, which as independent verbs mean respectively *go* and *come*. Names need not have these endings. In addition, many people have nicknames denoting personal characteristics such as a runny nose or prematurely white hair; these inevitably contain everyday words. Men traditionally had a special nickname, which was supposed to be kept secret for women, which referred to the appearance of the man's penis, likening it to a plant or animal. Occasionally such a name comes into general use, as with one prominent man called Kaŋkaŋ (Hornbill) — and perhaps another called Wul (Eel) — in which case women were not supposed to know the origin of the name.<sup>22</sup> In addition, when boys have their teeth blackened each is given a new name which ends with *-kit*, the word for tooth-blackening material. If syllables of this name are tabued, the word *kit* is not. The only names not subject to tabus are baptismal names assumed by converts to Catholicism, which now embraces most of the people living near the coast.

For both sexes, it is tabu to say the name of any affine of senior generation, or any word resembling that name or one of its syllables (other than *li*, *me*, *kit*). The consequences of breach of the tabu are, in theory at least, disastrous: sickness, possibly the death of the spouse, and failure to have children and to gain wealth in shells, the two great desires of individuals of both sexes. The tabu extends across languages; a person who cannot say *e-ki water*, *bird*, also cannot say Pidgin *ki key*. Goodale was told in Kaulong that the tabu lasted until the death of the affine, but she may have misunderstood; in Sengseng it lasts until the death of the person observing the tabu, regardless of whether the affine is alive or not.<sup>23</sup> It applies not only to living affines, but to well-remembered dead ones, such as those buried within the hamlet's men's house or identified as the planters of fruit trees around the hamlet. I knew three women, married to a set of brothers (though one brother was long dead), who had to avoid *homan new, now* because it was the name of their husbands' grandfather, who would certainly not have been alive when they married. Normally the residents of a hamlet centring on a men's house are cognatic kin and so likely to share at least one remembered ancestor, so that all in-marrying women may have some name tabus in common. In addition, if a tabu name includes the name of a food, it is also tabu to eat the food. In time it is possible to lift the eating tabu, like some other affinal tabus such as approaching the grave of a dead tabu affine, by giving a pearl shell to the spouse's kin, but the name tabus cannot be lifted.

In consequence of the name tabus, the Sengseng (and Kaulong<sup>24</sup>) languages contain lexical items called 'married talk', substitutes for many common words. The people actually describe the situation as if there are two distinct languages separating the single from the married,<sup>25</sup> and as if all the married use 'married talk'. In fact, a married person need not use the substitute form unless it appears in the name of a tabu affine, though many do so as a matter of course. (The test is whether such a person will say the 'single' or 'true' word if necessary, as in speaking to someone like me who may not recognise the alternative.) When first married, people may simply shift



vocabulary to avoid giving offence until they learn who all their tabu affines are. An extreme form of shifting vocabulary was practised by a newly married Kaulong man, more widely travelled than most, who told Goodale that he tried to avoid speaking Kaulong at all, substituting Pidgin and the language of Talasea where he had been a labourer (and thereby rendering himself largely unintelligible to his bride).

At present, in this area, name avoidance cannot be accomplished by minor alterations in pronunciation, as is the case in Kove (where, for example, they substitute voiced stops for spirants). Certain sound shifts between neighbouring languages are well known, such as Karore /r/ for Sengseng /h/ in many words, but a Sengseng avoiding the tabu word *sew* could not just substitute the Karore version *sirit* for *sihit*. As far as I know, metathesised forms, which are frequently heard (e.g. *ahu* alongside *hau cry out*) do not serve to evade tabus, but I failed to ask about this. For many words, a number of standard married forms exist and are generally known, so that in Dulago village the married forms for *pig* (*yu*) include *a-ni*, *kanem*, *a-tiem*, and *pasi*. This set is interesting because the origin of the words can be traced, though the Dulago people did not do so. In Angelek village in Kaulong, *a-ni* is a modifier used to distinguish wild from domestic pigs, and *kanem* is known to be a borrowing from Lamogai languages to the east. *A-tiem*, which is said in Sengseng also to be a word for *ghost*, is used to talk about pigs when they are being carried through spirit places so that the spirits will not be attracted to the pig. Throughout West New Britain, cognates of *pasi* are general terms designating a number of game animals, including pig in Kove *basi* but in Lakalai referring only to smaller animals such as possum.

Each small region in the Pasismanua has its stock of married terms, which vary locally. For example, I found that although people in the 'coastal' Sengseng village of Suvulo recognised most of the married terms that I had learned in the interior, some were quite unfamiliar to them. Goodale's impression was that much of the perception of dialect differences in Kaulong derives from differing sets of married forms. These standard substitutes do not cover all the possibilities, however, and often a newly married person must improvise. Failing knowledge of a sufficiently different term from a foreign language, he may use other methods. One is a slight shift in meaning or narrowing of range, as in the pig terms just mentioned. Another is a greater shift that is still readily intelligible, such as *tongs* for *hand*, and *vine* for *snake*, or the complex construction (time marker + completion marker + *here*) that the three Dulago wives used for *now*. The next two groups seem to be probabilities. The list of Sengseng synonyms contains many nouns formed from verbs, as *kesjin cutter* for *knife*, *nasjin the chewed* for *sugarcane*, and *pahihjin shaver* for *obsidian*, all of which may have developed as someone's married substitute for the usual term. In addition, many lengthier descriptive terms exist for animals and plants, again as alternatives to shorter terms. For example, one of the numerous words for wallaby means *soft fur*, one for python means *crooked middle*, and one for candlenut means *spear polisher*. Again, it seems likely that these alternatives to shorter unanalysable terms were originally developed in response to name tabus; certainly I have no evidence of other origins (as in poetry or magical spells). Finally, in some cases a person seems simply to invent a word, as personal names and most tooth-blackening names are invented, and lets others learn its meaning from context.

It should be noted here that along with this proliferation of synonyms, the Sengseng fail to make many distinctions which I am familiar with in other languages. The word translated 'spear' above also embraces 'wood', 'tree',

and a variety of wooden tools such as the trigger of a trap, and the synonyms usually have the same range. A single word for tree bark is used for a bark cooking roll, a bark umbrella, and a bark baler for a dammed-up stream. Presumably this absence of many specialised terms prevents the number of words each individual must learn from reaching an unmanageable size. As it is, the unmarried especially enjoy displaying knowledge by listing all the synonyms they know.

Contrary to what one might expect, in view of the fact that children first learn married forms from their parents, the Sengseng consider the 'single' form to be the basic original word for something.<sup>26</sup> Often when I was being told a place name by a person who had to use a married form for one of its syllables, I was urged to supply the single form myself so that I would record the true name. It should be added here that many Sengseng men never marry, and others delay marriage until they are at least middle-aged (see Chowning 1980), so that some men never use married terms after early childhood, and others use single terms for most of their lives. Traditionally, however, all women are married, and usually at a fairly young age, so they are perhaps to be considered the main sources of linguistic innovation and change. Given a common though not invariable post-marital pattern of virilocal residence, women are also more likely to have to avoid the names of dead affines buried near where they live. On the other hand, most marriages take place between individuals who not only live near each other but who share at least one common ancestor, so men also often interact with affines.<sup>27</sup> The evidence indicates that in some cases, the married term completely replaces the original, and I suspect that many such cases occurred locally prior to pacification when incessant warfare limited contact between small local groups.

## 5.2 Other word tabus

In addition to the affinal name tabus, there are others that affect vocabulary. At least in theory, all Sengseng within the vicinity tabu the name of anyone who dies for a period variously said to range from a few days until decay of the flesh. I frequently heard breaches of this tabu; if it once was influential, it no longer seemed to be. (In many parts of Melanesia, tabus on names of the dead are more influential than affinal tabus because they often are observed by all members of the community; see below and Simons 1982.) Some tabus are even more temporary, but do add to the local store of synonyms. In certain places inhabited by spirits, particular terms are avoided that might anger or attract them, and sometimes a substitute is used, as with the a-tiem pig term mentioned above. When collecting shrimp, it is necessary to avoid their usual name (e-lus) lest they hear and flee, and the name of a red leaf is substituted. In general, spirits tend to be addressed and sometimes referred to by kinship terms, notably tisa *grandfather*, and this has become a married term for fire, which is both personified and sacred. Finally, avoidance of sexual terms and other obscenities in mixed company has led to the use of various euphemisms. Men say that women have a secret vocabulary for discussing sexual matters, but I did not confirm its existence. Conversely, though a man could be killed for using a Sengseng obscenity in the presence of women, many delighted in using what they thought or said were obscene exclamations borrowed from other languages (on the assumption that the women, who travel less often, would not recognise them.)

### 5.3 The acceptance of substitutes

For tabus, including euphemisms, to become fixed in the language and actually replace earlier terms, they must of course be known and used by most people. The small largely inbred populations in south-west New Britain present an excellent opportunity for replacement, as what was originally a substitute term comes to be so widely used that it is thought of as the original. That this has happened is shown by the fact that in some Kaulong villages, including Angelek, e-mon, elsewhere the prime example of a married form for bird, has become the term used by everyone. Goodale reports other cases in Angelek of common use of what were substitute terms in the interior village of Umbi, though the affinal tabus were still observed in Angelek. In Suvulo I found that in several cases a Pidgin word such as kambang *lime* had not only become the usual term but was firmly stated to be Sengseng in origin. Of course such cases of replacement by borrowing occur where no name tabus exist, as in Kove, but the opportunities do seem considerably greater in a situation like Sengseng, in which substitute forms are constantly sought, created, and widely used.

In eastern Oceania, particularly, word substitution as the result of name tabus can easily become established when the names are those of chiefs, so that everyone has to observe the tabu. Widespread tabus, as I noted above, are more likely where the names of the dead rather than affines are avoided, even when the dead are not chiefs. In parts of the Massim, where the kin of the dead all take offence if the name is spoken, such tabus can indeed alter the language, as Lithgow (1973:106) records for Woodlark. Where supernatural sanctions back up the tabu on names of the dead, the effect can be even stronger with people only peripherally related, who do not know the exact connections and avoid the name out of fear of offending, as Keesing found in Malaita. The Kwaio tabus in any case affected all members of a cognatic descent group and locality, and could spread by out-marriage and fissioning, producing a situation in which "there are significant variations in vocabulary (between localities) many of which resulted from word tabooing" (Keesing and Fifi'i 1969:171). Here is certainly one possible explanation for the amount of linguistic diversity in Melanesia, which has long seemed difficult to understand. Although I agree with Pawley (1981:273-275) that a major reason is simply normal divergence over a long period of time, he does not really tackle the problem of extreme diversity in a geographically compact area like New Britain except by postulating "local movements and the intrusion of alien, enclave communities" (p.275; compare the statement on p.289 that "major subgroups tend to correspond fairly well to a discrete island group"). Here I would like to suggest that the great diversity found in regions in which the continuous distribution of closely related languages argues against migration as an explanation, may owe something to the widespread Melanesian phenomenon of incessant warfare between communities with a single language and culture (see Chowning 1977:41-42). This both weakened the likelihood of political confederation and increased the possibility that small local differences would become fixed. Name-tabuing could then have a chance to lead to linguistic diversification even in the absence of chieftainship. I am not suggesting that the situation just described was found only among AN-speakers; on the contrary, NAN-speakers may not only have undergone linguistic change for the same reason (see Franklin 1977:13-14), but western Melanesian political behaviour may owe something to influence from people resident in the region before the AN languages arrived. If Pawley is correct (1981:285) in believing that hereditary leadership can be attributed to a Proto-Melanesian stage, its rarity in the west needs explaining; contact with speakers of NAN languages may have contributed both to the development of the

Big Man system so typical of the west, and to their patterns of warfare, both of which may have helped accelerate linguistic change throughout this area.

On the other hand, the same small size that facilitates linguistic differentiation can work against differentiation, because members of small populations must often seek mates outside (even where marriages do not result from sexual attraction between relative strangers met at large gatherings, as they sometimes do in Sengseng). Intermarriage, which can also lead to adoption across linguistic boundaries,<sup>28</sup> must be a major reason for the existence of differing pronunciations of the same word, and possibly of the great variety not only of Sengseng kinship terms, but of possessive endings for them. Often the source of the variation can be identified. For example, in many words Sengseng /-h/ corresponds to Kaulong /-k/, as in S. *muh*, K. *muk precede* (POC \*muqa). Consequently when faced with such alternate forms as e-sih, e-sik *snare* and e-yah, a-yak *axe* it is probably safe to assume that the latter was originally a Kaulong pronunciation, even if it is no longer so identified by the Sengseng (only the forms with -k appear in the Kaulong word lists that I have seen). Possibly when one pronunciation, not necessarily the original one, became preferred, we have the explanation for varying reflexes of a single proto-phoneme (see 4.1), as S. *mak chew betel* where we might expect *mah*. Again, with kinship terms it is possible to identify *wohuk my brother* as Kaulong because both the first syllable and the ending are characteristic of that language. Often, however, one can only postulate an outside origin without identifying it. To indicate the diversity: Sengseng has four different first person singular possessive endings (address and reference) with kinship terms (-a, -h, -k, -ŋo, as well as *veheŋ mother's brother* which either has  $\emptyset$  or a fifth ending), and there are three for second person singular reference (-m, -ŋon, and -p), the last being the usual Kaulong (and -ŋon the usual Sengseng) form for suffixed possessives (see Table 1). The Sengseng words for *father* and *father-in-law* take -p, for *mother* and *brother* -m (of uncertain origin, although of course AN), and for *sister* -ŋo. The reasons for this proliferation elude me, but out-marriage seems the most likely explanation.

What emerges in the Pasismanua languages, including Sengseng, is the situation that Grace has recently (1981:266) described for New Caledonia, with "complicated sound correspondences ... due to large scale borrowing of core vocabulary from related languages". In this paper I am arguing that irregular correspondences should not prevent us from accepting certain forms as AN, since we have evidence of extensive borrowing between related languages in this region. More importantly, however, I suggest that the present pattern of word substitution because of name tabus, coupled with the large number of synonyms in each language, indicates that much vocabulary has been replaced — and in some cases undoubtedly by AN forms from other languages. Nevertheless, most of the present AN content of Sengseng and its neighbours cannot plausibly be derived from other AN languages now present in New Britain. In view of the grammatical evidence, these seem to me most likely to be AN languages that have simply undergone rapid lexical change of a type which has probably been common in the small societies of western Melanesia, but which, as Keesing and Fifi'i, and Simons, pointed out, can cause major problems of interpretation when lexicostatistical data are relied upon.

The conclusion that follows is that the number of AN lexemes retained in the 'basic' vocabulary<sup>29</sup> cannot be used to determine with certainty whether a specific language is to be classed as AN. In his 1981 paper, Blust points out that he does not know why retention rates vary so greatly between unquestionably AN languages. If, for his sample, the rate ranges from 59% for Malay to 16% for

Gapapaiwa of Milne Bay, there is no theoretical reason why it should not fall well below 16% for languages that are still AN, according to other criteria. A considerable AN content in the remaining vocabulary and in grammar, particularly when this cannot plausibly be derived from other AN languages in the vicinity, should outweigh the single criterion of the content of a word-list. It follows, of course, that in some cases AN languages may have fewer words of AN derivation in such a word-list than some NAN languages, as with the famous case of Mailu: for West New Britain, a possible example is Wasi, originally considered AN by several observers (see Chowning 1976a:189, 190).

## 6. THE PROBLEM OF JOHNSTON'S PROTO-SOUTHWEST NEW BRITAIN

I have argued that the combination of grammatical evidence and a substantial amount of AN lexicon, not attributable to borrowing from the unquestionably AN languages of the north coast of New Britain, make it plausible to call the Pasismanua languages AN. On the evidence available to me, the same argument applies to all the other languages of south-west New Britain: those that I have called Arawe, Lamogai, and Whiteman, and that Johnston has called Arove, Lamogai, Eastern Whiteman, and Western Whiteman.<sup>30</sup> They look neither more nor less AN than each other, except where they have been influenced by adjacent north coast languages. The questions then remain of whether they all derive from a single relatively recent ancestor, Johnston's PSW, and whether specific phonological changes from this putative ancestor (rather than from POC or PAN) justify Johnston's subgroups.

To begin with, two points must be repeated. First, I reject the inclusion of Uvol in the same subgroup with Sengseng, and so shall be discussing only the remaining Western Whiteman language, my Pasismanua. Second, I accept that certain isoglosses extend through the languages of south-west New Britain: e.g. forms like S. amat *snake*, sinaŋ *sun*, miok *three* and nal (not ŋal, as in Johnston) *four*. The first two of these seem to me unquestionably AN, but a-mat can be derived without difficulty from POC \*ŋmata, either with metathesis or with a prefixed article, and if Johnston is correct in postulating a POC form \*nsinaŋ *sun*, the same argument applies to it.<sup>31</sup> The second two do not seem to me OC, despite Johnston's ingenious derivation of PSW \*moiook from "metathesised forms apparently reflecting POC \*kamiu 2 pl. in all SWNB" (Johnston 1983). The Sengseng trial/paucal pronouns (see Table 2) all have an -ok ending except for souka *first person inclusive trial*, and miok *is*, as well as the word for *three*, also the second trial form. (The -ok ending also appears in the pronoun yok designating three people together, as opposed to yoŋ for *two*; for -oŋ as a dual marker see Table 1.) It is, of course, commonplace for dual and trial pronominal forms to incorporate the words for *two* and *three*, but if we derive S. miok from \*kamiu, we are left with the second plural pronouns om/ami which can be more easily be derived from \*kamiu without invoking metathesis.

As regards the Pasismanua languages, the forms postulated by Johnston seem to me to fall into four categories. First are those in which PSW is identical with POC, such as \*mata *eye*, \*tama *father*, \*taliŋa *ear*. Second are those with no recorded reflexes in the Pasismanua languages (excluding Uvol), such as PSW \*puri *banana*, \*towu *sugar*, \*izuŋ *nose*. Third are those for which Johnston has identified Pasismanua reflexes which are unacceptable because of incorrect data, including mistranslations and false divisions of words, and because of unlikely sound shifts. As well as the word for *night* mentioned above, examples include confusion of words for *forehead* (S. miyaŋa) and *head*

and the derivation of both from \*zamwa *forehead* (POC \*ndamwa), and the derivation of S. iya-n *its name*, written by Johnston yan, from \*azaŋ. So far I have been discussing PSW forms he derives from POC, but the same objections apply to some proto-etyma postulated for PSW alone. I am unpersuaded that some of the forms he derives from a single proto-form are all cognate with each other: for example, that S. tahe-n (his tahe-n) *one* and Arawe *ke* both derive from PSW \*kai, or that S. yut *hair* and kin *leaf* both derive from \*kañin. Finally, Johnston has proposed a few proto-forms that do seem to be distinctive, whether or not they derive from POC, and to have reflexes in different subgroups of south-west New Britain languages. These include \*ñumuk *mosquito* (for POC \*ñamuk), \*pa-ŋal *four*, and \*zeki *water*. In most cases, not enough comparative data are available to make it certain that the supposed reflexes are just that — for example, that S. e-ki *water* and Arawe rei *rain* both derive from the same root.<sup>32</sup> In others, the distribution of the distinctive form outside this region is not adequately described; for example, umlauting of the type that would produce \*ñumuk is found not only in Kilenge-Maleu but in at least one language of the Siassi Islands (see Chowning 1976:371).<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, we are not yet in a position to assess the importance of borrowing in affecting the distribution of these forms. Several that do not appear in Johnston's list for Pasismanua languages are in fact found in Sengseng either in the 'married' lexicon (e.g. kwon *fire* beside 'single' yau) or as one of the synonym sets (e.g. hvo *two* along with wuoŋ and ponwal).

On the basis of the evidence presented, I cannot see that Johnston has yet proved that all these South-West New Britain languages show evidence of phonological changes that justify grouping them together, possibly with a putative Coral Sea Cluster (Lynch 1982), and separating them from other New Britain languages. Of the five possible phonological and morphological innovations said to "identify PSW as a distinct proto-language and the SWNB group as a group with common inheritance" (Johnston 1983), the Pasismanua languages completely lack three: reflexes of PSW \*tilu *three* (with vowel change from POC); a "3 ps alienable possessive form \*ka-Ø or \*ka-a"; and "first person plural inclusive possessive forms \*ka-ri, \*li-ri, and \*-ri" (see Table 1). Johnston acknowledges that the fourth "innovation", "the accretion -ŋal in PSW \*pa-ŋal 4" is found in Bariai and Vitiaz Straits languages, and can only suggest that these latter borrowed from SWNB, but in any case the Pasismanua languages lack the pa- prefix. Johnston does, however, consider "metathesis of the vowel sequences POC \*kamiu 2pɿ > kamui > komui > PSW \*omu ... definitive of PSW". See, however, the Sengseng forms in Table 2, and also, for at least part of the proposed unique metathesis, Molima (Milne Bay) omi'a 2 pɿ.

All this is not to deny the possibility that the Pasismanua languages do indeed subgroup with others in south-west New Britain (apart from those I originally assigned to the Whiteman Family). In order to prove such connections, however, we need much more evidence in order to establish ties above the level of dialect chains. Even for these, extensive borrowing obscures the picture (and doubtless accounts for much of the disagreement between Johnston and me).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Without further investigation, some major difficulties encountered by those who have tried to classify the languages of south-west New Britain cannot be ascribed to the operation of name tabus over a long period of time. We cannot know precisely how long these people have been observing their present system of word tabus or handling them in precisely the same way: indeed, I am suggesting that they may once have practised avoidance by the use of minor phonological changes, a method that is not acceptable nowadays. Furthermore, we do not yet know how name and other word tabus operate in other languages of south-west New Britain, though in view of various cultural similarities among these societies (see Chowning 1978a), it is likely that they are similar in these respects as well. Certainly name tabus are not the only factor to have affected lexicon in this region. Some of the diversity must have been caused by intermarriage between small populations, and quite possibly there existed in the past the influence of speakers of NAN languages, now gone from the immediate region.<sup>34</sup> Allowing that all the local peculiarities did not have a single cause, if we accept that much of the AN content of these languages is directly inherited, the situation found in the Pasismanua languages at least is strikingly close to that described by Keesing and Fifi'i and Simons. The irregular sound correspondences, the proliferation of synonyms and doublets, and the small number of AN forms in the lexicon coupled with grammar that is by no means aberrant for OC, all fit Simons' predictions about the effects of lexical change resulting from word tabu (Simons 1982:189-190). Simons warns against the danger of offering word tabu "as a panacea to cure all comparative problems" (1982:191), and undoubtedly he is right to do so. Nevertheless, in view of the demonstrable effects of such tabus in the recent history of the Pasismanua, it seems highly likely that these languages look aberrant primarily because they have undergone rapid lexical change, and that a major reason for this change was the operation of word tabus in small scattered populations. Like Keesing, Fifi'i, and Simons, I should expect that similar accelerated change, with the same causes, has affected many languages of Oceania.

## NOTES

1. Loukotka considered these languages, along with the Arawe ones, Papuan, whereas Capell called both groups "semi-AN". I discussed their classifications, and rejected them, in Chowning 1969:23. More recently, Blust has informed me that because of the small number of reflexes of PMP forms in basic vocabulary, he considers Kaulong and Sengseng at best "indeterminate" — that is, not proved to be AN.
2. A is a noun-marking prefix which precedes all masculine proper names and many place names, as well as many ordinary nouns. Because it is clearly viewed as a separate prefix, I decided to discard it in writing the name of the language, but I have not heard it omitted when Sengseng and Kaulong speakers are referring to the language.

3. Presumably because they relied on informants unfamiliar with the region east of the Andru, the Throops erroneously identified Karore with Palik, and indicate the Karore region as occupied only by Sengseng (1980:236). Word-lists make it clear that their Palik is an Arawe language spoken on the small islands (other than Kaveng) between the mouths of the Andru and Johanna Rivers. In the recent past, Karore was spoken in the region near the coast around the Ursula River, and (as it still is) on Kaveng Island, just offshore. With the recent moves of some interior Sengseng villages nearer the coast, some formerly Karore-speaking regions are now occupied by Sengseng speakers, as in Suvulo village, and other Karore villages, such as those officially called Pariwa and Mai-ieo, now contain many Sengseng speakers (and are listed by the Throops simply as "Asengseng").
4. I have briefly touched on the subject to be discussed here in earlier papers, initially in one entitled "The languages of south-west New Britain", delivered to the 11th Pacific Science Congress in Tokyo in 1966, and later in Chowning 1976:372. My own fieldwork in Sengseng was financed by the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences (1962), the National Science Foundation (1963-64), the Australian National University (1966), and the Internal Research Fund of Victoria University of Wellington (1980-81).
5. An outsider might also have difficulty recognising Pidgin words, both because of local pronunciations and local perceptions of word boundaries, which led the Sengseng to regard the initial syllable of many Pidgin nouns as a disposable article, producing such forms as *les* from Pidgin *wailles wireless*, and *morol* from Pidgin *botoi bottle*.
6. The shared cognacy rate between a Sengseng village which contained no foreigners (Dulago) and a Kaulong border village which contained several Sengseng speakers (Umbi) was 80%. Away from the border area, speakers of both languages said that they could not easily understand the other. Johnston has recently (1983) proposed Uvol as another member of his "Western Whiteman", otherwise composed of Miu, Kaulong, Sengseng, and Psohoh (represented by the Bao dialect). Although it was resemblances between Uvol and Banaule (Bebeli), which Johnston now assigns to Eastern Whiteman, that made me originally (Chowning 1969:32-33) suggest a possible link between the Mengen and Whiteman families, I see no reason to accept the assignment of Uvol to the same subgroup as Sengseng. The interested reader can consult comparative word-lists in Johnston 1980b:220-221 and Johnston 1983.
7. I have here rendered Sengseng consonants in my phonemicisation, which uses /p/, /t/, and /k/ for stops which are voiced and in the case of /t/ often trilled when preceding a vowel (in the 'beach' dialect, trilled in other positions as well), while my /v/ represents a bilabial fricative before /e/, /i/, and consonants, but in the interior dialect /w/ before /o/ and /u/, varying before /a/. In the beach dialect the fricative may appear before /u/. Kaulong forms are taken from those recorded by Goodale and the Throops, and not phonemicised. The comparative lists published by the Throops (1980:257-259) relies for "Asengseng" on one that I supplied; pronunciations of Kaulong and Sengseng do not differ as much as the spellings suggest.



8. The term also means *face*, as in many other OC languages, and a homonym means *point (as of a spear)*. See also *snake*. The hyphen following a noun shows that it takes a suffixed possessive. Some S. nouns, but not all, are preceded by articles a- or e-.
9. I was dubious about this one because of the initial consonant, but Blust tells me that such a shift for \*t before /l/ is not uncommon in AN languages.
10. Interestingly, Molima and Sengseng also share the device of an intercalated /n/ between a verb root ending in /-i/ and a third person singular objective pronoun i: S. i-ni *eat it*; vi-ni *hit it*; Mol. ai-ni-ya *ate it*, vai-ni-ya *married him/her*. Because this /n/ appears only in this context, I have not interpreted it either as the reappearance of an original final consonant or as a transitive marker (see Pawley 1973:128ff.).
11. cf. Bola of the north-coast Kimbe languages, with first person ga, second person go, third person ge future markers – Johnston 1980b:119.
12. I also occasionally found it difficult to hear /h/, and sometimes have been influenced in my decision by the presence of a corresponding but more audible sound (Karore /r/ in some words, Kaulong /k/ in others) in cognates from other languages.
13. These correspondences with Psohoh may explain a few odd forms in Sengseng Pidgin, such as morol for P. botol and mamkin for P. pamkin. They suggest that between Psohoh and Karore, a combination of nasal plus voiced stop lost the stop. Other Pidgin terms in Sengseng are pronounced with the initial nasal (e.g. a-mbin *bean*).
14. In general, \*ŋ is reflected in Sengseng as /ŋ/, but there are a few exceptions in which it appears as /n/ (see 4.1). In a number of Kaulong words /n/ appears for /ŋ/ in the languages east of Sengseng (e.g. Psohoh e-giŋ *bird*) and the /n/ may reflect borrowing from Kaulong. The final consonant remains a worry, however.
15. This word is risik in Karore. Here, as on the north coast of New Britain there seems to have existed a variant form of POC \*tasik with prenasalisation. See Johnston 1980b:113; Goodenough 1961b. Normally \*t is reflected as an alveolar stop or trill in Sengseng.
16. Blust (personal communication) suggests that, instead, the Sengseng form derived from PMP \*ŋipen. While this source cannot be ruled out, it would represent a deviation from the normal pattern of Sengseng reduction of proto-forms, which rarely results in Sengseng words ending in vowels unless these represent proto-final vowels. I would have expected S. ŋip or possibly ŋipo (if the final consonant was either dropped in POC or reanalysed in S. as the third person singular possessive suffix).
17. The hyphens separate the article from the noun except in sa-nuhum, where sa = *tree*.
18. Johnston translates the latter as *later today* (1980a:59). In this particular case, the fact that Lakalai consistently indicates future time in adverbs by using a prefix ga- may point to it (or a related language) as the source.

19. There is, however, some evidence that in relatively recent times the Tolai traded down to the Kandrian area in order to obtain shells for their type of money (see Chowning 1978a:200), so that the possibility of a little linguistic influence cannot be ruled out.
20. For my suggestions, based on several considerations, about the order in which the ancestors of various AN languages reached New Britain, see Chowning 1976b:379-380.
21. In the Massim, famous for tabus on the names of dead kin on the father's side (but in Woodlark, surprisingly, reported by Lithgow to be those of one's own clan - 1973:106), the effect varies from nil in Molima, where personal names form a special category, to noticeably influential in Me'udana on Normanby Island (Schlesier 1973:53), and in Wagawaga (Seligman 1910:629). See also Simons 1982:201-203.
22. It was reported in 1981 that the practice of giving penis names has dropped out in the longer-contacted villages.
23. Marriage in Sengseng and Kaulong lasts for eternity, a reason given for traditionally killing a widow when her husband died so that she could not remarry (see Chowning 1980:15-16).
24. Unless differences are specifically mentioned, it should be understood that everything I say about Sengseng custom applies to Kaulong as well.
25. The gulf between the single and the married is very marked in these societies (see Goodale 1980:136-137). It may be that some of the use of the 'married' forms is undertaken just to emphasise the gulf.
26. For this reason, I have not counted married forms on my lists, such as e-mon *bird*, though some of them would have raised the apparent AN content of the basic vocabulary.
27. Unless special payments are made, both sexes have to avoid the graves of certain affines, so men also need to know where the wife's parents and others are buried. A man who marries a kinswoman already has most of this knowledge. The tabus still hold for marriages between kin.
28. Adoption was common because of the large number of orphans resulting from the killing of widows; they might be adopted by the mother's kin after spending early life in the father's village.
29. This objection is particularly pertinent because of the peculiarities of Blust's PSM test list. First, it is culture-bound, as 'basic vocabulary' by definition should not be, because it includes referents to practices which are not universal in the region under consideration; see no.93, *to pound, beat - rice, prepared food*; no.68, *to sew (clothing)*; and no.69, *needle*; no.70, *to shoot (an arrow)*. (It also includes no.126, *lake*, though lakes do not occur in all environments.) The list also discriminates against many OC languages in which a single term is used for related concepts (e.g. *hit - kill, long - far, good - correct*) which are said to have been lexically distinguished "in an ancestral stage of their development" (Blust, personal communication). If the single form is not AN, it is scored as two minuses.
30. Although, as regards subgroupings of specific languages, we agree only on Lamogai, we are still both discussing the same languages.

31. I had been doubtful about attributing this form to direct inheritance in S., because the POC form I had seen was \*siŋa(R), probably reflected by the first two syllables of S. siŋanan *day* beside siŋaŋ *sun*.
32. Surprisingly, Johnston has overlooked a derivative of this root in the language he knows best: Lakalai reki *waters tabu to women*.
33. When I wrote that, I was mistaken in not attributing the vowel shifts in Arawe to umlauting, being unaware that the shapes of words for body parts that I collected were affected by the vowel in the suffixed first person singular possessive.
34. Johnston attributes a number of lexical items found in SWNB to the joining of AN and NAN roots.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BLUST, R.A.

- 1977 A rediscovered Austronesian comparative paradigm. *Oceanic Linguistics* 16/1:1-51.
- 1981a Variation on retention rate among Austronesian languages. Paper read at the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, Bali. Mimeo.
- 1981b Personal communication.

## CAPELL, A.

- 1971 The Austronesian languages of Australian New Guinea. In Sebeok, ed. 1971:240-340.

## CHOWNING, A.

- 1966 The languages of southwest New Britain. Paper read at the 11th Pacific Science Congress, Tokyo.
- 1969 The Austronesian languages of New Britain. *PL*, A-21:17-45.
- 1973 Milke's "New Guinea cluster": the evidence from northwest New Britain. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12:189-243.
- 1976b History of research in Austronesian languages: New Britain. In Wurm, ed. 1976:179-195.
- 1976b Austronesian languages: New Britain. In Wurm, ed. 1976:365-386.
- 1977 *An introduction to the peoples and cultures of Melanesia*. Second edition. California: Cummings.
- 1978a Changes in West New Britain trading systems in the twentieth century. In J. Specht and J.P. White, eds *Trade and exchange in Oceania and Australia*. University of Sydney Press.
- 1978b Comparative grammars of five New Britain languages. In Wurm and Carrington, eds 1978:1129-1157.

CHOWNING, A.

- 1980 Culture and biology among the Sengseng. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 89/1:7-31.
- 1983 Interaction between Pidgin and three West New Britain languages. In *Papers in pidgin and creole linguistics No.3*, 191-206. PL, A-65.

CLARK, R.

- 1979 Language. In J.D. Jennings, ed. *The prehistory of Polynesia*, 249-270. Canberra: ANU Press.

DYEN, I.

- 1965 *A lexicostatistical classification of the Austronesian languages*. *IJAL* Memoir 19.

FRANKLIN, K.J.

- 1977 The Kewa language in culture and society. In Wurm, ed. 1977:5-18.

FRAZER, J.G.

- 1922 *The Golden Bough*. Abridged edition. New York: Macmillan.

GOODALE, J.C.

- 1980 Gender, sexuality and marriage: a Kaulong model of nature and culture. In C. MacCormack and M. Strathern, eds *Nature, culture and gender*, 119-142. Cambridge University Press.

GOODENOUGH, W.H.

- 1961 The Willaumez languages of New Britain. Paper read at the 10th Pacific Science Congress, Honolulu. Mimeo.

GRACE, G.W.

- 1964 Movement of the Malayo-Polynesians 1500 B.C. to A.D. 500: the linguistic evidence. *Current Anthropology* 5:361-368.
- 1971 Languages of the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands. In Sebeok, ed. 1971:341-358.
- 1981 Indirect inheritance and aberrant Melanesian languages. In Hollyman and Pawley, eds 1981:255-268.

HOLLYMAN, J. and A. PAWLEY, eds

- 1981 *Studies in Pacific languages and cultures in honour of Bruce Biggs*, 255-268. Auckland: Linguistic Society of New Zealand.

JAMESON, R.D.

- 1956 Names. In Leach, ed. 1956:781-782.

JOHNSTON, R.L.

- 1980a *Nakanai of New Britain: the grammar of an Oceanic language*. PL, B-70.
- 1980b The languages and communities of the Kimbe Bay region. In Johnston ed. 1980:107-158.
- 1981 The quest for Proto-Southwest New Britain. Paper delivered at the 1981 annual congress of the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea.

JOHNSTON, R.L.

- 1983 The continuing quest for Proto-Southwest New Britain. Paper read at the 15th Pacific Science Congress, Dunedin.

JOHNSTON, R.L., ed.

- 1980 *Language, communication and development in New Britain*. Ukarumpa: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

KEESING, R.M. and J. FIFI'I

- 1969 Kwaio word tabooing in its cultural context. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 78/2:154-177.

LEACH, M., ed.

- 1956 *Standard dictionary of folklore, mythology and legend*. New York: Funk & Wagnall.

LINCOLN, P.

- 1978 Reef-Santa Cruz as Austronesian. In Wurm and Carrington, eds 1978:929-967.

- 1979 Proto-Oceanic cognate sets: a compilation. Computer printout.

LITHGOW, D.

- 1973 Language change on Woodlark. *Oceania* 44/2:101-108.

LOUKOTKA, C.

- 1957 Classification des langues papoues. *Lingua Posnaniensis* 6:19-83.

LYNCH, J.D.

- 1975 *Lenakel phonology*. *Working Papers in Linguistics, University of Hawaii* 7/1.

- 1981 Melanesian diversity and Polynesian homogeneity: the other side of the coin. *Oceanic Linguistics* 20/2:95-129.

METRAUX, A.

- 1956 Name tabu. In Leach, ed. 1956:782-783.

PAWLEY, A.

- 1973 Some problems in Proto-Oceanic grammar. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12:103-188.

- 1981 Melanesian diversity and Polynesian homogeneity: a unified explanation for language. In Hollyman and Pawley, eds 1981:269-309.

SCHLESIER, E.

- 1970 *Me'udana (Südost-Neuguinea)*, 1. Die soziale Struktur. Braunschweig: Albert Limbach.

SEBEOK, T.A., ed.

- 1971 *Current trends in linguistics*, vol.8: *Linguistics in Oceania*. The Hague: Mouton.

SELIGMAN, C.G.

- 1970 *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*. Cambridge University Press.

SIMONS, G.F.

- 1982 Word taboo and comparative Austronesian linguistics. In Amran Halim, Lois Carrington and S.A. Wurm, eds *Papers from the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, vol.3: *Accent on variety*, 157-226. PL, C-76.

THROOP, C. and L. THROOP

- 1980 The languages and communities of the Kandrian inland region. In Johnston, ed. 1980, 225-240.

TYLOR, E.

- 1870 *Researches into the early history of mankind*. Second edition. London: John Murray.

WURM, S.A.

- 1975 The East Papuan Phylum in general. In Wurm, ed. 1975:783-804.

WURM, S.A., ed.

- 1975 *New Guinea area languages and language study*, vol.1: *Papuan languages and the New Guinea linguistic scene*. PL, C-38.
- 1976 *New Guinea area languages and language study*, vol.2: *Austronesian languages*. PL, C-39.
- 1977 *New Guinea area languages and language study*, vol.3/1-2: *Language, culture, society, and the modern world*. PL, C-40.

WURM, S.A. and Lois Carrington, eds

- 1978 *Second International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics: proceedings*. PL, C-61.