

PIDGINS, CREOLES AND POST-CONTACT ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PETER MÜHLHÄUSLER

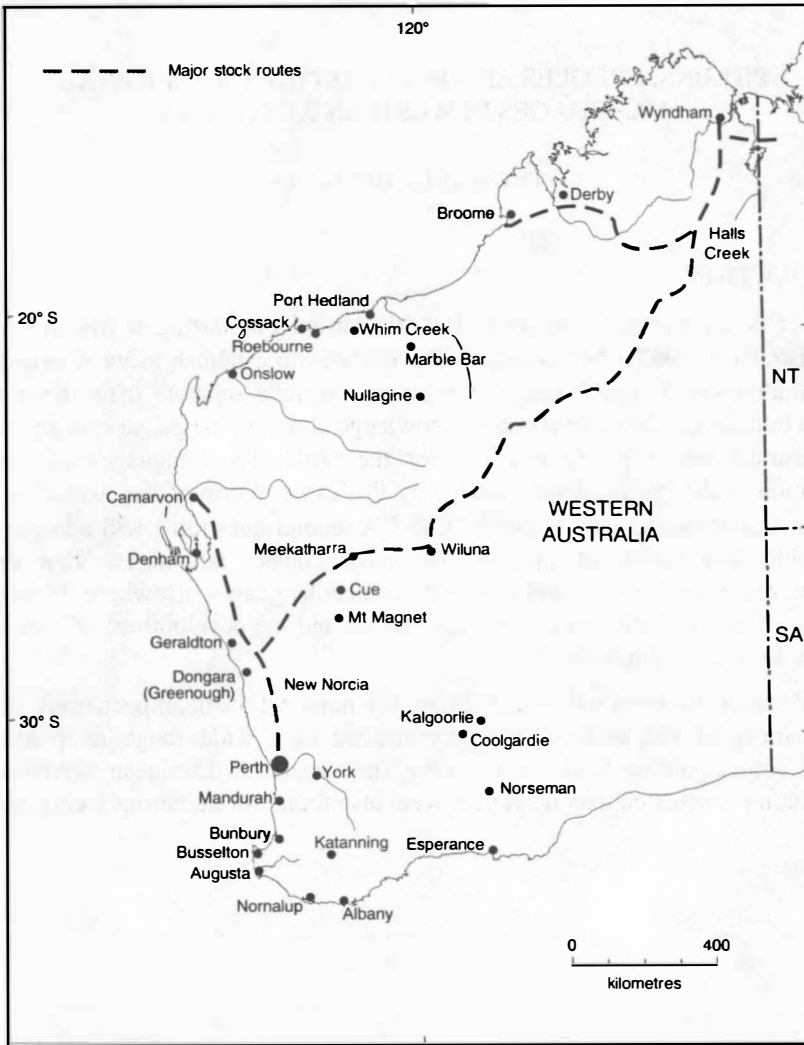
1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a preliminary account of work carried out during a two-month visit to Western Australia in 1987.¹ My principal aim has been to establish to what extent one can speak of a tradition of Pidgin English in Western Australia separate from the much better documented tradition in the eastern states. Knowledge about the language contact situation in Western Australia was urgently required for the 'Atlas for Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific Area' initiated by Professor Wurm of the Australian National University in Canberra and the author in 1985.² A second question I will address concerns the geographic distribution of pidgins and other contact languages, their centres of development, routes of diffusion and links with contact languages elsewhere. Finally, I have attempted to address wider issues of language contact and the development of non-traditional languages in this part of Australia.

My initial search has been successful beyond my most optimistic expectations. A Western Australian variety of Pidgin English is documented in a wide range of published and unpublished sources-dating back to the very first years of European colonisation and materials relating to other contact languages were also found for numerous locations.

¹ I am grateful to the University of Western Australia for a two-months' visiting fellowship that enabled me to carry out my research. This paper would not have been possible without the generous help of this institution and the encouragement I had from my colleagues at the Department of Anthropology during my stay, in particular Dr Susan Kaldor and Mr Alan Dench. A considerable proportion of the archival work for this paper was carried out by my wife Jackie and several of my students at the University of Western Australia, in particular Caroline Blumer, Patricia Downs and Terese Carr. Valuable advice was also given by Dr Sylvia Hallam, Department of Prehistory and Dr Veronica Brady, Department of English.

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MAP 1: WESTERN AUSTRALIA WITH THE PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENTS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT AND MAJOR STOCK ROUTES

Whilst I have attempted to cover a fairly wide area I shall have relatively little to say about contact languages north of the 20° degree latitude, the area commonly known as the Kimberley. The reasons for this omission include:

- a. Komei Hosokawa of the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, has worked on the complex language contact situation in the multilingual pearling industry of Broome and has compiled a preliminary account of it (Hosokawa 1986).
- b. The Kimberley, unlike most other areas of Western Australia, was settled from the east by cattle farming pastoralists from Queensland and the Northern Territory and their employees. This created a particularly complex linguistic situation which remains to be sorted out.

c. A number of detailed studies of Kriol structure and use in this area are available (e.g. Hudson 1983, 1984; Thies 1987 and Sandefur 1986).³ My present paper concentrates on materials that have not so far come to the attention of linguists rather than better known ones.

I have illustrated my arguments with extensive text samples. Whilst these will affect the length of this paper it seemed essential to include them as most of them are either archival or published in obscure and inaccessible sources and have not been listed in available bibliographies for pidgin languages in Australia such as Reinecke et al. (1975) or Sandefur (1983).

2. SOCIO-HISTORICAL SETTING

Western Australia was first settled in 1827 by white colonists from England (rather than from New South Wales⁴ as was the case with Queensland, Victoria and South Australia). In contrast to other Australian colonies convicts were not involved in the first years of colonisation. The southern part of the colony was occupied gradually between 1829 and around 1870 from the Perth/Fremantle area. The settlement of the north is more complex in that it involved both overlanders from the south-west and contacts from Queensland and the Northern Territory. Further complexity is due to contacts with additional groups of immigrants in the wake of the discovery of pearls and gold from around 1860. Thus, whilst in the agricultural south-east up to about 1870 intercommunication between English speakers and Aborigines developed in a gradual manner, later developments further North typically involved many groups (Aborigines, Europeans, Chinese, Malay, Japanese as well as immigrants from the Eastern states) and were often of a more abrupt and temporary nature. The hope of finding a single continuous tradition of Western Australian Pidgin English thus seems hardly justified by the socio-historical context of language contacts.

The prominent place that I have given to Pidgin English is motivated not by my research question (which was aimed at contact languages in Western Australia in general) but by the fact that other forms of intercommunication became very much marginalised as the public and private importance of English grew. Labels such as Neo-Nyungar (cf. Douglas 1968) like Hall's 'Neomelanesian' and 'Neosolomonic' (1966), conceal the fact that one is dealing with forms of speech that are lexically and otherwise very heavily influenced by English. Aboriginal *lingue franche*, such as Walmajari and Pitjantjajara are mainly found in the economically and demographically more marginal desert areas. The study of other Aboriginal settlement languages is at present in its infancy and many of the solutions for interlinguistic communication in urban areas and mission stations have remained undocumented. In this paper I can do little more than emphasise the urgent need for research on this question. It is for want of documentation that the bulk of my paper is concerned with languages used

³ The importance of Kriol, unlike that of some of the languages discussed in this paper, has increased greatly in recent years in the context of the National Language Debate in Australia and the study of language and identity in Aboriginal communities (e.g. as discussed by Berndt 1986). This paper merely provides some of the socio-historical background which might help to clarify a number of issues in this debate.

⁴ The very early settlements, particularly around King George Sound in the southwest, were originally founded by government forces, as shall be pointed out below. However, throughout most of the period discussed in this paper, internal migration from the Eastern states was a much less important factor than direct settlement from overseas and internal migration within Western Australia.

between Europeans and members of other races. As regards its organisation, it is fortunate that geographical expansion and linguistic diffusion in Western Australia was such that the linguistic contact between settlers and Aborigines which began in the south-west was repeated over and over again as areas further north were opened up. It is for this reason that geography can be used as an organising principle. The exceptions are scattered and mobile groups such as the Chinese and Afghans who will be dealt with separately.

3. EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH WEST

G.F. Moore who arrived in Western Australia in 1830 characterised the initial communication problems in the following way:

There are few situations more unpleasant than when two individuals are suddenly and unexpectedly brought into collision, neither of whom is acquainted with one word of the language of the other. Amongst civilised people so situated, there are certain conventional forms of gesture or expression which are generally understood and received as indications of amity. But when it happens that one of the individuals is in a state of mere savage nature, knowing nothing of the habits and usages of civilised life, and perhaps never having even heard of any other people than his own, the situation of both becomes critical and embarrassing. It was in this predicament that the early settlers of Western Australia found themselves, on their first taking possession of their lands in that colony. The aborigines, suspicious of treachery even amongst themselves, and naturally jealous of the intrusion of strangers, viewed with astonishment and alarm the arrival of persons differing in colour and appearance from anything they had hitherto seen. Ignorant alike of the nature, the power, and the intentions of this new people, and possessed of some vague idea of their being spirits, or reappearances of the dead, the natives were restrained, probably by superstitious awe alone, from attempting to repel the colonists at once by direct and open hostility. On the part of the settlers generally, there existed the most friendly disposition toward the aborigines, which was evinced on every suitable opportunity, by the offer of bread, accompanied by the imitation of eating, with an assurance that it was "very good". And thus this term, "very good," was almost the first English phrase used, and became the name by which bread was, for a long time, generally known amongst the natives of Western Australia.

(Moore 1884: iv of appendix)

A more detailed account of the patterns of the very early contacts between Aborigines and Europeans is given by Reece and Stannage, eds 1984. This publication is notable for its attempt to complement the numerous European biased accounts with Aboriginal interpretations, something that is also done by Reynolds (1981) and Dutton (1982) for other parts of Australia and the Pacific. Characteristic of these early encounters is the misunderstanding, on both sides, of the cultural rather than natural basis of many forms of non-verbal behaviour. For example, it is not clear why there should be a natural base to green branches as a symbol of peaceful intentions and the failure to get the message across in the following example (Stirling 1833:217) should not come as a surprise:

After taking a little refreshment, we commenced our journey again, and in a little time met with a small party of natives; these are the first I have seen on this excursion. We got a green branch, (which is the emblem of peace) shouted, and made many signs, but all was unavailing; poor Mungo, I venture to say, was never in such a predicament in his life before; he shouted, and appeared to boil with rage, showed his spear and throwing stick, but when he found that all his bravado did not deter us, but that we still kept advancing, his courage forsook

him, and the whole party took to their heels, and away they ran, hooting and muttering, yet apparently terrified beyond measure; and no wonder, for I suppose they had never seen an European before, much less a horse, with a man thereon. As they worship the sun, and probably other celestial bodies, they might think "the Gods had come down." Very little good land this afternoon. Saw thirty kangaroos to-day.

The successful establishment of contact in the next example, again involving Stirling (reported in Uren 1948:32) does not appear to be directly related to the use of natural sign language:

The rule I had laid down for my guidance in all communications with these people was neither to seek nor avoid an interview. I adopted this plan as the one best calculated to prevent hostilities, for to approach a savage or to retire before him, I am persuaded, would both produce the same result: in the one case leading him from fear to strike the first blow and in the other tempting him to make conquest of enemies who, by retreating, exhibit symptoms of weakness and fear. It was with this view that I resolved in the present case to let our new acquaintances seek or shun us as they best pleased. At first they displayed great reserve but as we made no attempt to approach them, the warriors followed us along the bank, the women and children retiring out of sight. The woods now resounded with their shouts to which replied our bugle with equal loudness and with more than equal melody. At this point, appearances wore a threatening aspect, for the natives seemed much enraged and I judged from their violent gestures and the great noise they made that we should shortly have a shower of spears. The river was here only sixty yards across and as they had the advantage of a bank twenty feet high, our situation put us much within reach of annoyance.

We, however, pursued our course until the bank became nearly level with the water, by which time they had assumed more confidence and began to mimic our various expressions of 'How do you do' and at last we held up a swan, which seemed to assure them, and having cast it to them, they testified the greatest delight at the present. This led to an interview which proceeded upon amicable terms. We gave them various articles of dress, a Corporal's jacket and three swans and received in return all the spears and woomeras. At length we were forced to tear ourselves away and they retired astonished at their acquisitions, intimating that they would willingly accompany the boats, but that a creek a short distance further up prevented their doing so. (Uren 1948:32)

I shall now leave such accounts of non-verbal communication alone and turn to the main topic of this paper, namely the development of verbal forms of intercommunication. Of the many solutions to the communication problem identified by Moore (1884), such as bilingualism, use of interpreters, and development of a pidgin, it is the last one that appears to have overtaken all others within a very short time. In fact, as early as February 1833 Moore provides us with examples of an English-based jargon or incipient pidgin in use around Albany. The following quotation (Moore 1884:163-164) serves as an illustration:

On this day (Sunday) many of the natives came into the barrack during divine service, of whom some remained all the time, and conducted themselves with great decorum. On Monday they were drawn up in line, and addressed in the following speech by Mr. Morley, the storekeeper, while we all looked most ludicrously grave.

Now now twonk, Gubbernor wonka me wonka
Now attend, the Governor desires me to tell the

black fellow, black fellow pear
black man if the the black man spear

white man white men poot.
the white man the white men will shoot them.

Black fellow queeple no good.
If a black man steal it is not good.

Black fellow pear black fellow no good.
If a black man spear a black man it is not good.

Black fellow plenty shake hand black fellow,
If the black man be friendly with the black man,

no black fellow no queeple, black fellow
if the black man do not steal, if the black man

give him white man wallabees, wood come here,
give the white man wallabees, bring wood,

water come here, white man plenty shake hand
and bring water, white man will befriend

black man, plenty give it him bicket,
the black man, and give him plenty of biscuits,

plenty ehtah, plenty blanket, arrack,
plenty to eat, and give him blankets, rice,

tomahawk. Now now Gubbernor wonka me give it
tomahawk. Now the Governor desires me to give

him one guy black fellow one guy knaif.
each black man one knife.

A knife was then suspended by a riband round the neck of each; thus ended the ceremony, and they were dismissed, a set of wealthy and happy mortals.

Examples of a similar type of language are found in several other sources relating to the first decade of colonisation. The following example comes from Dr A. Collie's *Anecdotes and remarks relative to the Aborigines at King George's Sound, Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* (July/August 1834):

Nakina raised himself to an erect position and instantly demanded, with the utmost earnestness, "'pear, 'pear,'" (give me spears, give me spears,) to which not immediately understanding we replied "Yes, what for?" "Me 'pear black fellow, plenty 'pear". We now as speedily not only withdrew our assent, but insisted it was very wrong to spear persons of a neighbouring tribe, because one of his own had died. He seemed little influenced by our reasoning and remonstrance, and said "Commandant 'pear?" (will the Commandant give me spears?) to which we also gave the negative, and continued our solicitations, promises and remonstrations to induce the abstaining from so barbarous a custom; all, however, we could obtain was, "me boo-matt tittel". (I will go into the bush a little way) "King George come". (And then come back to King George's Sound.) To our further questions, he said he was not going to spear any of the Will tribe, and that they were now "good fellows".

In the same anecdotes (by Collie 1834) several other passages of this early contact jargon are given, suggesting that Albany, which was settled from New South Wales, was perhaps the earliest focus for the development of PE in Western Australia. (Compare also Green 1983). Other such passages are the following.

The dark motives of my swarthy friends were unblushingly exposed, immediately the little boy turned to go to the house where he lived, "bicket" "Me

wangker (tell), Charlie Brown; top” (stop.) “Kai (yes), me wangker plenty;” “me very good.” This concise and urgent appeal made laughing, shewed me at once that the hypocritical heartless rascals, for whose sense and humanity their advice had raised my temporary estimation were jesting with the sufferings of the poor boy.

and

The answer that had been given to our inquiries - when Talmamund would come back?” “where he was?” (by and bye come mat tittle) - i.e., he had only gone a little way into the interior and would be back by and bye, was no longer repeated.

and

Several natives were about the Settlement, and two, in open day, before the old man’s face, walked off with his two remaining wives, to his irretrievable loss, and, therefore, inconsolable wailing that was poured forth, and unavailing, although repeated, koo-ees (come back!) “Tannaké, koo-ee; Koondeetshee, koo-ee; Tannaké, koo-ee” (Tannaké and Koondeetshee, the names of the two women.) (Collie, *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 1834)

Similarly extensive examples, again relating to the King George’s Sound or Albany region are found in George Grey’s (Governor of South Australia’s) Journals for the years 1837-9 (Grey 1841). An interesting utterance containing the Nyungar negator utterance-finally is reported for his aboriginal companion Kyber (1841: 365)

“Come in, come in; Mr. Grey sulky yu-a-da”

“Come here, come here. Mr. Grey is not angry with you.”

A couple of other features of this early contact jargon, sentence final verbs and the emergence of em/um as a marker of transitive verbs, are in evidence in the following request (p.245) “Poor fellow, sixpence give it ‘um”.

As settlements were established further away from Perth, the early Nyungar-English contact jargon was either transplanted or reinvented.

At Australind in 1843, the Reverend Wollaston (1948:151), whilst deploring the lack of English and the inadequacies of Nyungar, nevertheless gives an example of an emerging English-based pidgin:

But there is no place for me to officiate in of the most ordinary kind, even were my offer accepted and I do not think it would answer any good purpose to preach under a tree. To the heathen, could they be made to understand me, I would not mind doing so, but they must first be taught the English language, for theirs is quite an unmanageable tongue, consisting chiefly of barbarous guttural sounds, incapable of being reduced to any rules of grammar. They now and then come peering into my little Church, with soft steps and grave inquisitive looks. Poor creatures! May God lift the veil from their eyes and when He does so, teach them to avoid their white brothers’ bad example. Their name for a house is “mire” (mia)⁵ therefore they call my Church “white man’s Sunday mire.” (Wollaston 1948:151)

To the east of Perth, at York, a more sophisticated version of the jargon, containing a number of grammatical conventions, is reported for the mid 1860s (Millet 1872:83-84):

⁵ It is not clear to me, whether *mia* is a Western Australian word or whether it originates in Queensland.

I took some pains to learn the native vocabulary, and was much interested at finding that the word “me-ul,” signifying “an eye”, which figures in the little list of words written down by Captain Cook from the lips of the savages that he met in New South Wales, was used in the same sense by our friends of Western Australia. I did not, however, attain to much proficiency in the study, and beyond an ostentatious display to Khourabene of any new word or phrase which I had picked up, was obliged to content myself with the conventional jargon which is universally adopted in speaking to the natives by all who are not really conversant with their language. This sort of hotch-potch is composed of native words largely mingled with English, and is better understood by the natives than plain English; it consists also in getting rid of all prepositions, driving the verbs to the end of the sentence, and tacking on to them the syllable “um” as an ornamental finish wherever it sounds euphonious. Thus I heard Khourabene calling out one day, “Dog hollarum, water wantum”; implying that he thought our house-dog was whining with thirst. A large quantity of anything is expressed by the words “bigfellow”, as “big-fellow-rain”, “big-fellow fond of”, but in showing pity or condolence “poor old fellow” is the received form, and is of such universal application that it is quite as suitable to a baby cutting its teeth, as to the moon suffering from eclipse, a misfortune which is laid at Jingy’s door, who is supposed to have put out the light maliciously by carrying off the moon’s fat. “Quiet fellow” and “sulky fellow” have an almost equally wide range, the first signifying any conceivable degree of amiability, either in man or beast, and the latter ferocity to a like extent. The words “get down” have been chosen as a synonym of the verb “to be” and the first question of a friendly native would be “Mamman all right get down?” meaning “is father quite well?” for strange to say Mamman is the native word for “father” whilst N-angan or Oongan stands for “mother.” (Millett 1872:83–84)

By the early 1870s the first anonymous (probably J.E. Hammond) and undated collection of phrases in the contact jargon had been compiled, featuring, among other things, the speech of Aboriginals from Pinjarrah and Bunbury. Because of the considerable historical importance of this document I shall reproduce it in full (spelling unmodified):

Some of the ways the natives comenced to use the white man’s language when asking for anything in the early sixties. Letters of the alphabet the natives did sound correctly and was used in native names

b e g i j k m n p q r y

native asking for Bread.

hungry Pullar me you givutum me bread

asking for tobaco

you good Pullar me wantum Backer you gattum Pipe

asking for tea and sugar

you givutum me tea little bit, chugar little bit, big Pullar tuesday Pullar me

asking for fat Pork.

you gettum Pig meat Pat Pullar. me big Pullar likum Pig meat. big Pullar good one.

The natives were very fond of fat Pork

asking a white woman for a dress and pettycoat

misey you givutum me good one dis and inside one

Black man asking how white man make tobaco

Black man: Which way makum backer white pullar

white man: dont make it. It comes from another far away Country.

Black man. White Pullar come on nother one Country Par away. Must be makum first time come on.

Meaning the white man must have made tobacco before he came to this country

Natives ask

What por white Pullar Eatum Ghalt (salt)

Dat one no good say the natives

A native women asking Mrs Dr Bedingfield of Pinjarrah for some washing

Misey me washum you

What for you wash me asked Mrs Bedingfield me not washum you. washum me you des Ebery ting good one.

In the early seventies a Bunbury native meet the then Sir John Forrest in Hay Street and said to him g'day Mr Forrest you got old suite atrouses you givum me. My trouses to big for you belly said Sir John. no to big sleep inum me kold Pullar night time

A black woman was helping a Mrs Cooper with some washing. this black women had two children with her one about 3 years of age the other about 6 months the Elder one was crying very much and trying the patience of his mother at last the mother shouted out to the child What por you noise makum dis one while woman you shamed ought to be you quite pullar be. The little chap had not learnt his own language let alone the broken English.

native to white man mises

me catchetum you Pish (fish) first time you givitum me Backer

If he caught some fish first would he give him some tobacco

A native asked Mr Hymes school master Pinjarrah

What por boy gal learnum paper talk. The School master. Alsame you stick wangi native. No alsame stick wongi. Boy gal cant catchum that one (meaning that boys and girls could not understand the letter stick)

Back in the sixties at Pinjarrah a native women was very popular among some of the white women who had been trying to teach her something about god and heaven that she must not steal or tell quillyarn (lies) if she did that god would punish her if she told quillyarn. One day this Black woman made a statement about some figs. The truth of which was doubted by one of these white women and she questioned the Black woman very closely to try and get the truth. At last the Black woman looked up into the heavens opened her eyes as wide as she could stretch them and putting hands up at the same time said god can see. This ended the cross questioning. The white woman had made a good impression.

Further north in the Nyungar speaking area, at Nova Norcia,⁶ similar varieties of reduced English were also in use, though the grammatical regularities reported by Hasluck (originally written in the 1860s) are not typical of the entire Nyungar territory:

These natives were quite gerious at first, explaining how they had heard that 'Big Guvna' was passing that way, and how they had come from far, just to look at him.

⁶ New Norcia was founded by Bishop Salvado and Spanish and Italian monks as a mission, seminary and boarding school for Aborigines. The lingua franca in this place appears to have been a reduced form of Italian. samples of which are given in the Salvado Memoirs (Stormon 1977). A fuller investigation of this 'pidgin' would require work in the mission archives at New Norcia.

They were not dreaming of begging, and looked sleek and fat, with lots of furs and blankets. One of the gentlemen put some finely scented chopped tobacco into the hand of a man who was only looking on, not talking. He sniffed it, found it different to the strong coarse stuff he knew, and hastily returned it, shaking his head and smiling, as much as to say, 'That's a good joke, but you don't take me in!' So the other gentleman hastened to explain that it was 'Guvna's baccy' and all right. Then they sniffed it again and finally decided to venture on it, amid much low laughter. 'We keep-um, nothing bad'; 'um' has to be added to nearly every word, and 'nothing' is the only negative they understand; 'nothing bad' means 'not bad'. (Hasluck 1963:68)

In the days of the early settlement, communication between white and black children was the norm and this again was an important context for the development of the contact jargon. In his "Reminiscences of Perth" (Shenton 1927:8) remembers: "In the days of my boyhood, the natives used to talk a bit of English and most of us boys used to talk a little bit of their lingo."

Fred H. Moore, son of the above quoted Samuel Moore, who was born at Oakover, Middle Swan, in 1839, reports similar experiences:

There used to be numbers of natives camped about Oakover in those days, and I remember a native chief, Moylie Dobbin, whom I knew very well, giving me a great start one cold, wet day. I found him warming himself by the fire under the laundry copper at Oakover and one of his eyes was injured. I asked him what was the meaning of it and he said: "Me mindick (sick): blackfellow (s)pear him. Plenty rain and cold". (Here he made gestures that it was all cloudy and pointed to his eye. "Bimeby plenty sun and (pointing to his eyes) all same, all same". He meant that his sight was clouded now but it would get better. (Moore 1931:65-66).

and

On another occasion I said to this native: "Why are you a little man (he was slightly built) and you a very big chief?" He replied: "You know so and so (naming a chief); he big fellow like that (holding up his forefinger). Blackfellow (s)pear him (knocking down the forefinger with his other forefinger). He dead. You know so and so. He fat fellow (holding up his middle finger). Blackfellow (s)pear him. He dead (knocking down finger). Moylie Dobbin all same (holding up little finger). No can (s)pear him (illustrating the spears missing the little finger). All same Moylie". Nevertheless Moylie had two spear wounds on his body. (Moore 1931:65-66)

Most of the data surveyed so far relate to communication between European settlers and Nyungar speaking Aborigines. However, we have indications that the contact jargon was also used for inter-Aboriginal communication. Perhaps the earliest place for the crystallisation of an Aboriginal Pidgin English in the south-west was Rottneest Island, which was used as a prison island for Aboriginal prisoners from the 1830s onward. I have not yet studied all documents relating to Rottneest but it seems that a fairly sophisticated version of Pidgin English was spoken there by around 1860. Lady Broome, wife of the governor of Western Australia, reports the following impressions of one of her numerous visits to the island:

Even after they are shut up in their prison at night in cells, which are a thousand times more comfortable than their *Mia-mias*, or huts, the warders do not prevent their singing, and talking, and laughing; and if they keep up the noise too long, a good-humoured "Come, come, boys; too much noise make-um" from the superintendent is enough to restore quiet and peace directly.

The natives are seldom actually lazy, though they cannot be said to like hard work; but the light tasks to which they are put generally interest and amuse them,

and they behave perfectly well. Your father goes out quite alone after his ducks of an evening, with a couple of murderers as retrievers, and it is very amusing to hear their conversations. One man, Peter by name, is going out of prison next month, and is very fond of telling us what he would 'Give Guvna eat-um', if he came to see him up in his own country. 'Wild turkey give-um, fish p'raps; very good lizard, plenty worms' (I forget the unpronounceable name he has for this delicacy), 'show Guvna how kangaroo spearum', and so forth. Peter's little mistake consisted in spearing a woman who was wrangling with his wife. He declares he only meant to spear her leg (a spear in the leg is considered the gentlest possible hint that your company is not desired just then); but 'wife knock up hand, spear go so, hit woman throat; she very sick-die. Peter nothing bad fellow, woman bad fellow, come wife talk-um.' That is his idea of the affair; but I think he has learned over here not to be quite so ready with his spear.

(Hasluck, Broome and Broome 1963:111)

Lady Broome also encouraged the prison superintendent of Rottnest Island, W.H. Timperley, to write down his experiences with Aborigines. Carr (1987) makes several observations on Timperley's rendering of Pidgin English in *Harry Treverton his tramps and troubles* (edited by Lady Broome) (1889) (and *Bush Luck an Australian story* (1892)):

One chapter of *Harry Treverton* (set in the 1860s) retells a shingle-splitters yarn told at the splitters camp about the capture of a native wanted for spearing (possibly located in the York area i.e. 25 miles from Perth near the Travellers Rest). The policeman has a warrant for the arrest of a 'black fellow' named Bob for spearing a woman

"Well, you bet, he felt a bit uncomfortable, for he says to the policeman, trying to grin, but looking rather cautious all the time, 'You Think-um white fellow hang-um mine?' 'Only one time hang-um you' says the policeman, 'and then let-um you go'."

(Timperley, edited by Broome 1889:90)

Mrs Millett is not the only observer who felt that *-um* was added indiscriminately. Although Timperley did not go so far as she. In a footnote to the passage above Timperley informs the reader that "The natives of Western Australia add *-um* to the verb", although this is contrary to some of his examples with intransitive verbs. Later in the yarn Bob has escaped and eludes the police:

'Policeman fool too much', Bob would say; 'walk-about, walk-about, can't catch-um mine. My word, horse very near kill-um; too much tired. Policeman near dead; too much walk-about walk-about. Nothing catch-um Bob; nebber catch-um mine, policeman fool too much.'

(1889:92)

Somerville gives an example of how the Rottnest prison system helped the diffusion of Aboriginal Pidgin English to more remote areas, in this instance to Geraldton to the north around 1870:

So the prisoner set off cheerfully, carrying his own commitment to gaol for 12 months, to the constable at Geraldton. Six months afterwards the J.P. was in the district again and to his astonishment was accosted by the culprit with the cheerful air of one who has participated in a joint enterprise and expected commendation for the part he had played therein. On being asked sternly if he had delivered the message to the constable at Geraldton he replied "Oh yes, boss, I take paper talk. I walk, walk, get very tired, meet my uncle and gib him paper talk, take constable." As soon as possible the uncle, a prisoner by proxy, was retrieved from Rottnest and brought home to fame among his fellow tribesmen as a traveller returned, who could tell of strange men and places he had seen on his travels.

(Somerville 1949:75)

That prisoners at Rottneest came from areas much further north is reported in several sources, for instance in Johnston (1962:175) where reference is made to a native policeman of the name Monday. "The sergeant stated that Monday was thoroughly civilised, as he had served a term at Rottneest Island for cattle stealing".

The importance of diffusion from the south to Geraldton and far beyond can hardly be overestimated, as the fate of Pidgin English in the south itself was sealed by the turn of the century. Hammond (1933:13) describes these changes as follows:

In the 'eighties and 'nineties there were several white people who could speak the South-West language well, and could converse with the natives; but the only difficulty was that these people only knew the natives who came and camped near the towns or came to the doors of their homes. It was necessary to know something of the whole country in which they lived. The natives, too, were changing. They were beginning to drop their own tongue. They thought they would place themselves in a better position with the white man if they learned to speak his language. They were great imitators, and once they found there was a difference between their ways and the ways of the whites, they began to try to copy the white man. The-half-castes and the blacks coming in from other territories also did much to destroy the true dialect. The blacks forgot or became disinclined to talk about their ceremonies. (Hammond 1993)

Examples of Nyungars employing Pidgin English become rarer as time goes on in the literature surveyed and those that are reported tend to portray Aborigines in the role of marginal onlookers rather than active participants in intercultural encounters. Two examples from the satirical magazine *Possum* illustrate this:

The Possum, Sat October 22, 1887

Two niggers appeared on the training ground one morning and appeared to be deeply interested in the gallops. At last when Duration and Telephone had finished their spin - one of the darkies said "Well which horse winum race t'morning Boss?" and even Towton couldn't tell.

(a) The Possum Oct 15, 1887

CONVERSION OF AN OLD CONSERVATIVE - An aboriginal native who gave evidence as a witness in the Supreme Court received a certain allowance therefor which was denied to his "womanny," who had attended, but had not been called, expressed his indignation with charming volubility, winding up, "Pom my word, me tink pretty near time we hab "Sponable Guvmet!"

One of the immediate consequences of these social changes was the functional spread of pidginised versions of English into many areas of Aboriginal life and the gradual replacement of a Nyungar-Pidgin English bilingualism by a Pidgin English-English one. How these changes are reflected in language can be seen from a passage quoted by Hammond (1933:13):

Some years ago I was talking to an old man of the North tribe about things in general. I asked him how old he was. He said that he was sixty-seven. He had learned to count and read and write at New Norcia. I then asked him several questions in the native language. "Oh, I don't know," he said. "I forget all black-fellow language now." asked him if he would like to talk his own language again. "No," he answered. "It would be no good to me now. I do all my business with the white fellow and have to talk with him in white-fellow talk. Plenty other-country blackfellow here now. All talk different. This-country blackfellow can't talk to them. Better we talk whitefellow talk. We have to wear the same clothes, eat the same food. We are now all the same white men."

Douglas (1968) seems to suggest that a diglossic situation continues in some parts of South Western Australia. The two varieties involved are the (low) Neo-Nyungar "a combination of elements from the native dialects and English" (pp.8,9) and Wetjala "normal Australian English of the country farmer and townsfolk". The following example of Neo-Nyungar (from Douglas 1968:17) shows that in many ways this form of language is very different from the earlier samples of English Nyungar Pidgin English:

PHONETIC TEXT WITH LITERAL TRANSLATION

hə'ləʊ 'ɾɔ̃n / 'nɔŋəs stɪl: 'fʌn 'iɣə /
Hello Ronnie. Nyungas still funny 'ere.

ɔl ɔ̃n ðə 'nə:lɔŋ ɣə nɔʊ ən stɪl:
all on the 'wine' you know an' still

ækn ðə ɡəʊt / ɣələftɪ kəm n
actin' the goat. you'll 'ave to come 'n

'pʊtəm st-- (laugh) / ɔ̃ 'diə t'ʊ.
put 'em st(raight). Oh dear, too

'fʌn / wɪ mɪs ɣu / θɪŋz mə't ɡəʊ 'dɪfrɛnt
funny, we miss you. Things might go different

wɪ'ðəʊ 'wɪðɣu 'iɣə / 'nə:lɔŋ ɪz ðə
withou- with you 'ere. Wine is the

'prɒblm 'ɣə bɔɪz / 'nɔŋəs t'u 'fʌn /
problem 'ere boys. Nyungas too funny

kə't 'wəɾə 'pɪpəl 'iɣə //
'silly in the head' people 'ere.

FREE TRANSLATION

Hullo, Ronnie! The native people here are still unChristian in their ways. They are all given to wine-drinking, you know, and still acting foolishly. You will have to come and put them right. (Laugh - 'What a thought!'). Oh dear, too bad, we miss you. Things may have been different had you been here. Wine is the problem here, boys. The people are too wicked, they are people who are silly in the head.

Before leaving the topic of Pidgin English in the South-west I should briefly mention that, in the eastern parts of Western Australia, there appears to have been significant influence from another Pidgin English tradition brought from South Australia via the Transcontinental Railway and by goldseekers flocking to Kalgoorlie in the 1890s. Numerous linguistic examples are given in Bolam's *Trans-Australian Wonderland* (1929). Finally, mention must be made of several other contacts with pidgin languages spoken elsewhere. From the very early days, American whalers visited Western Australia and South Seas Jargon may well

have influenced local developments.⁷ Chinese labourers and some Afghan camel drivers were brought to Western Australia from the 1860s onwards (see §5. and §6. below) and there were also considerable economic, demographic and cultural ties with the eastern states. As with other pidgins, Western Australian varieties did not develop in splendid isolation even in the early days.

4. DEVELOPMENTS FURTHER NORTH: OVERLANDERS, PEARLERS AND GOLDDIGGERS

The development of the north-west of Australia centred around three industries: a) the pastoral industry, b) pearling and c) its minerals. Each of them created new *raison d'être* for language contact and contact languages. From the point of view of linguistic continuity, the pastoral industry seems to be the most important one. Large parts of Western Australia, particularly the Pilbar(r)a, were settled from the south and the first settlers brought with them Aborigines who had worked with them previously and could now serve as linguistic models for the locally recruited labour force. The pattern of detribalisation and decline of the indigenous population that had accelerated in the South became equally characteristic of the North, the principal difference being the lower population density and greater distances.

The closest links with the South existed for centres such as Geraldton and Carnarvon that were connected with the South by Stock Routes and later by roads. Carnarvon, about 600 km north of Perth, was founded in the early 1880s as a harbour for the import and export of commodities pertaining to the pastoral industry. The establishment of the town created several new opportunities for close contact between Aborigines and Settlers, including the employment of around 20-30 native prisoners at any one time in road and construction work, the setting up of a small Chinese settlement comprising shops, laundries and similar service-oriented businesses and, finally, missionisation.

As yet, I have found few examples of Pidgin English as spoken around Carnarvon. However, what little evidence there is suggests interesting linguistic similarities with southern varieties. Thus, Memory (1967:75) reports the following account of the early days of the mission:

...remember one day a poor, old dirty native came up to the door of our house and showed her bare neck. Upon our asking what she meant, she said 'Me wantem dressey', and when my wife gave her an article of clothing, she jumped with delight and shouted, 'You wobbinger Mission fella. You Me Sister', she threw her arms round my wife's neck and kissed her. On another occasion, a poor native came and flung herself down at our door and said, 'Me Mendie' and placed her hand on her chest. I understood that she was in pain there; so I gave her a little medicine and kept her warm for the night; and in the morning she was better and able to go on her march into - the bush; There was one man who hung about the place for some time. I could not get him to do anything. All he would do was to eat and keep close to an old umbrella that was hanging up. At last I found out that he wanted this gamp; and on my presenting it he departed, carrying it over his shoulders, to his own delight and the envy of other natives that passed him on the road. But I think the climax was reached when a fine, tall

⁷ Another possible contact point with the outside world is Australind, founded in the 1830s to promote trade between the British Indies and Western Australia. However, as this enterprise collapsed after a very brief period, no lasting influence on the language situation there can be expected (for details see Wollaston 1948).

fellow came up to our house in a perfect state of nudity, excepting for a collar round his neck and a hat upon his head, which I had given him, and saying to me - as he pointed to himself - 'My eye, fine fella'. Nothing pleases these poor blacks so much as to get European dress.

There is a one good trait in their character, their fondness for their pickaninnies. It was rumoured amongst the natives that I was to take their children from them and I have seen the mothers flying up sandhills with children under each arm, to get away from me. At last they would come to me and say, 'You nothing take altogether my pickaninnies'; and I told them, 'Me nothing take altogether your pickaninnies' and now they are satisfied. (Memory 1967:75)

More extensive texts are available for later years, in particular the 1920s. At about this time the motor vehicle was beginning to take over from the earlier horse and camel waggons as a principal means of transport between Carnarvon and outlying areas and the frequency of communication between Carnarvon and the interior increased greatly. The motor lorries also appear to have served as vehicles for the spread of Pidgin English. Some samples of the language are reported by Johnston (1962) and Ammon (1966):

We did not know much about Charlie and where there are 'black men there might be black women'. However, Charlie appeared late in the afternoon, remarking: 'Bin walk 'em walk 'em find 'em find 'em plenty fellow long.' It was elicited that Bluey had broken a hopple and that Charlie had to track him nearly half-way back to the station. (Johnston 1962:215)

Many were the times when Ross had anxiously scanned the sky and asked the old fellow, "When are you going to makem rain, Winderie? You're falling down on your job lately."

Quite unruffled Winderie would puff away at his pipe as he sat on the woodheap and thoughtfully answer, "Umm, byem-bye, boss. Byem-bye. Plenty rain come byem-bye."

"So you reckon it's going to rain, eh, Winderie? When?" he asked.

"Oh, quick, soon now, boss. Might be two-three days." Winderie was most emphatic about it.

"What makes you so sure, Winderie? You been makem rain?"

Winderie dropped his eyes. "Yes, boss," he answered, "me been makem rain last night, but plenty more fella makem rain too."

"Oh?"

"Yeh, boss," and he almost whispered the words. "Big fella spirit talk along Mungingee Flat." He was agog with excitement and awe.

(Ammon 1966:177-178)

The pastoral industry in the Pilbara area again has strong ties with the south. The first pastoralists to arrive in the Nickol Bay/Roebourne area in the late 1860s came from Fremantle and brought with them Aboriginal labourers from the south. The established pattern of communicating with local aborigines in Pidgin English was continued as a growing number of them were made to work as station hands or domestic servants. Taylor (1980), in writing about the early days of the Withell and Hancock families in the Roebourne area refers to young white children playing with black ones speaking "all-a-same blackfella man" (p.73). More extensive examples of Aboriginal Pidgin English from the Roebourne area are found in the local Court records, though most of them date from a time when additional language contacts with Chinese and Malay divers had been made. A good example is a case that took

place in 1908 (Batty collection Western Australia State Archives 24/08 Roebourne Police Court Minutes of Evidence):

Statement by Sophie (Aboriginal female) Roebourne Police Court 1908 (24/08): I know accused. He come camp. I never see him longtime. Accused brought half bottle of whisky to camp. Accused gave me two nips of whisky-little ones. He gave me whisky in a mug - little one. Police come. The moon was up when accused come to camp.

same case (statement by Tiger - Aboriginal male): I stop camp Monday night. I saw accused come along to camp late. Moon up. I heard accused ask Kenneth for a woman. After accused took Sophie away. I saw bottle with accused. Kenneth I saw and Sophie too drink whisky. They got drunk and Winnie and Sophie fight.

(same case, statement by Sambo - Aboriginal male): I stop along black fellow camp in river on moon night. Sophie wake up. She gave me one nip of whisky. I didn't see white fellow in camp.

The first systematic search for pearls in Western Australia began around 1867, mainly in the Nickol Bay area, and subsequently further north. The principal port in the early years was Cossack, established in 1872 to act as a port for Roebourne. The number of boats operating in the area increased from 30 in 1870 to 80 in 1873. Up to this date, most of the divers were Aborigines, many of them women who were recruited, mostly against their will, from places further and further inland from the coast. Bligh (1938:44–45) gives an account of how recruiting was done:

This procedure was a little round about but this made it legal. A station owner, acting as a J.P., signed another station owner's servants on for twelve months, and this was reciprocated. The aboriginal was told "if you make mille mille me, you get shirt, tobacco, plenty tucker. You say Coo (meaning yes). Suppose you say Meda (meaning no) you no more get back your country plenty noondie if he try (meaning die)." When the aboriginal sees what he wants today, he never worries about tomorrow, and a shirt, blanket and tobacco have the desired effect without the threats. Once he said "Coo" his hand was held, and a cross was made on the paper, binding him for twelve months. Once made, this "millee millee" (agreement) was hard to cancel. (Bligh 1938:44–45)

A brief passage of the language used by an Aboriginal diver is also presented orally in A.C. Angelo's reminiscences of the early pearling days given to the Western Australian Historical Society on 27 August 1948:

I have never seen a white diver who could dive more than a couple of fathoms without going head first and propelling himself down and I often wondered how these blacks could do it.

Some people have suggested it was done by the diver expelling all air from the lungs: if so, how did they inhale a fresh lot to bring them up again, while in the depths. I have asked some of the more intelligent ones how they did it. Their replies were not very illuminating – "Wantem go down, go down; wantem come up, come up," was the only and hardly lucid explanation.

Many of the Aboriginal divers never returned to their homeland; those who did brought with them a knowledge of the Pidgin English in use on the pearl luggers.⁸

⁸ As recruiting occurred very far inland it must have been an important factor in the geographical spread of Pidgin English in the Western Desert. One can only speculate as to whether the situation encountered in

When the recruitment of Aboriginal labour became restricted around 1874, the lugger operators turned to employing Malays recruited from locations such as the St Straits settlements (Singapore) and Dutch Timor. By the end of 1874 about 500 Malays worked in the pearling industry. Interaction between the Malay and the Aborigines took place both on the pearling luggers and in a number of contexts on shore. One such context was the prison at Roebourne. The following statement relates to one of the many instances of intergroup violence in Roebourne and Cossack (case against Sonny Mahomet Roebourne Police Court 40/1908):

Extract from statement by Charlie (Aboriginal male, Roebourne Police Court 1908:

Me talkem English. White fellow callem me Charlie. Me in Roebourne gaol. Me remember gettem gaol a month ago-morning time after breakfast. Me have chain on leg-chained to Wallagum. I see Malay. Malay along inside-Blackfeller side-Malay he come cleanem house. Me not know what Malay said. Me facem door. When him finishem talk- that Malay he come back. I want you, me gettem you tobacco, you nice boy. He say this to Wallagum. He likem boy, he wantem fuckem. Boy lay down. Malay then takem arse-takem down trousers takem off belt pullem up shirt he get on top. Me see Malay cock. He putem arse: One time he fuckem. Boss come he finished. Boss come Malay get up. Boy layem down. Boss say what a matter now. Some feller boy- boy get up trousers pullem up wettem. Boss make em pull them down again. Boss look at backside. Me heard gate open. Me kickem boy say get up boss coming-too late.

Very similar pidgin is also produced by the next witness, or rather his interpreter Willie alias Undooe.

My name is Wallagim. Am Prisoner in Roebourne gaol. Was here one moon ago was chained to Charlie. Accused was at the gaol at time. Was in cell. Three fellow accused and Charlie with me after breakfast. Accused said. Me wantem fuckem you. Accused him taken off belt. Malay (accused) taken off my trousers. We kneel down - hands on floor. Accused then he got on top, he tookem down trousers. He gottem fuckem. Malay gottem cock putem between legs. Did not putem in backside. Boss then come up directly. Mr. Pond come along. Two feller pullem up trousers and then Malay go away. Boss come up lookem Mr. Pond. Malay ask me first time. Malay wantem me-wantem fuckem me. Boss come along, he get up.

Roebourne and Cossack not only appear to have been the centre for the crystallisation and expansion of a new pidgin, only indirectly or weakly related to the preceding Southern Pidgin but also a centre of diffusion of this new pidgin. One should bear in mind that at Cossack there was an encounter between Aboriginal Pidgin English, Pidgin Malay and various reduced varieties of English spoken by the Japanese, Chinese and other groups. It even appears that, for a while, Bazaar or a similar kind of Malay was the most commonly used lingua franca. Thus, in discussing the construction of Jarman Island Lighthouse by prisoners from Cossack and Roebourne, Owen (1936: 36-37) remembers:

Now I appreciated, to the full extent, the feelings of those building The Tower of Babel when God caused all engaged thereon to speak different languages (Genesis, XI, 7). I had a practical demonstration forcibly thrust on me.

the Eastern states was repeated here, that is the practice of Aboriginals adopting Pidgin English for discussing matters pertaining to Westerners and as a means of intergroup communication even before direct contacts with whites.

After considerable trouble we go the derrick upright and the guy ropes duly secured. The pulley at the top required some adjustment. Stratford extemporised a "boatswain's chair." I succeeded in making the men understand to haul him to the top by the crab winch.

This job being completed, do you think I could make then lower him down? They would lower him a short way and then haul him up again repeatedly. I shrewdly suspected they did it on purpose (like the proverbial Chinese who "no savvy when he no want") with "malice aforethought," and just for the fun of the thing, though I could not detect the semblance of a smile on any one of their Sphinx-like countenances. However, with Stratford's continued expostulations, not altogether devoid of strong language -(hence its absence from this page) from the top and my equally emphatic comments from the bottom, I succeeded eventually in landing him safely.

Once safely on the ground, I said to Stratford, "That will do for to-day. I can see if we don't address them in their own language, or at least some of it, we shall not get much work out of them."

Knowing George Roe was in Cossack, and that he was an expert Malay scholar, I decided to go ashore and learn from him at least some of the necessary expressions to enable me to carry on the work, and the following is what he taught me. "Mind you, Owen," he said, "this is not the way it is spelt but pronounced, so that it is really phonetic Malay":⁹

⁹ Dr Voorhoeve of the Australian National University sent me the following comments on this variety of Malay: "Was George Roe an expert Malay scholar? In the land of the blind One-eye is king...Anyway, most of his 'phonetic' rendering of the Malay words I could decipher:

go forward	piggie de mukah	pigi di muka	Standard Malay
go aft	piggie de blackah	pigi de blaka	pergi ke muka
slack away	arrier	???	pergi ke belakang
make fast	ecat	ikat	???
slack a little	arrier sedekie	sediki	ikat
luff	balo	belo(?)	sedikit
keep her away	touroet	turut (?)	(mem) belik (?)
down jib	arrier jib	...jib	turut
take the rudder	pagung commudie	pegang kemudi	...jib
go ashore in the boat	bower schoochie dedarat	bawa skuci di darat	pegang kemudi
a glass of water	satoe glass lre menoem	satu glas air minum	bawah 'skuci ke darat
go down	piggie debower	pigi di bawa	satu gelas air minum
go aloft	piggie deattas	pigi de atas	pergi ke bawah
come here	merrie desinie	mari disini	pergi ke atas
knock off work	bruenthie credger	brenti kreja	mari kesini
commence work	moly credger	mulai kreja	berhenti kerja
one	satoe	satu	mulai kerja
two	dowar	dua	satu
three	tegar	tiga	dua
four	ampat	empat	tiga
five	limah	lima	empat
six	annum	anam	idem
seven	tougon	tu ju	enam
eight	delapan	delapan	tujuh
nine	sambelan	sambilan	idem
ten	sapolo	sapulu	sembilan
			sepuluh

English	Malay
go forward	<i>piggie de mukah</i>
go aft	<i>piggie de blackah</i>
slack away	<i>arrier</i>
make fast	<i>ecat</i>
slack a little	<i>arrier sedekie</i>
luff	<i>balo</i>
down jib	<i>arrier jib</i>
take the rubber	<i>pagung commudie</i>
go ashore in the boat	<i>bower schoochie dedarat</i>
a glass of water	<i>satoe glass ire menoem</i>
go down	<i>piggie debower</i>
go aloft	<i>piggie deattas</i>
come here	<i>merrie desinie</i>
knock off work	<i>bruenthie credger</i>
commence work	<i>moly credger</i>

Numerals

one	<i>satoe</i>
two	<i>dowar</i>
three	<i>teger</i>
four	<i>ampat</i>
five	<i>limah</i>
six	<i>annum</i>
seven	<i>tougon</i>
eight	<i>delapan</i>
nine	<i>sambelan</i>
ten	<i>sapolo</i>

When we were returning to the island my coxswain handed the tiller over to one of the prisoner crew - Pedro I think - who made a mess of things, and we were capsized. I managed to save my bag with the papers in. The one with the above translation got wet. It still shows sea water stains, but I am able to decipher it. I value it very much, not only for the use it was to me, but as a reminder of one of the many kindly acts of a dear old friend, alas, no more. He died in Melbourne a few years ago.

It definitely is a non-standard variety of Malay in which I recognise the following features which occur in eastern Indonesia (they may also occur in western Indonesian varieties, but I am not acquainted with those):

- the use of *di* where Standard Malay (SM) has *di* (at, in) and *ke* (to);
- the loss of word-final consonants

The use of *pigi* for *pergi* is common in non-standard varieties of Malay all over Indonesia.

I can't make sense of *arrier*. No Malay word with a meaning like "slacken, loosen, to lower", etc. comes even near to it in form. I suspect that either it is a special jargon term. or when transcribing his water-stained text he must have made some mistakes, as also in his transcription of *tujuh* 'seven'. The transcription, by the way, is not purely 'Malay spelled in the English way'. It clearly contains some Dutch spelling conventions: final *ie* for [i], *oe* for [u]. Also the word *schoochie* seems to be Dutch: *schuitje*. *Balo/belo/belok*: the Indonesian word means 'to turn, make a turn' - in this particular context: to turn into the wind (Du. *oploeven*); *touroet/turut*: in Indonesian 'to follow'; probably used in the context of two boats sailing a parallel course, and one makes a turn towards the other whereupon the other has to follow suit in order to avoid a collision. *Bawa skuci kedarat* literally: take the small boat ashore." (Dr Voorhoeve, pers.comm., August 1987)

A similar type of Malay was also widely used in the pearling industry around Broome.

Soon after landing, I took every opportunity to air my knowledge of the Malay language. It had the desired effect. It impressed my hearers. Result, the work proceeded more rapidly and smoothly. (Owen 1936)

Some of this kind of Malay continued to be used once the pearling fleet had moved north to Broome. The same writer reports several examples of Pidgin English for the same period spoken by members of other races, for instance by the Arab Assam (p.43): "Sulieman stab'em me, master."

Next to the Chinese and Malay there was also an increasing number of Japanese in the Cossack pearl industry; I have not, however, come across examples of their speech nor have I been able to establish conclusively that divers from the Torres Straits area were involved here, as they were subsequently at Broome.

Whilst many such matters remain to be settled and whilst it is hoped that more linguistic data can be obtained, there can be little doubt that the pearling industry around Cossack and Roebourne in the 1880s provided one of the best centres for the crystallisation of a Pidgin English in the north of Western Australia: first, we have the condition of a multitude of linguistic backgrounds among the participants, secondly, in almost all instances they were displaced from their home country, thirdly, they were thrown together, for periods lasting around six weeks at a time in the confined setting of a pearling lugger depending on successful communication for their physical survival. Lastly, the social distance between the whites and members of other races was such that acrolectal varieties of English were inaccessible to the latter in most instances, some of the more affluent Chinese being a possible exception.

The type of pidgin that developed around Cossack appears to have combined certain features of the older South Western tradition with a number of new developments. One cannot assume, given the numerous changes in the composition of the speech community over the years and the tenuous communication links with the south, that there was a direct strong continuous tradition. However, it is important to emphasise that this pearling pidgin too was a local West Australian development, relatively uninfluenced by developments in the Eastern states.

By the late 1890s the pearling industry around Cossack was almost defunct, as the fleet had shifted its headquarters further north to Broome, taking with them, without doubt, many of the linguistic conventions that had so far developed.

Roebourne and Cossack continued to play an important part as trade centres for the agricultural industry and supply bases for the gold and mineral industries, though other ports such as Port Hedland, later took over this function. Around 1890 the Pilbara field to the east of Roebourne had become a centre of gold seeking activity, whilst further north in the Kimberley another goldfield had been declared. Of the new towns that were set up, Marble Bar (founded in 1893) deserves special mention. Because of the competitive and secretive nature of gold digging, contacts between members of different races appear to have been fewer than in the pearling industry. Exceptions would have been contacts with Afghan camel drivers who, until the construction of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway in 1911, played an important part in the local transport industry and business relations between white and Chinese shopkeepers and between gold diggers from all races. Idriess (1954:165ff.) gives a number of texts dating back to the turn of the century, among them the story of an Aboriginal woman, Mary Ann, who had scraped together a bag of alluvial tin worth about £7 at the time. (p.165ff.):

Justly proud of her achievement, she gave the heavy bag to Jacky her lord and master to carry to the storekeeper, there to buy tucker and a particular dress she had long coveted. Jacky started out full of good intentions, with the bag of tin balanced across his head and one ear cocked over his shoulder to the shouted instructions of Mary Ann to, "Hurry back longa camp now, Jacky! You no more stay longa store! Hurry back home. Bring dress, bacca, tucker, change belonga me." "Arri," shouted Jacky. Alas, the noble abo fell by the wayside, a failing not confined to coloured husbands. He sold the tin all right, then went for a stroll right into a big ring of miners engaged in that engrossing pastime, two-up. "Heads you win! Tails you lose!" The sophisticated aboriginal anywhere in Australia, if once taught, is nothing if not a gambler, and will play cards the day and night through. Quite a number of them can teach the whites a point or two at poker - and other games. Jacky looked on at the play a while, his eyes shining as he watched the tossing pennies. Eagerly he gazed forward with the players to see how the coins fell. He forgot all about Mary Ann patiently cooking his evening meal, forgot about her new dress, her tobacco, her tucker, the change that belonged to her. He took his place in the ring. It was all fair and square. He knew every player, they knew him and he knew as much about the game as they did. For a time he played with flattering luck, grew excited, plunged and lost all. It was a gloomy blackfellow who wended his way home.

Afar off, Mary Ann's expectant attitude changed to an apprehensive stare; she hurried to meet him with fire in her eye. "Where that money belonga me?" she demanded. "I been gamble longa white feller," Jacky mumbled. "They been lickem me." "You mad!" she shrieked. "What for you want to play longa white feller? You can't play longa white feller! You too dam' silly! White feller got too much head longa you!"

Jacky muttered something to the effect that he was not so sure about that! He had just as much in his head as any white feller. "Yah!" she jeered. "You one poor fool! In shrieking crescendo she assured him that all in his head was what fed upon it. "You run back quick feller," she howled, "bringem back that money belonga me!" "No can do that," he protested. "Me loseem that money longa gamble fair play." "Arrright!" she shrieked. "Me go. Me go lookem out them white feller! You no bringem me that money! No good me get nothing! No good me yandy tin, yandy tin, yandy tin all day for mad fool you. Yandy tin for white feller! Huh! Me showem. Huh! Me takem dowick!"

She did. A dowick is-a heavy fighting club. And brandishing it, she came raging up from the creek into the ring of players. "What for you white feller gamble belonga my man stealem my money?" she demanded. "No good black feller play belonga you feller. He can't play. He alla same dam' fool!" "He play all right, Mary Ann!" the ring-keeper retorted. "We play fair belonga him, him been loseem proper." "You lym white feller! You no playem fair belonga him!" And Mary Ann swung her dowick with skinny body crouched for the spring. "True Mary Ann!" protested the ring-keeper hurriedly. "We playem fair. You askem these other feller white feller." "These white feller all a same you lying white feller!" And with a flying leap she swung the club so dangerously that the big school fell back, leaving her in sole possession of the ring with the kip and the coins at her feet. Shrilly then she defied them to shift her.

To their explanations and protestations she simply swung the club and howled her defiance "Aw! Give the old cow back the money," growled a player. "We'll never get on with the game." "Yes," voted another, "give her back the money and a kick in the pants." "She don't wear any," chuckled a player. "Well, chuck her the money so she can buy some."

Unanimously the crowd agreed. She lowered the club though grasping it warily as the ringkeeper advanced. He handed her a little wad of notes. Happily she squatted in the ring, one by one counted six notes into her lap, then a 10-shilling note, then five shillings in silver. She glared up accusingly. "White feller," she demanded, "'nother one five shillun! That one only six pound fifteen proper money." "No, Mary Ann, that right," protested the ring-keeper. "No, not right," she argued. "You wantem cheatem poor silly black gin. More better you payem straight!" "That one straight money, Mary Ann," insisted the ring-keeper. "Jacky bring that much feller money. No more."

Mary Ann knew this could well be true. Jacky must have spent the other five shillings on himself. But she refused to admit to a penny. In a tirade she shrilled about her bag of tin worth £7 per bag and she demanded every penny of it.

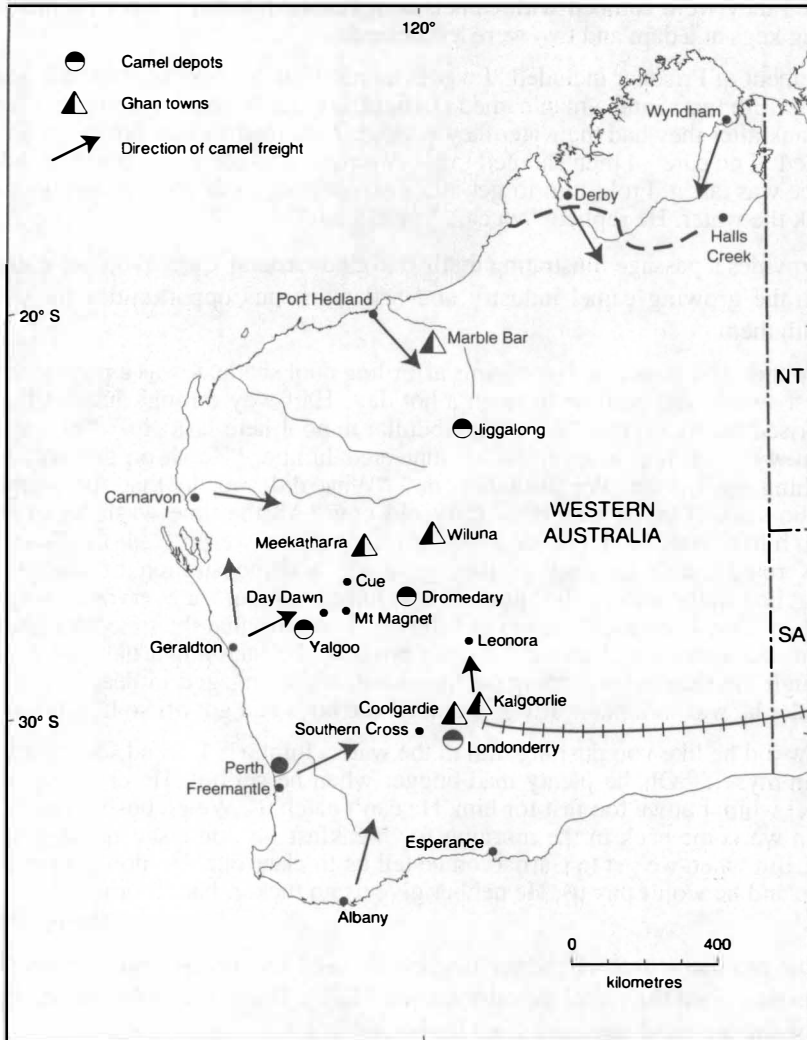
With a laugh the crowd gave her the other five shillings and another two shillings to buy a drink with. And happily Mary Ann wended her way home.

(Idriess 1954:165ff.)

I shall have to leave my brief survey of Pidgin English in the Pilbara at this point, though I do not wish to give the impression that it is complete. Smaller text samples were found for other areas and periods and during a brief field trip to the area, I gained the impression that much of the past of language contacts in this area could still be reconstructed by going to older people living on the cattle stations or on outback settlements. A very large body of police records is available, though regrettably access to most of this material is restricted.

5. THE AFGHANS AS AGENTS OF DIFFUSION

Before the advent of the railways and the motorcar (particularly the latter) the development of the outback areas of Australia depended to a significant extent on camels and their Afghan (Ghan) handlers. The first shipment of camels arrived in 1858 in Victoria, followed by South Australia in 1866 and Western Australia from the 1890s. A fuller account is found in Downs (1987) and McKnight (1969). The term 'Ghan' refers to a mixed group of Moslem camel handlers originating from Afghanistan and various areas of present-day Pakistan. Being a linguistically heterogeneous group and finding themselves in an environment dominated by English, their principal means of communication was English (of which some of them had acquired considerable fluency) and reduced or pidginised forms of English needed both in their dealings with Aborigines and frequently with other groups as well. In the case of some Ghans, their linguistic skills had been acquired in the Eastern states, particularly in connection with work on the Trans-Australian Railway. After 1890 they increasingly came to Western Australia directly from their homeland. The following map, adapted from Downs (1987) illustrates the most important centres and direction of movement of the cameleers:



MAP 2: CAMEL ROUTES AND GHAN SETTLEMENTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The earliest samples of Pidgin English as spoken by Ghans were located by Downs (1987-) in the West Australian Newspaper. In both instances, the location is in the ‘civilised’ south of the state:

Nov, 25, 1887 p.3b

Two ‘Afghan’ camel drivers encountered near the Bunbury Road in search of three or four camels which had strayed from the neighbourhood of Fremantle. Their stock of English was almost as small as their supply of food and consisted solely in the reiterated inquiry: “SEE-CAM-EL? SEE CAM-EL?”

Albany: Dec 7th 1984

This morning at the police court Thos. Brandon Knowles was charged with unlawfully wounding Noore Mahomet and with killing John Mahomet near Point Malcolm on the 13th October. A copy of the Koran sent from Perth was used to administer the oath to the interpreter and the Afghan witnesses. The evidence of F. Shan, Amas Saalam and NooreMahomet was to the effect that on the day

named they were camped with camels near Point Malcolm. Two men had been filling kegs at a dam and two were left behind.

Statement of Prisoner included "I was at a tank 13 miles NW of Ponton's Station on the 13th inst. I and a man named Hatfield saw an Afghan washing his feet in the tank after they had the water they wanted. I shouted to him not to do so. He replied "I no care". I then shouted to his companion to come and stop him but no notice was taken. I told him to get at a distance and wash his feet as white men drank the water. He replied "No care Englishman".

Ammon provides a passage illustrating that Aborigines around Carnarvon were employed by Afghans in the growing camel industry and had numerous opportunities for using Pidgin English with them:

Surrounded by towering river-gums affording cool shade, it was a pleasant place to rest awhile and boil the billy on a hot day. Half-way through lunch Charcoal surprised me by saying, "We push Abdullar in pool here last trip." "You what?" "Yeh, we push him in all right," volunteered Jumbo. "He sit on that rock there washing his turban. We push him in." "What did you do that for, Jumbo?" Jumbo said, "Oh, he altogether dirty old cow. All the time wash him turban, wash him turban, but he never have bath himself, so we push him in." And the boys roared with laughter as they gave me a demonstration of the Afghan struggling in the water. The situation was full of humour for everyone except the Afghan. For, knowing Afghans as I did and knowing that the time was likely to be around sundown, I thought it quite possible the man might have been going through the ritual of wrapping on his turban while engaged in deep prayer. No wonder he was indignant. It was a marvel the boys had got off so lightly.

"How did he like you pushing him in the water, Jumbo?" I asked, doing a bit of a grin myself. "Oh, he plenty mad bugger when he get out. He chase us with a camel whip, but we too fast for him. He can't catch us. We go bush all night and when we come back in the morning for breakfast he don't say nothing so we stay. But when we get to Carnarvon he tell us to clear out. He don't want us no more and he won't pay us. He nebber give us no tucker, bacca, or nothing."

(Ammon 1966:8)

The most prolific source of Pidgin English as used by the Afghan cameleers is Barker (1964) who described the camel industry around Marble Bar in the early part of this century. Here follow the principal passages from his book:

"I say goodbye, my camel".

"Fifty years I stop this country, work all the time, now I finish". (Barker 1964:2)

Zareen, an Afghan wit, used to say: "Mr. Snell a very good man from boots right up to chin. From chin up, no good." (Barker 1964:28)

He was a stranger to me but the Italians knew him. He tied his camel to a tree and came over to the Italians looking exactly what, to my idea, a bearded prophet should look like. He told the Italians they were "very wicked men". Through their behaviour it had taken him days to find his camel. Like the blacks, who can't say "Italian", he called them "Stalian men", and this the Italians took as a joke and a compliment.

At first I could not understand what the row was over, but it soon became clear. All three talked at once, shouted and showed their teeth, "good the gidg", and "no good the gidg", "more better" something else, "no good the understand".

"True for God," said the Ghan, "my camel very, very hungry, he die." "Camel too fat," yelled an Italian. "I stop tirtree year this country, I know." "You stop fifty year you no good the understand," replied an Italian.

The argument raged on, but no knives were brought out. The old Afghan gradually became calmer till his expression changed from viciousness to smiles, and finally he shook hands with one Italian saying, "You my very best friend." They handed him a pannikin of tea, tea with a double allowance of sugar that Afghans like. (Barker 1964:30)

...he had been in gaol the night before and the police had told him he would be in again if he was caught within a mile of the town. I asked him what he had done to deserve punishment. He said "I get drunk, I run the muck, I call every white man...no more I remember. I wake up gaol." (Barker 1964:97)

Moosa Khan, a fine old man, ran his young camels on Mr. Brockman's land, and once told me: "Mr. Brockman a very good man, all the same as Mr. Jesus." The Ghans did not rate me as highly as Mr. Brockman because I refused to have young camels amongst sheep. (Barker 1964:94)

As the use of motorcars became more general in the 1920s the importance of the camel industry and the Ghans declined. Some of them returned to their homeland whilst others settled in Ghan Towns such as Meekatharra, Marble Bar or even in Perth. A notable feature of the Ghan community in Western Australia was that they were exclusively male and thus had to find female partners among the Aboriginal, European and mixed race communities. This constituted yet another important reason for the disappearance of the Pidgin English used by the Ghans.

6. THE CHINESE

The linguistic importance of the Chinese, like that of the Ghans lay in the fact that they were: a. mobile and b. in frequent verbal interaction with members of all races. One can distinguish three categories of Chinese migrants: indentured labourers in the South and Southwest following the termination of convict labour around 1860, Chinese in the pearling and gold areas of the North mainly after 1880 and free Chinese immigration after 1909. I have no comprehensive statistics, although, those that I have examined (as well as those examined by So 1987) suggest that Chinese immigration was predominantly male (there were 912 males and only 5 females in the colony in 1891 for instance), that the migrants belonged to a wide range of professions with cooks, market gardeners, servants and water-drawers being the principal categories, and that they tended to be scattered rather than settled in larger groups in these communities. As regards their origins, early migration, particularly to the pearling and gold industries, tended to come from Singapore and later migration from the areas around Canton.

Whilst many of the Chinese spoke some reduced form of English or Malay on their arrival the demographic factors warded against their variety becoming influential. Thus, whatever features of Chinese Pidgin English can be pointed out in some of the earlier texts did not make a great impact on other varieties of Pidgin English in Western Australia. However, the role of the Chinese in disseminating the Aboriginal and multilingual contact Englishes of the colony appears to have been significant.

Samples of pidginised varieties of English used by Chinese are reported from many areas. As popular white sentiment against Chinese immigration was very much in evidence for most of the time, the use stereotyped literary forms of their English was widespread in satirical publications such as the journal *Possum* or the *Bulletin*. The following poem was published in the *Possum* of December 10th 1887 as a reaction against increased Chinese immigration:

Governor he sent along,
 All the way to Hong Kong,
 Bidding John Chinaman
 Come across the sea.
 Bade him tie his pig tail
 Ready for a ship to sail.
 Take him awful distance,
 From the land of tea.

You like moo cow,
 Johnny likes bow wow,
 Give him little puppy dog,
 Rice, and plenty tea.
 Three years quickly go,
 Then another boat he'll row,
 Sailing on as happy
 As he well can be.

Not like your blooming black,
 Never need flog his back;
 Mind sheep velly well,
 Cook the shepherds' tea.
 Never sent from Kimberley,
 To Inspector Timperley
 Salty mines at Rottnest
 Never yet did see.

John buys a hand cart
 He sells and you part,
 You like lettuces
 And cresses for your tea.
 Pumpkin-headed gumsucker
 Very fond of good tucker,
 Buy it off of Johnny
 From the land of tea.

John soon buys a horse,
 Puts him in the cart of course,
 See *Wo* and Company
 Make the donkey *Gee*.
 Very soon they get a shop,
 In and out yon often pop,
 Sell you dried tea leaves
 For very good tea.

Larriking in Murray Street
 Policeman never on his beat,
 Have a smack at Chinaman
 Happy as can be.
 Take him by his pig tail,
 Tie him to a fence rail,
 Shorten up his tether
 Very soon you'll see.

Johnny takes a whitey wife,
 Very fond of married life,
 Plenty more populace
 Wanted here you see.
 Soon the little almond eyes,

Many folks will surprise,
Nothing half so lovely
As the young Chinesee.

Good bye whitey man,
You were the first began,
Bringing John Chinaman,
Far across the sea.
Better had you let him bide,
Where he should have lived and
Far away in China
In the land of tea.

The following examples of Chinese Pidgin English were all found in the *Western Australian Bulletin* by So (1987):

A Chinaman is speaking to himself as he irons a shirt. Picks up a shirt showing evidence of having been well cared for and says: "Bachelor; him lady fix him."
Picks up another, buttonless and frayed at the wrist and neck: "Mallied man".
22 December 1888

"VULGAR PREJUDICE by an Eye Witness."

Mrs. Gump: "Well, Johnny, goin'to give up yer garden, eh." Johnny: "No, missie, me gottee new leasee --- ." Mrs. Gump: "Good Eavens, he means he's got a new disease."
25 August 1888

Anecdotal material featuring Chinese is also available for many other areas. Thus, Taylor (1980:176) reports the following amusing story of the Chinese cook, Suey, who worked in Cossack in the 1890s:

"Finding her absent one day when he called he said when next greeting her.
"Mrs. Tuslo, I went to see you. I went in your front side - I walked around your inside and I came out your back side. I no see."

Hardie (1981:57) reports another anecdote for about the same period:

One of the best stories about Chinese cooks, told by Rob Lukis, concerns the jackaroos who plagued old Ah Boon with practical jokes. When they'd nailed his wooden sandals to the floor beside his bed and he'd fallen flat on his face as a result, Ah Boon complained to the boss, who directed the jackaroos to elect a spokesman from among them to apologise. This was duly done.

'You no more put flour in my pillow?', asked Ah Boon. 'You no more put chopped horsehair and - snakes in my bed?'

'You no more nail my shoes to the floor?' he asked in conciliatory tones.

'No!' they answered.

'Al li. Al li,' he replied, deadpan. 'I no longer pee in your soup.'

A much more reliable indication of their language can be found in the court proceedings which feature samples of language taken down at the time it was uttered. Whilst a certain amount of editing must have occurred with the various court scribes, the status of such data is not one of literary fabrication. The following examples were located in the Roebourne Police records.

Statement by ang Ong - Roebourne Police Court Minutes of Evidence (7/1891)
Before Ah Lee owe me money, Before he come court and get verdict. Ah Lee has not paid any money. Before Ah Lee had a house it belonged to him. About

three weeks after he sold the house for £17-0-0. He get em money. He no pay any money at all. He kept the money.

Statement by Ko See San - Roebourne Police Court 1892: (21/92)

Ah Loow he go my house one month. I lend him some money. He owe me £23-0-0. I plenty ask him money he no give it. He plenty time say he give it but he no give it.

Statement by San Sed, Roebourne Police Court Minutes of Evidence 115/1892

I own Sun Sed garden. I remember Ah Looan going to stop San Sed garden. He stop nearly one month. I stop there too. I have work to do with garden. I am Lee boss. Ah Looan got no garden. I am best sell plenty vegetables - Ah Looan sell little bit. Ah Looan give San Sed money when he sell vegetables...I ask him for 10/- he say no and run away. When I see him again he say he no like the garden.

Statement by Charlie Ah Sing Roebourne Police Court Minutes 24/1908

I never buy Whisky for Billy. When I buy I drink it myself. I bought that whisky but I drank it myself. Police boys come ask me to buy whisky, I never do. I never give nigger a drink.

The following case (Roebourne Police Court 29/ 1909) involved the Chinese Ah Chow and the Aborigine Muranumwiri, as well as other Aboriginal witnesses.

Ah Chow; I go to I. to see my friend. I go by S. road. I had a some whisky in pocket for my friend in I. I go road close to S. Sandy catch me first time. He say "What you do". He called Albert and Sandy and Albert held me by hands. Albert took whisky out of my pocket. They hold my hands out and take me to police station. They woke up P.C. O'Brien and latter told P.C. Dowd. The latter told two natives to bring me inside. On Monday I stop See Ling house. I did not go to natives camp on Monday night. I know Nellie. I no go to camp. She come to me. I slept with Nellie close to my sulky near See Ling's yard. I ask Nellie to come and she come. I didn't give her whisky. Charlie tell lie when he says I went to camp and took Nellie. No moon Tuesday night. Track from S. across creek. I go sometimes across that way two or three times a day. Sometimes I go other road not this time.

Sandy: I saw Ah Chow at camp last month. I see Albert at camp too. Albert and I go to camp together. I saw Ah Chow at native camp sitting down. No one said 'I think Chinaman there'. I go up to Chow Albert told me to go up and look I find Chow and ask him what he was doing and he said looking after Calico. Albert come up. I got Chow by wrist. Albert took bottle of whisky from Chow. We take Chow to police station. I hold of one arm Albert other. Ah Chow was looking for Nellie. We get Chow he was on track leading down to native camp. We take Chow because we take part of black fellow. Chow want the woman. The night before Chow take this woman and we wait for him the next night.

Sporadic examples of Pidgin English as spoken by Chinese are also found in the *Nor'west Times*, an example being the following ones of Saturday September 17th 1892: "Good'ay marsers, good'ay. You likey ladish marsers? Oh, no, no. No marsers me no want money, me no charge you."

The kind of language found in most of the texts surveyed can be described negatively as lacking a number of important features of Chinese Pidgin English as well as those of South Western Nyungar Pidgin English. Similarly, one is struck by the absence of social norms in the varieties of reduced English spoken by Chinese in Western Australia. This would seem to reflect the fact that one is dealing with a collection of individual interlanguages rather than a distinct separate variety of Pidgin English. Such an explanation would also account for the frequent use of acrolectal inflections and other types of hyper-correction.

7. LEXICAL AND STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES OF PIDGIN ENGLISH IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

One of the questions asked at the beginning of this paper has been whether one can speak of a separate tradition of Western Australian Pidgin English. I have so far outlined the socio-historical context in which such a variety could have developed and provided a number of arguments as to why the question should be answered in the affirmative.

A documentation based on an exhaustive computer analysis of Australian Pidgin English data can be found in the texts (particularly Mühlhäusler and McGregor 1996) and maps of Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon 1996.

Turning first to the lexicon, we can observe that a fair number of un-English forms appear in the very early texts, particularly those in the southwest. Some of these forms are of Nyungar origin (e.g. *wonga* 'to say, talk, speak', *kai* 'yes', *mannam* 'father', *mindik* 'sick'), others are restructured words of English origin such as *queeple* (from creep up (on sheep)) 'to steal' or *tittel* 'little'.

For yet others such as *boommat* ('to go bush' and *quillyarn* 'to lie' an etymology has as yet not been established. A number of observers remark on non-standard pronunciations of English forms such as *chalt* for 'salt', *poot* for 'shoot' and *bikket* for 'biscuit'. As the Nyungar declined in numbers and importance as interlocutors, their particular brand of Pidgin English also declined. None of the forms listed here is recorded outside the Nyungar speaking area or for the period after 1900.

From the earliest period we note the presence of a number of lexical items of Eastern origin, including *sulky* 'angry', *mel* 'eye or to see', *coo-ee* 'to shout', and *walkabout* 'to wander, walk'. The proportion of such forms appears to increase in later texts and in the northern parts of Western Australia.

As regards the morphosyntax of the texts considered in this paper, the general trend is again one from less to more agreement with varieties of Pidgin English spoken elsewhere in Australia. Thus, two salient properties of the early texts, a trend towards verb final sentences (as in Nyungar) and the use of *nothing* as a negator, disappear in later samples.

A longitudinal study of the texts clearly demonstrates the development from an extremely impoverished contact jargon to a stable pidgin over a relatively short period.

Those familiar with the pidgins and creoles in the Pacific area will have noted the presence, in the varieties of Western Australia, of a number of diagnostic features such as *-fella* affix after adjectives, the verbal marker *'-um*, or *'-em*, the use of *mine* and *me* as first person singular pronoun, the future marker *baimbai* and the emphasiser *too much*. First indications are that their use in Western Australia does not predate their use in other parts of Australia or the Pacific, fuller details are given in Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon (1996). However, it can be concluded tentatively that we are not dealing with a totally separate development but a mixture of diffused pidgin lexicon and grammar and local innovations.

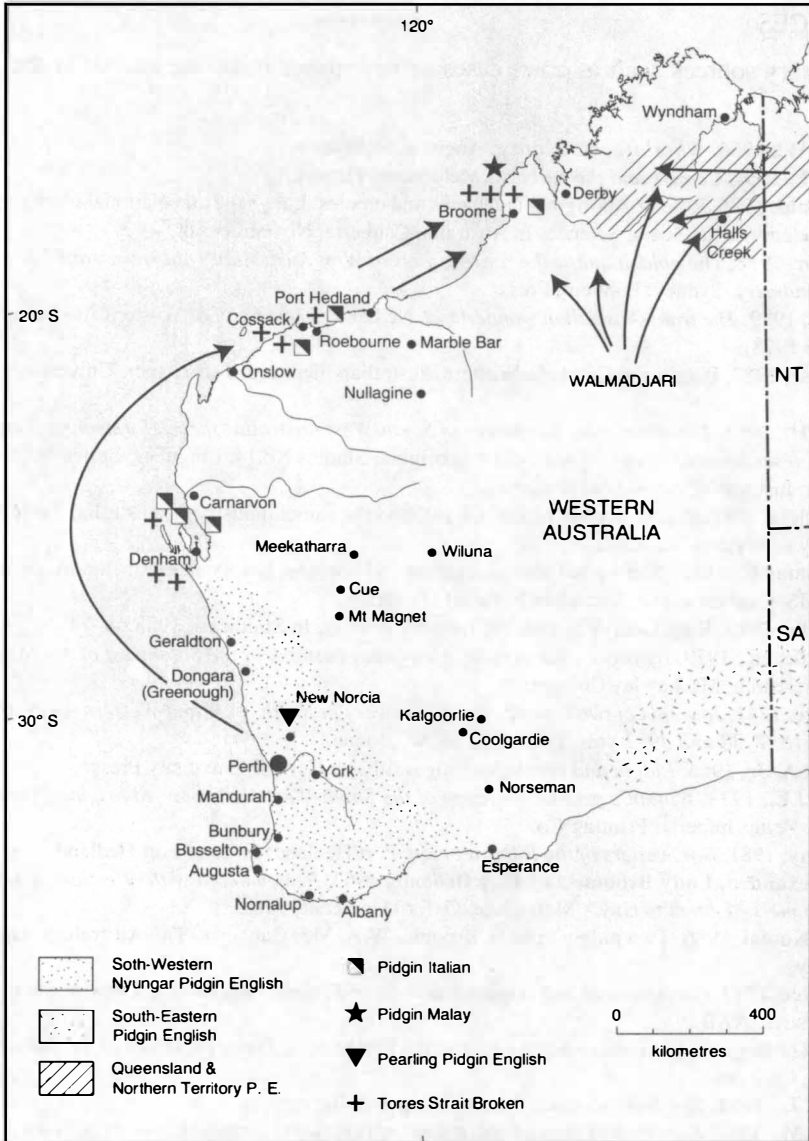
8. OUTLOOK

To me one of the most interesting trends in pidgin and creole studies in recent years has been the discovery of a very large number of new varieties in addition to the well-known ones around which the field has centred in the past. For many of them, documentation is

rather sparse but for others, like the variety discussed in this paper, archival and field research is capable of uncovering a surprisingly substantial body of evidence. The data I have seen in connection with my work on the languages for intercultural communication in the Pacific area suggest that the following topics should be followed up by pidginists and creolists in more detail:

- i. The process of language diffusion. We urgently need to refine the notion of diffusion from an ad hoc category or dustbin device to an explanatory one. This process has now become possible with the help of computer analysis of large bodies of data.
- ii. The role of targeted learning in pidgin development. The data from Western Australia and other pidgins that I have investigated suggest that their development, in most instances, is a combination of 'natural' complexity adding grammaticalisation paired with a complexity-preserving restructuring in the direction of the superstrate language. Pidgins may start off as compromise systems or 50-50 mixtures but they rarely remain that way for any length of time.

As regards the more specific findings for Western Australia, I hope to have demonstrated that the local demographic and linguistic situation gave rise to a specifically Western Australian tradition of Pidgin English. As the colony expanded and became more closely associated with the remainder of the Australian economy and culture, the linguistic independence of this variety disappeared. It remains to be seen what traces are left in the areas north of the Pilbara. The following map presents the most important developments. More detailed maps can be found in Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon (1996).



MAP 3: WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LINGUE FRANCHE PIDGINS AND CREOLES

The information presented in this paper is by no means an exhaustive account of contact languages in Western Australia. Rather, it is part of a larger picture which embraces Aboriginal modes of intercommunication prior to the arrival of the Europeans, contacts between Aborigines and visitors from Southeast Asia, the many linguistic encounters following resettlement, dispersal and internal colonisation of Aborigines during the last two hundred years and the migrant languages of groups other than English. I hope that research on these matters will be commenced in the not too distant future as the opportunities for studying the complex language contact situation in Western Australia are rapidly declining with the increasing domination of English and universal schooling in this language.

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