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Volume 17

Sarah G. Thomason (ed.)

Contact Languages: A wider perspective

CONTACT LANGUAGES

A WIDER PERSPECTIVE

Edited by

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Introduction

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The best-known contact languages are pidgins and creoles with European lexicons, scattered along the major routes that were followed by European powers engaged in trade and colonization, starting in the Age of Exploration. These languages arose as a direct result of contact with Europeans, as reflected in the fact that their vocabularies are drawn primarily from the European languages of visiting traders, colonizers, or resident slavemasters. But it is becoming increasingly obvious that languages such as the Caribbean and Indian Ocean creoles, the various varieties of Pidgin English, and the several Portuguese-based creoles in South Asia and elsewhere owe their fame (and their prominence in the linguistic literature) to their links with European history rather than to any special linguistic status among contact languages. Pidgins and creoles with non-European lexicons are now being studied in many places around the world, and a third type of contact language — bilingual mixtures that (unlike pidgins and creoles) must have been created by bilinguals — has been reported reliably from widely separated locations. The purpose of this book is to present linguistic and historical sketches of some lesser-known contact languages, in an effort to provide some balance in the worldwide picture of these most dramatic results of language contact. An added goal is to facilitate the investigation of linguistic and historical similarities and differences among contact languages of all three major types.

The twelve case studies collected here range over all three types of contact languages, and several authors also deal explicitly with the problem of finding the boundary between contact language and dialect of the lexifier language. Three chapters focus on particular pidgins (Hiri Motu, Pidgin Delaware, and Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin), two on creoles (Kitúba, Sango), one on a

specific set of pidgins and creoles (Arabic-based languages), one on the question of early pidginization and/or creolization in Swahili, and five on bilingual mixtures (Michif, Media Lengua, Callahuaya, Mednyj Aleut, and Ma'a). The chapters are arranged according to the type of language: pidgins first, then the chapter covering both pidgins and creoles, then creoles, then the question-mark chapter on Swahili, and finally the two-language mixtures.

Geographically, the Americas and Africa are best represented (five chapters each); there is one chapter each from the Pacific and northern Eurasia. This geographical skewing was not a deliberate choice. To some extent it resulted from a historical accident — several scholars who were asked to contribute were unable to do so in the end — but the main reason for the imbalance is that more contact languages that meet the basic criterion for inclusion are known in Africa and the Americas than in other parts of the world. This picture may change dramatically soon, as more information becomes available about contact languages elsewhere, notably among non-Austronesian languages of New Guinea (Foley 1986:30-31, Williams 1993).

All the authors were asked to address a series of questions designed to make the case studies easy to compare with each other and with descriptions of other contact languages. The first set of questions concerned the circumstances of the language's use: location, number of speakers, domains of usage, other languages spoken by the users. The next set focused on demonstrating the "linguageness" of the language under consideration: is it crystallized, so that it must be learned as a language rather than simply being produced by ad-hoc simplification (or other distortion) from any given speaker's native language? And is it mutually intelligible with any other language, specifically the main lexical-source language? The third set of questions was historical. In discussing the historical circumstances under which the contact language arose, authors were asked to distinguish carefully between documented social conditions and inferences drawn from inevitably incomplete documentation, and to lay out the bases for inferences drawn from linguistic facts. (For instance, if the language is a creole, is there direct evidence of a fully crystallized pidgin stage, or could creolization have been abrupt in a new contact situation?) Finally, authors were asked to describe the language briefly and to consider which of the three obvious candidates for sources of contact-language lexicon and grammar — the lexifier language(s), other language(s) spoken by the creators of the contact language, and universal structural tendencies — might be responsible, alone or in combination, for particular features found in the language.

These questions could not be answered fully for all the languages, because of limitations in the available information or, as in the Swahili chapter, a scope that included non-contact varieties as well as contact languages. The chapters also differ in depth of coverage. In some cases the contact languages, and often their lexical and grammatical source languages as well, are still too little known to permit a detailed analysis; in other cases, such as Hiri Motu, more detailed discussions of certain topics are available elsewhere, so that readers are referred to other sources for details. The authors approach their topics in different ways as a result of the kinds of information that are available. So, for instance, Goddard's discussion of Pidgin Delaware is based on philological analysis of the documentation on this long-dead language, while Dutton and Muysken, to name just two of several authors, draw on their own fieldwork data in describing Hiri Motu and Media Lengua.

An introduction to a book about contact languages must define the object of study: what is a contact language? The book's title presupposes that contact languages are a well-defined linguistic phenomenon, but — as with so much else in language-contact studies — the point is controversial. Probably no answer will satisfy everyone, but the following definition is at least consistent with the usage of all the contributors to this volume: a contact language is a language that arises as a direct result of language contact and that comprises linguistic material which cannot be traced back primarily to a single source language.¹ Because the historical linguist's technical concept of genetic relationship requires that members of a language family descend primarily, as whole systems, from a single parent language, contact languages do not belong to any language family: by definition, their genesis was not a matter of descent with modification from a single parent. This definition is thus fundamentally historical; it is based on diversity in the sources of the linguistic structures rather than on (say) typological characteristics of the language. The reason for insisting on a historical definition is that synchronic definitions don't work; there is, for instance, no such thing as a master list of linguistic features that are universally shared by and exclusive to contact languages, or even pidgins and creoles as a set (leaving bilingual mixtures aside).

There are, in my view, just three types of contact languages — namely, the types represented in this book. There are prototypical contact languages in all three categories, and there are also various kinds and degrees of deviations from the prototype. All these deviations (e.g. “semi-creoles” and “koinés”) are best analyzed in relation to the prototype, as on a continuum, and not as

separate types of contact languages. Treating pidgins, creoles, and bilingual mixtures as discrete language types of course raises problems of identification. There are many borderline cases: languages that have some pidgin characteristics but are analyzable as simplified versions of their lexifiers; speech forms that have some systematicity but are not clearly stable enough to be classed as languages; and so forth. But there are also many clear cases of contact languages. And since wrestling with fuzzy boundaries is a standard part of the historical linguist's job — consider, for instance, the impossibility of drawing a sharp dividing line between dialects of the same language and separate languages, during a process of language split — the discovery that fuzzy boundaries also exist in the study of contact languages is no surprise. Some languages are clearly contact languages; for other languages there is conflicting evidence, so that no firm identification is possible; and still other languages clearly are not contact languages.

Of the languages covered in this book, most are definite contact languages by my definition: Hiri Motu, Pidgin Delaware, Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin, various Arabic-based pidgins and creoles, Kitúba, Sango, Michif, Media Lengua, Callahuaya, and Mednyj Aleut. Nurse argues that early Swahili was not a contact language, however, and Owens discusses (critically) the view that Arabic went through a pidgin stage. Ma'a is a contact language if it is a separate language, but its status as an independent language is debatable.

Contact languages are not necessarily *lingua francas*,² though many of them are. Of the ones discussed here, Hiri Motu, Pidgin Delaware, Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin, the Arabic-based pidgins and creoles, Kitúba, and Sango are (or were) also *lingua francas*; Swahili too has long served as a *lingua franca*, but it did not arise through pidginization or creolization. In sharp contrast, none of the bilingual mixtures fulfills (or fulfilled) such a function. This split is typical: bilingual mixtures usually or always serve as salient markers of ethnic-group identity (in fact, that's why they come into being), while pidgins and creoles arise as *lingua francas*.

As noted above, a major purpose of this book is to make information about lesser-known contact languages more readily available. This in turn should enable specialists who are interested in generalizing over the whole range of contact languages to avoid the European-lexifier bias (especially for pidgins and creoles) of the majority of theoretical proposals in this area. The chapters provide two particularly striking illustrations of the usefulness of a broader data-base.

The first concerns the issue of how many languages must be present in a new contact situation in order for a stable pidgin to develop. Virtually all generalizations about pidgin and creole languages cite the presence of more than two languages as a typical, or in some cases an absolute, condition for the emergence of a pidgin or creole. Probably the most widely cited formulation of this view is Whinnom's argument that "no pidgin has ever consolidated itself in other than a multilingual situation" (1971:104); numerous other authors (e.g. Mühlhäusler 1986:147) have accepted Whinnom's view. But two authors in this volume describe pidgins that apparently arose in two-language contact situations. Goddard suggests that Pidgin Delaware originated in communication between Delawares and Dutchmen and then spread to other European groups; Huttar & Velantie say that Ndyuka-Trio pidgin developed for communication between Ndyuka and Trio speakers only. Together with other cases that have been described recently — most notably Kouwenberg's analysis of Berbice Dutch Creole as a two-language creole that arose out of contact between Dutch and the West African language Eastern Ijò (1994) — these examples show that the standard view about numbers of languages in pidgin genesis is simply mistaken.

The second striking example is, in effect, the explanation for the first. Whinnom's common-sense reasoning behind his claim that more than two languages are needed for pidgin genesis is that, in a two-language situation, "there cannot be any really effective withdrawal of the target language" (1971:104). But here common sense is misleading. All three of the pidgins described in this book — Hiri Motu, Pidgin Delaware, and Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin — emerged in the first instance because the lexifier-language speakers deliberately withheld their full language from outsiders, instead using a simplified foreigner-talk variety that formed the basis for the eventual pidgin. Comparable cases are reported from other parts of the world, e.g. *Halbdeutsch* (Lehiste 1965), but few of these turned into stable pidgins. The three examples side by side in this book provide solid evidence for the crucial importance of speakers' attitudes in determining the linguistic results of language contact.

Another important feature of these papers is the thoroughness of the authors' descriptions of the historical circumstances in which the contact languages arose. These descriptions reveal a number of shared historical features, but there are also significant differences. Among the pidgins, Pidgin Delaware, Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin, and some Arabic-based pidgins arose as

trade pidgins, as did many other pidgins around the world. The setting for the development of Hiri Motu was more complex: in Dutton's account, the Motu used their foreigner-talk variety with all foreigners, but a stable pidgin crystallized only when many foreigners arrived — including the first police force, whose members came from other islands and were not Motu speakers — to provide a multilingual setting in which a single lingua franca was needed.

The three creoles described in the book followed three different routes of development. East African Nubi, though connected with Arabic-based trade pidgins, was creolized when ethnically mixed soldiers established their own permanent settlements. Kitúba arose out of contact between West Africans and Bantu speakers, on the one hand, and among the Bantu speakers themselves in new multilingual settings, on the other; and Sango emerged as a work-group language. The five bilingual mixed languages fall into three general categories, historically speaking. Michif, Media Lengua, Mednyj Aleut, and Callahuaya all arose abruptly, by sudden creation, rather than gradually; but there were apparently two quite different motives for their development. The first three serve as the special languages of new ethnic groups or subgroups — the mixed-blood Métis (French, Cree, Ojibwe), acculturated Quechuas who belong neither to the Quechua world nor to the Spanish world, and mixed-blood residents of Mednyj Island (Russian, Aleut), respectively. The fourth, Callahuaya, functions as a secret language, used by male healers during rituals. The fifth bilingual mixture, Ma'a (Mbugu), is not the result of sudden creation but rather of long-term linguistic persistence in the face of intense cultural pressure from Bantu; far from being a new ethnic group, Ma'a speakers are an old community that has stubbornly resisted total cultural assimilation. At first glance, then, these five languages seem quite different in nature. But they share a characteristic social feature: all of them are in-group languages, used within the community as a sign of community solidarity and not understood by outsiders. They also share a salient linguistic feature: they are all comprised of two components, one from each of two source languages, and the linguistic material from each source language is adopted wholesale, without the kind of distortion that would occur in the absence of bilingualism.

Finally, the structural descriptions in the first six case studies provide a strong antidote to the still common view that all pidgins and creoles have similar and simple structures. Features like the systematic OSV and SOV word order patterns of Hiri Motu, the noun class system of Kitúba, and the

/kp/ and /gb/ phonemes of Sango will surely help to eradicate the idea that pidgins and creoles have maximally simple and more or less identical grammatical structures.

The set of case studies in this book is a very small sample of the rich variety of contact languages around the world. We hope, in presenting these studies, to encourage other work along the same lines. Only with the accumulation of many solid case studies can our data-base become substantial enough to support robust generalizations about the nature and development of all types of contact language.

Notes

1. At least one hedge must be added immediately: non-contact languages may, and often do, contain a great many loanwords, but few loanwords appear in the BASIC vocabulary. English is the most famous example of a loanword-heavy language, with up to 75% of its lexicon borrowed from French and/or Latin. But it is nevertheless easy to prove that English is a Germanic language, because the vast majority of the items in its basic vocabulary, together with most of its grammar, are of Germanic origin. An added complication is that "basic vocabulary" is not a precise concept. The idea is that basic vocabulary items are those that occur in every language, and are therefore (among other things) less likely to be borrowed than culture-specific words. In spite of its vagueness, this notion is of considerable methodological importance in historical linguistics.
2. And of course not all lingua francas are contact languages. English, for instance, is the world's most-used lingua franca, and English itself is not a contact language.

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Hiri Motu

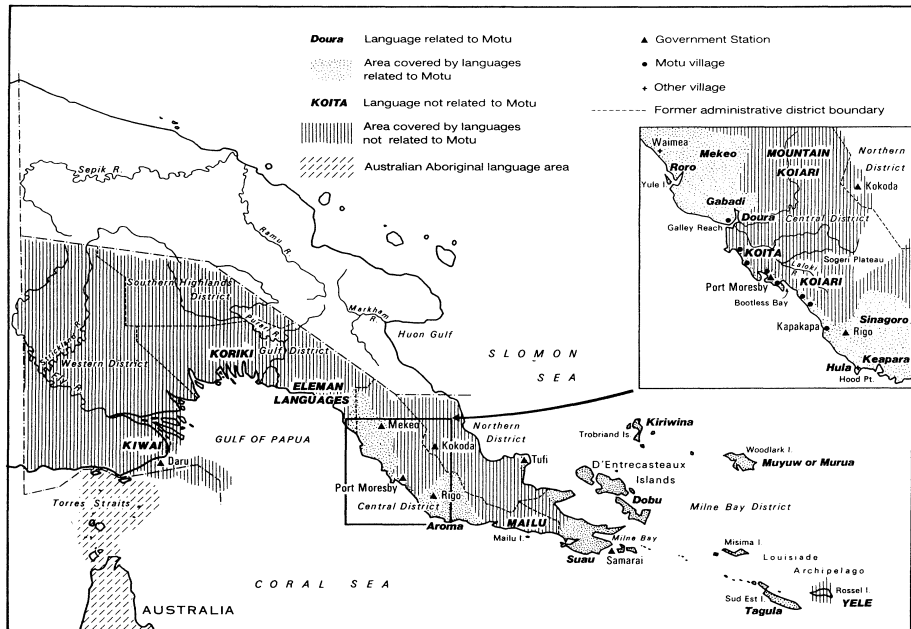
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1. Introduction¹

Hiri Motu is the name now used officially to refer to the language that used to be known as Police Motu. This is a pidginized form of Motu, the native language spoken around Port Moresby, capital of Papua New Guinea, and for some fifty kilometers or so east and west of it along the coast (Dutton 1969) — see map.² Until independence in 1975 Hiri Motu (as Police Motu) was the principal lingua franca between peoples speaking mutually unintelligible languages (including Europeans) and the unofficial language of administration of much of the southern half of the country that was then known as the Territory of Papua. In the years immediately preceding and following independence Hiri Motu assumed an important role in national politics. Today not so much is heard of it in this role although it still has the potential to become so should social conditions change to favor it. It is still, however, an important language in Papua New Guinea and one of two recognized unofficial national languages of the country, even though it is not being learned and used by the younger generation to the same extent as previously, as Tok Pisin and/or English become more widely known.³

Historically the origin of this language is uncertain as there are no relevant written records. Until recently the popular view was that (and this is the view that underlies the name change from Police Motu to Hiri Motu) it is a continuation of a trade language used by the Motu on annual trading voyages, or *hiri*, to the Gulf of Papua where the Motu traded with linguistically unrelated peoples.⁴ However, recent research shows that this cannot be the case. Instead the language most probably developed out of a special variety or register of Motu used by the Motu in talking to those who came to visit or trade with them



Map of Hiri Motu area

in their own area, whether from linguistically unrelated areas or not. This variety was a simplified form of Motu, a kind of Motu Foreigner Talk, that was, it will be claimed, taken up, used, and spread in a revised form by members of the first police force and others in British New Guinea, as Papua was called then, from the late 1880s onwards. As a result it became associated with the police force and soon became known as Police Motu.

2. Distribution and varieties

A survey of the distribution of Police Motu in 1961 (Brett et al. 1962) showed that it was at that time spoken throughout most of Papua except for those areas which had had little contact with the Administration (as, for example, in the Southern Highlands District and in distant parts of the Western, Gulf, and Milne Bay Districts) or where there were competing church languages (as, for example, in the Milne Bay and Western Districts). The Central District contained the highest number of speakers and the number of speakers diminished roughly in relation to the distance traveled away from Port Moresby in any direction. The only exception to this was in the coastal area of the Purari River delta where the language was adopted as the language of the Tommy Kabu Movement⁵ in the 1950s and was spoken “as a conscious preference” to the mother tongue of the members (Hitchcock & Oram 1967:11). In 1962 the number of speakers was estimated to be approximately 65,000, although this did not include 12,000 Motu and Koita villagers around Port Moresby who spoke Motu as their first or second language and who generally also know some kind of Hiri Motu. In the 1966 census, however, something like 110,000 persons over the age of ten years claimed to be able to speak “simple Police Motu”, or at least could answer census questions in it, and in the 1971 census upwards of 150,000 persons living in Papua New Guinea are said to have spoken it. Not all of these were Papua New Guineans but the majority of those that were came from the six administrative districts that used to make up the old political unit of Papua. The present situation is unknown as there are no more recent census statistics available. There are some indications also, as noted above, that younger speakers are not learning the language but are learning and using Tok Pisin and/or English instead.

Because of its wide distribution it comes as no surprise to find that there is no such thing as standard Hiri Motu. Instead it exists as a series of varieties

(distinguishable chiefly by their sound systems and vocabulary) representing varying degrees of difference within two dialects — a Central one and a non-Central one. Thus, for example, whereas speakers of the Central dialect generally maintain phonological distinctions made by the Motu (because their languages are closely related to Motu), speakers of the non-Central dialect do not. Consequently speakers of the non-Central dialect will be heard to say *lau* for both “I” and “go”, whereas Central dialect speakers will say *lau* for “I” and *lao* for “go”. Similarly, speakers of the Central dialect use more Motu words than speakers of the non-Central dialect do, the latter using words taken from different varieties of English or other languages of Papua. Thus, for example, speakers of the Central dialect will be heard to say *ginigunana* for “first” while those of the non-Central dialect will be heard to say *namba wan*, a form borrowed from the variety of pidgin English formerly spoken in Papua and the adjacent Torres Straits.⁶ Or again, while Central dialect speakers will use *rata* for both “breast” and “milk”, non-Central dialect speakers will use *rata* for “breast” and *susu* for “milk”; this latter word comes from some form of pidgin English or from one or more of the languages of Milne Bay, most probably Suau. Finally, whereas Central dialect speakers will say *tamagu* for “my father” and *tamamu* for “your father”, non-Central dialect speakers will say *lauegu tamana* and *oiemu tamana* respectively.

The Central dialect of Hiri Motu is that used mostly by the Motu and speakers of other closely related languages in the neighboring area who generally know some Motu. These languages are those generally referred to in the literature as Austronesian, as distinct from most others in Papua New Guinea, which are non-Austronesian or Papuan — see map. The other dialect is that used by speakers of all other languages, which are mostly not related to Motu, except in the Milne Bay Province and adjacent areas. These are all Papuan languages. This latter dialect is much more widespread than the former and several commentators have advocated that it, or selected parts of it, should be taken as the standard dialect for mass communication purposes. In fact the Central dialect is the one most used for these purposes.⁷

3. The pidgin nature of Hiri Motu

As already indicated, Hiri Motu is a pidgin language. That is, it shares a number of features with pidgins observed elsewhere. Thus, for example, it is

reduced in structure compared with its major lexical-source language, Motu. It lacks, for example, most of the inflectional and derivational morphology of Motu, has no irregular verbs, makes no distinction between alienably and inalienably possessed nouns, has restricted adjective agreement, and has generalized dual forms and a universal postposition *dekena* or *dekenai* which is very much like *long* in English-based pidgins of the neighboring region. Its vocabulary is, moreover, restricted and not based solely on Motu. Hiri Motu can also be said to be like other pidgins in being nonnative to most speakers — there are reputed to be a number of speakers who speak it as their first language, but these have never been surveyed or studied — and in being used for communication between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages across Papua. Thus, even though, as will be argued here, Hiri Motu is most probably a continuation of a simplified form of Motu that was used for communicating with visitors to the Motu area, it has developed its own structure which has to be learned just as does that of other well-recognized pidgins. Thus Motu speakers cannot produce Hiri Motu by ad-hoc simplification, just as English speakers cannot produce Tok Pisin, for example, by ad-hoc simplification of English (however much most nonspeakers think they can).⁸ It is, moreover, not immediately intelligible to Motu speakers who have not been previously exposed to it. In other words, Hiri Motu is a language in its own right and is not some debased or broken form of Motu.

4. The origin and development of Hiri Motu

At the time of first European settlement in 1874 the coastal area around Port Moresby was occupied by two completely different and linguistically unrelated groups of people, the Motu and the Koita (or Koitabu as the Motu call them). The Motu lived in maritime villages between Kapakapa in the east and Galley Reach in the west and were divided into two groups or tribes, the Eastern Motu and the Western Motu, who lived east and west of Bootless Bay respectively. Of these two groups the Western Motu played the most important role in the origin and development of Hiri Motu (as Police Motu), for it was they who were drawn into closest and increasing contact with foreigners after the arrival of the first Europeans. They were, however, distinguished culturally from their eastern counterparts by the fact that at the time of European contact (and for an unknown number of years before) they were

involved in a complex network of trading relationships with linguistically related and unrelated groups east, west, and inland of their present position. The most spectacular and important part of this trade was the *hiri*, or annual trading voyage to the Gulf of Papua several hundred kilometers away to the west. During these voyages the Motu visited such groups as the Elema (the general name given to a group of coastal peoples speaking eight closely related languages of the Eleman Family between Cape Possession in the east and the Purari River delta in the west) and their neighbors immediately westwards, the Kikori, who inhabit the delta of the Purari River. These groups speak languages unrelated to Motu and only very distantly related to each other (if they are related at all).

On these visits and on return visits made by some of these groups, the Motu and their trading partners communicated with each other in one or more of at least two different trade languages which were pidginized forms of the languages spoken by the Gulf traders. One of these languages, the Hiri Trading Language, Eleman variety, hereafter HTL(E), was based largely on the component languages of the Eleman Family, and the other, the Hiri Trading Language, Koriki variety, or HTL(K), was based on the single language, Koriki. Both of these languages had a number of features in common, although they were not mutually intelligible. The examples in Table 1 show what these languages were like, and most importantly, that they were quite different from, and should not be confused with, Hiri Motu, as has been the case in the past, although they were obviously similar in structure to it in many respects.

Table 1. The Hiri trading languages and Hiri Motu compared.

HTL(K)	HTL(E)	Hiri Motu	English
<i>Koa(nu) vapeo?</i> who(his) canoe	<i>A, neia enane</i> eh, who his <i>vevara?</i> canoe	<i>(Inai be) daika</i> (this focus) who <i>ena lakatoi?</i> his canoe	Whose canoe is this?
<i>Na vapeo.</i> my canoe	<i>Ara enane vevara.</i> I my canoe	<i>(Inai be) lau-</i> (this focus) I <i>egu lakatoi.</i> my canoe	(It's) mine.

<i>Ni noe koana?</i> you name who	<i>Eme enane rare</i> you your name <i>neia?</i> who	<i>Oi- emu ladana</i> you-your name <i>(be) daika?</i> (focus) who	What's your name?
<i>Na noe Moi.</i> my name Moi	<i>Ara enane rare</i> I my name <i>maro Moi.</i> focus Moi	<i>Lau-egu ladana</i> I- my name <i>be Moi.</i> focus Moi	My name is Moi.
<i>Ni vake(nu)</i> your friend <i>noe koana?</i> name who	<i>Ene enane pamora</i> you your friend <i>rare maro neia?</i> name focus who	<i>Oi- emu pamora</i> you- your friend <i>(be) daika?</i> (focus) who	What's your friend (or trade partner)'s name?
<i>(Na vake(nu)</i> (my friend(his) <i>noe) Elamo.</i> name) Elamo	<i>(Ara enane pamora</i> (I my friend <i>rare maro) Elamo.</i> name focus) Elamo	<i>(Lau-egu pamora</i> (I- my friend <i>be) Elamo.</i> focus) Elamo	(My friend (or trade partner)'s name is) Elamo.
<i>Elamo uapekai?</i> Elamo stay	<i>Elamo abuviti?</i> Elamo stay	<i>Elamo ia noho?</i> Elamo he stay	Is Elamo here?
<i>E, uapekai.</i> yes, stay	<i>E, abuv iti.</i> yes, stay	<i>Io, ia noho.</i> yes, he stay	Yes, he's here.
<i>Moi, anene pei</i> Moi, come food <i>navai.</i> eat	<i>Moi, abusi ma</i> Moi, come water <i>siahu abulari.</i> hot eat	<i>Moi, oi mai</i> Moi, you come <i>aniani oi ania.</i> food you eat	Moi, come and eat (some food).
<i>Na okuai!</i> me give	<i>Ara porohalaia!</i> me give	<i>Lau oi henia/ oi</i> me you give/ you <i>henia lau dekena!</i> give me to	Give it to me!
<i>Enane pu miai</i> go sago get <i>anea!</i> come	<i>Abuari pai</i> go sago <i>avaia abusi!</i> get come	<i>Oi lao rabia</i> you go sago <i>oi mailaia!</i> you bring	Go and bring some sago!
<i>Pu peo.</i> sago not	<i>Pai penepene</i> sago some <i>lasi.</i> not	<i>Rabia (ia noho)</i> sago (it stay) <i>lasi.</i> not	There's no sago.

But the *hiri* was only part of the complex network of trade and exchange that the (Western) Motu were engaged in at the time of European contact, albeit the most spectacular part. Other parts of this network involved contact with speakers of other languages that lived in their immediate neighborhood and a little farther afield. Some of these trading groups spoke (and still speak) languages that are closely related to Motu, while the remainder spoke (and most still speak) languages which, as already indicated, are not related to Motu and are only distantly related to each other in groups or families, if they are related at all.

The closest to the (Western) Motu were the Koita, who, at the time of first European contact, lived amongst the Motu as minority sections in Motu villages or in separate villages close by. Inland of the Koita and closely related to them linguistically lived the Koiari and the Mountain Koiari (also spelt Koiali). Because of their position, however, these two groups had little direct contact with the Western Motu, although there was some trade between them. They apparently knew very little if any Motu.

Beyond the Koita the Motu also traded directly with linguistically related groups on either side. In the west they visited the Doura and Gabadi of the Galley Reach area and to the east they had developed rather special relationships with the Vulaa, a tribe inhabiting Hula and associated villages around Hood Point. Motu villagers who did not go on the *hiri* depended on these people for fish while the *hiri* traders were away. In return the Vulaa received sago and other gifts from the returning *hiri* canoes.

It is not known for certain what language was used by the Motu and their trade partners in these more local contacts, but it can be assumed on the basis of the available evidence that this was a simplified form of Motu, hereafter referred to as Simplified Motu. Thus, for example, when the Rev. W. G. Lawes of the London Missionary Society settled in Port Moresby in 1874 as the first European missionary amongst the Motu, he attempted to learn Motu. However, it was not until some time later that his son, Frank, who played with the boys in the village and learned Motu from them, drew his father's attention to the fact that he did not speak "true" Motu but only a simplified version of it,⁹ which he also used in making his first translations into Motu (Taylor 1978). Later Lawes noted that this simplified version of the language that he had been taught was characterized by "a good many colloquialisms" or "instances of pidgin Motuan" in use amongst the Motu which were "not correct grammatically" but were "sanctioned by usage" (Lawes 1896:30).

This Simplified Motu was, moreover, used by the Motu “in speaking to foreigners”, although they themselves would “never do so amongst themselves”. Although Lawes did not ever describe this foreigner talk in more detail we have been able to get some further insight into its nature and use in various ways. As a result it is possible to say that this Simplified Motu was not a separate language from Motu (in the sense that it was unintelligible to native Motu speakers and had to be learned by them as a second language), but was merely a special variety or register of Motu used for communicating with a particular class of people, notably those seeking entry to the Motu world. This variety was furthermore most probably not a stable one but probably varied from speaker to speaker over time, and depending on whether the person being spoken to was a complete stranger to the Motu or not. As a variety it was distinguishable from “true” Motu by a number of grammatical features of the sort already noted and to be discussed in more detail below, some of which are not found in Motu. Thereafter nothing is heard of this Simplified Motu until more than twenty years later when a distinct language with many of the same features appears that was to become known as Police Motu and later Hiri Motu. Although there is again no linguistic evidence on the point it is presumed, on the basis of other evidence to be presented, that the two are connected and that Police Motu is a continuation of this Motu Foreigner Talk or Simplified Motu (in a modified form) and not a separate development. There are two reasons for this. The first has to do with the fact that the received oral tradition claims that Police Motu is a continuation of a *hiri* trade language (as already indicated) and the second with social developments in the Port Moresby area following the arrival of London Missionary Society missionary Lawes in 1874.

With respect to the received oral tradition it is to be noted that the principal reason for suggesting the name change Police Motu to Hiri Motu was that this language was supposed to be a “lineal descendant of the language of the Hiri” (Chatterton 1971:2). But it has already been shown that this could not have been the case, because not only did the Motu use at least two such languages (the HTLs) in *hiri* trading, but also these were markedly different from Police Motu, especially in vocabulary. So either the tradition has to be rejected as nonsense, or it has to be seen as having been misunderstood or misinterpreted at some point. Alternatively Police Motu has to be seen as a “lineal descendant” in a sense different from that normally accepted in linguistics. Given, however, that the Motu had another contact “language”,

Simplified Motu, which shares most grammatical features and vocabulary with Police Motu, a point which is demonstrated and discussed further below, the simplest explanation would appear to be that the tradition has indeed been misunderstood or misinterpreted at some time. This position is attractive, moreover, because it saves both the tradition, in a modified form, and the linguistic definition of continuation. Thus we may suggest that what the tradition really said was simply that Police Motu was the continuation of a trade language, one of several used, and not THE *hiri* trade language. Thus, both the received oral tradition, once reconstructed, and the linguistic evidence are consistent with an hypothesis that Police Motu is a lineal descendant of the contact “language” Simplified Motu. However, for this to be true particular social forces must have been active in and around Port Moresby to keep this simplified form of Motu alive and to extend its use into a general lingua franca before 1890, the year that the first police force was established in Port Moresby. One of these forces, notably the need to trade or converse with non-Motu coming into the Motu area, has already been referred to. A second force, probably not unrelated to the first, was that the Motu were apparently not keen for non-Motu to learn Motu; other forces have to do with social developments in the Port Moresby area following the arrival of missionary Lawes in 1874.

Thus when news of the discovery of Port Moresby began to filter down through the Australian colonies and overseas, people of all sorts began making their way towards this new *terra incognita* as if drawn to it by some strange magnet. The first to do so were missionaries, who were soon followed by “scientists”, entrepreneurs, explorers, adventurers, traders, and others, who in turn were followed by Government officials. Each of these groups had their effect on the use and transmission of different languages in the area, but it would appear to be the unofficial “visitors” who were the most important as far as the development of Police Motu was concerned.

These “visitors” began coming to the area soon after Lawes arrived there in 1874 and continued to do so unchecked for the next sixteen years before the governor of the newly proclaimed colony of British New Guinea was in a position to control them. They included a wide range of ethnic types such as Chinese, “Malays”, “South Sea Islanders”, persons of mixed race, Maltese, Ceylonese, Indians, Filipinos, Europeans, Americans, and a large number of British-Australian origin. Many of these stayed and “married” Papuan women from the Port Moresby area and their descendants are still to be found there

today. Apart from a few extraneous cases these unofficial visitors generally fall into two classes: “South Sea Islanders” (who came mainly from what used to be called the New Hebrides but is now called Vanuatu) and “Malays” (who came from around the Singapore-West Indonesian area).

Because these “visitors” were foreigners and were dependent on the Motu for food and other services, they would presumably have been in a situation similar to that that missionary Lawes was in when he first arrived. In other words they would have been treated like other visitors and addressed in Motu Foreigner Talk or Simplified Motu and not “true” Motu. And because these foreigners came from so many different sources (although collectively many of them may be labeled “South Sea Islanders” or “Malays”), and because they presumably had no language in common if they did not know some form of “broken” (or pidgin) English,¹⁰ the lingua franca of the Torres Straits and Queensland from where most, if not all, are known (or presumed) to have come to Port Moresby, there would have been increased pressure on them to learn and use some form of Motu as a lingua franca. Besides, they were in the minority and therefore in a weak social position. Consequently they would have been forced to accommodate to the Motu and not vice versa. Finally, because many of these foreigners were traders and traveled from one language area to another where some Motu was already known (and no English was) at the time of European contact,¹¹ some form of Motu was bound to become the natural lingua franca between foreigner and non-Motu.

In short, the whole sociolinguistic context of the Port Moresby area in the period preceding government intervention predetermined Motu in some form or other to becoming the established lingua franca of the area. But this was not just a change in frequency of use of the language; rather, it was a fundamental one in kind where its function was widened, or changed, from being a unidirectional, or vertical, one (that is, Motu-to-foreigner and vice versa) to a multidirectional, or horizontal, one (that is, foreigner-to-foreigner — including non-Motu Papuans — and vice versa).

Just what form of Motu developed out of this contact is difficult to say without written records. However, given (a) that present-day descendants say that some of their forefathers spoke “pidgin Motu”, and (b) that, as will be indicated below, a subset of these foreigners was employed by the incoming Government from 1884 onwards and that thereafter Police Motu appears amongst those who were under their charge, it seems reasonable to assume that something similar was the lingua franca of this foreigner community.

That is, it seems reasonable to assume that a form of Simplified Motu similar to that taught to Lawes, but not necessarily identical with it — in fact, most likely not identical to it, given the different origins, social standing, and presumably different language learning abilities of these foreigners¹² — was the lingua franca of this community. In any case, it would seem to be highly likely that this community would play a significant role in establishing a form of simplified Motu as the general lingua franca of the Port Moresby area. But there were other important social changes in and around Port Moresby at the time which also had their effect on the language. These changes were introduced by the establishment of a Government presence in Port Moresby.

When the four-year-old Protectorate of British New Guinea was converted into the colony of British New Guinea in 1888, Dr. (later Sir) William MacGregor was appointed first Governor. He arrived in September, 1888, proclaimed the colony, and immediately set about the two main tasks of getting to know as much of the country as possible and of building up a suitable administrative structure with the limited resources available.

At that time the colony was divided into three divisions — Eastern, Central, and Western — with headquarters at Port Moresby and Samarai and outstations at Rigo and in the Louisiade Archipelago where gold mining was developing. Port Moresby had been surveyed as a town in 1886 but had not yet developed into anything resembling one.

At this time much of the country was still unknown and not yet under government influence or control. Those areas that were under some sort of control were those more or less coextensive with mission influence or areas such as the following where commercial activity had been going on for some time: the Port Moresby-Aroma coast and immediate hinterland in the Central Division, the Kiwai area in the Western Division, and the coastal parts of the mainland tip around Milne Bay and islands in the Louisiade Archipelago in the Eastern Division.

With MacGregor's arrival conditions changed dramatically for the native population. Hitherto, the Protectorate Government had been merely conducting a holding operation, attempting as far as possible to avoid disturbances and to protect the local population from undesirable outside influences and from itself. It had few legal powers to make laws and to enforce them. But a colony was a different matter and it was the change in the nature and methods of the colonial Government that had such an impact on the local population and, in turn, on the linguistic situation. Indeed, the impact was so

great that by the time that MacGregor left British New Guinea in 1898, what was later to become known as Police Motu had become the principal, although not the sole, unofficial language of administration in many areas and the scene was set for its further expansion into other areas as similar policies and methods continued bringing new areas under control.

The principal agents in this development were the three instrumentalities of law and order: the police force, the village constable system, and the prison system. These three systems were closely related and integrated and fed on, and into, each other in the following way: the prisons provided recruits for the police force and the village constable system, which in turn provided recruits for each other as well as fresh prisoners.

When Sir William MacGregor arrived to proclaim the new colony of British New Guinea, one of the most pressing requirements was for a suitable police force with which to help extend government influence over an increasing area and to enforce law and order over those areas. Hitherto administrators of the Protectorate had to depend on “commodore justice” and on an unofficial police force composed of a heterogeneous collection of foreigners and local Papuans who acted in various capacities but who had never been trained in any way for the police work they could be called on to do. Consequently MacGregor soon set about organizing an official force which he called the Armed Native Constabulary. But as no trained personnel were available in British New Guinea to form the nucleus of this unit, MacGregor appealed to the Governor of Fiji for assistance, with the result that two Fijians and twelve Solomon Islanders from the island of Malaita were recruited to go to British New Guinea for periods between one and three years — the two Fijians, a sergeant and a corporal, for one year and the remainder, constables, for three years. The members of this force all spoke mother tongues which are Austronesian languages distantly related to Motu. In addition the Solomon Islanders probably spoke some form of Fijian as a result of having spent between six and twelve years working on plantations and/or for the Government in Fiji before being recruited, and all are presumed to have also spoken some form of English as a necessary prerequisite to being chosen to serve under English-speaking commandants in British New Guinea. This nuclear force arrived in British New Guinea in 1890 and was gradually expanded by the addition of Papuan recruits mostly from the Kiwai area of the Western Division, until, by the end of MacGregor’s term as Governor in 1898, the force consisted of one hundred and ten Papuan non-commissioned officers and constables drawn from most parts of the country then under control.

The way in which the police force was formed and developed has a number of implications for the history of Police Motu, whose name is so closely associated with it. The most important of these are:

(i) Because the founding members of the force were drawn from areas outside the Central Division, where “true” Motu was (and still is) spoken natively, they did not know any Motu on arrival. Consequently they must have been forced to communicate with one another and with their superiors in some form of English, which the majority, if not everyone, must have known. For the founding Fijians and Solomon Islanders this English was most probably what is generally referred to as “broken” English but was in reality a form of pidgin English similar to that found in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands today. Similarly the founding Papuan members from the Kiwai area of western Papua spoke a form of “broken” or pidgin English, a creolized version of which is the primary language in the Torres Straits today and whose official name is Broken (Shnukal 1988). Thus even though Police Motu eventually became associated with the force as THE language of the force, it was not the sole language of the force; “broken” or pidgin English was equally important in the formative years. In fact both languages were required for a long time as each was used in different parts of the country and a member of the force could be transferred from one part of it to another on duty at any time. But to understand why only Police Motu became associated with the force (as the name indicates) and what it was like, we have to turn to the second main implication of the way the force was formed mentioned above.

(ii) Because the force was formed in the way it was and was housed and trained in Port Moresby, and because the language situation in that area was the way it was (viz. Motu was the most widely known language while at the same time very little English of any kind was known), the police could not avoid learning some kind of Motu if they were to carry out their duties in the Port Moresby area. Thus, it will be remembered that the initial nucleus of the force consisted of imported Fijian and Solomon Islanders and that Papuan members were only added “gradually” (to use MacGregor’s words). When these imported men arrived they would immediately have recognized a number of what would today be called *wantoks* (or persons from the same area and/or cultural background) in Papua New Guinea amongst the foreigner population of Port Moresby. As these *wantoks* had been in Port Moresby for some time and were living in or near Motu villages, it is presumed that they

could speak some sort of Motu. In addition it is presumed that they would have very soon introduced their newly arrived “friends” into the Port Moresby scene, in particular to its local politics and the utility and necessity of knowing some kind of Motu for survival purposes in the Port Moresby area. Even if this had not taken place, the new arrivals would surely have quickly come to the same conclusion themselves, for they were very soon put to work after their arrival in the Rigo and Mekeo areas east and west of Port Moresby. Here they would have been working with Government officials and other employees, some of whom were the *wantoks* already referred to and all of whom it is presumed (for reasons given above) spoke some kind of Motu. Consequently, they would have been exposed to Motu being put to use in the field. Presumably they would also have been told (even if they had not needed to know) that in the Port Moresby area “Motu” was the most widespread language and that one had to be able to speak it if one wanted to communicate with the local people. At the same time, they were probably given some elementary advice about its nature and possibly even how easy it was to learn. However, they would hardly have needed much of that kind of instruction since all of these men, as already noted, spoke languages related to Motu. Indeed, they would themselves have easily recognized many of its basic words and structural elements as being similar to their own. This can be seen by looking at Table 2, in which Motu words are compared with some of the most common words from some of those languages that are known or are suspected as having been spoken by various members of the force.

For similar reasons, the form of Motu adopted by these first police is likely to have been similar to that used by the Government officers, other employees, and unofficial policemen with whom they worked and/or whom they were replacing — in other words, some form of Simplified Motu.

The formation of the police force was thus a new and important element in the development and spread of this variety of language. It provided a particular social environment in which men from different parts of the country (and overseas initially) were brought together to work. In this situation, which is akin to those on plantations elsewhere, some common language of communication was soon needed. Initially, for reasons already given, this language must have been “broken” (or pidgin) English. However, the use of “broken” (or pidgin) English in the Port Moresby area was limited by the fact that “Motu” was the established lingua franca there. Consequently, although “broken” English never died out, its use in the Central Division was more

Table 2. *Some basic vocabulary and structural elements of Motu, Fijian, and some Solomon Islands languages compared.*

English	Motu	Fijian ¹³		Solomon Islands Languages		
		Bau	Kadavu	Lau	Kwara'ae	Kwai Is
belly	boga	kete	kete	oga	sira	oga
bird	manu	manumanu	manumanu	manu	hai'no'	no
bone	turia	sui	tua	sili	sulia	suli
butterfly	bebe	beebee	bebe	bebe	beb	bebe
come	mai	lako mai	lako mai	mai	mai'	mai
die	mase	mate	mate	mae	mae	mae
eye	mata	mata	mata	maa	maa	maa
five	ima	lima	lima	lima	lima	nima
fly (v.)	roho	vuka	vuka	lofo	loh	lofo
foot	ae	yava	laga	'ae	a'e	'ae
go	lao, laka	lako	lako	lea	leka	leka
he	ia	koya	kia	nia	nia	nia
his	-na	-na	-na	-na	-n(a)	?
hornbill	bina	_____ ¹⁴	_____	bina	bina	bina
house	ruma	vale	vale	luma	lum	luma
I	lau	yau	yau	nau	naua	nau
in	lalonai	e lomani	i lomani	lalo	sae	laona
life	mauri	bula	bula	mouri	maori	mauo
lobster	ura	urau	urau	ura	deng	uragou
louse	tumu	kutu	kutu	'uu	'uu	'uu
mother	sina	tina	tina	tee	tea'	tee
my	-gu	-qu	-qu	-gu	-ku	?
name	lada	yava	ila	sata	sata	rata
paddle	hode	voce	voce	fote	fote	fotee
road	dala	sāla	saa levu	tala	tal	tala
salt, sea	tasi	maasima	maasima	asi	asi	asi
sugarcane	tohu	dovu	tovu	ofu	uuh	ofu
taro	taro	dalo	suli	alo	alo	alo
two	rua	rua	rua	rua	rua	rua
what	dahaka	cava	yava	ta	tae	taa
your (sg.)	-mu	-mu	-mu	-mu	-mu	?

restricted than elsewhere. The fact that recruits were taken to Port Moresby for initial training before being distributed around the various Government stations meant that the language traditions, once established, were perpetuated and, moreover, that because, as MacGregor noted in his Annual Report for 1892/3 (p. xxviii), “thirty or forty men leave the force each year for their own villages”, Police Motu went with them to distant parts at a constant rate.

This situation was reinforced by the two other ancillary law enforcement agencies, the village constable system and the prisons, both of which were considered by Governor MacGregor as important agents of change. These systems contributed recruits to the police force from an increasingly wide area and returned Police Motu speakers with them.

Thus by the time MacGregor’s period of governorship came to an end in 1898 there had been significant developments administratively and socially which had their effects on the linguistic situation. At first, MacGregor, like his predecessors in the Protectorate, had to rely on the mission and a number of locally appointed “servants” to maintain some sort of law and order. However, after 1890, Government influence and control rapidly outstripped mission influence and became the decisive factor in linguistic developments.

By this time “Motu” had become the unofficial language of administration. This “Motu” was that that subsequently became known as Police Motu (and now Hiri Motu) because of its association with the police, notwithstanding the fact that it was just as much part of the prison and village constable systems as of the police force.

Thereafter this language spread (along with “English”) with expanding contact with Europeans, so that today the language is spoken throughout most of what used to be called Papua. In 1971, in response to changing political circumstances in Papua New Guinea, a Study Conference on Police Motu was organized by the Government in Port Moresby to consider various aspects of the language’s future. One of the results of that conference was the adoption of a new name for Police Motu. It was felt that because the term Police Motu had “become an anachronism” (Chatterton 1971:1) the name ought to be changed to something more in keeping with the origin of the language. As a result it was changed to Hiri Motu because, as has already been pointed out, it was thought that the language was a continuation of the *hiri* trading language. This new name was subsequently adopted as the official name of the language despite the misunderstood oral tradition that lies behind it.

5. Sources of the structure and vocabulary of Hiri Motu

Sourcing the structure and vocabulary of Hiri Motu is complicated by several factors — the generally poor quality and amount of relevant early data available, the complex nature of the external history of the language, and the number and nature of possible source languages available. Assuming, however, that Hiri Motu developed out of Simplified Motu as the social evidence outlined above strongly suggests, all discussion of the source of non-Motu features in Hiri Motu must begin with Simplified Motu. Given further that Simplified Motu was a register of Motu and not a separate pidgin language, then it is also reasonable to assume, especially when there is no evidence to the contrary, that this variety was composed solely of Motu elements even though some of these were apparently not used in strictly Motu ways and even though the variety probably varied from speaker to speaker and from context to context. Consequently all non-Motu features found in Simplified Motu, and later Hiri Motu, must have come from some external source or sources if they were not the result of some universal or internally generated tendencies. There are three languages most suspect of being probable source languages for such non-Motu features: Koita, the Papuan language spoken in and around Western Motu villages; Kiwai, the Papuan language spoken by MacGregor's first Papuan police recruits; and “broken” English, the initial lingua franca assumed to have been spoken by the founding members of MacGregor's police force. Each of the three aspects of language, phonology, morphology, and vocabulary, are involved and will be considered separately.

5.1. *Phonology*

In the beginning, as has just been suggested above, Hiri Motu, as Simplified Motu, is most likely to have had a phonology similar to that of Motu. As this variety expanded into a pidgin, however, it became increasingly diversified and the pronunciation in particular began reflecting the features of the mother tongues spoken by the individual users.¹⁵ Even so, and despite still observable variation within it, the language developed a number of features which are fairly consistent across the non-Central dialect (and which therefore help define it) irrespective of the nature of the background phonologies of the individual speakers. These features are:

- (i) the reduction of the Motu *kw/gw + au* sequence to *ko*, as in *koraia* “inceptive aspect marker” (< Motu *gwauraia* “to talk about”) ;
- (ii) the absence of a distinction between Motu /g/ and /ɣ/. Thus whereas Motu distinguishes between *guria* “to bury” and *yuria* “to pray”, there is no contrast between these words in the non-Central dialect of Hiri Motu — they are homophonous;
- (iii) the contrast between Motu /r/ and /l/ is generally neutralized so that words like *lau* “I” and *rau* “leaf” are both pronounced *lau*;
- (iv) /h/ is often lost, especially word-medially;
- (v) the Motu contrast between /ao/ and /au/, between /ae/ and /ai/ and between /oe/ and /oi/ is lost so that each pair is realized as /au/, /ai/, and /oi/ respectively.¹⁶

Distinctive as these features are, it is not possible to trace them to any particular source. On social and historical grounds Koita and Kiwai are the most suspect, if these features were not progressively acquired from other Papuan languages as the dialect developed or if they did not develop independently. Both Koita and Kiwai have a number of these features in common with each other and Motu — e.g., Koita has a contrast between /g/ and /ɣ/, both Koita and Kiwai have /h/ and an open syllable structure and /a+u/ sequences, and Kiwai has a contrast between /r/ and /l/ (Wurm 1973:226). Consequently it is hard to see how they could have been sources. Likewise the languages spoken by the Solomon Islander and Fijian policemen are not likely to have been sources as they are related to Motu and are similar to it in general structure.

5.2. *Morphosyntax*

This is the area of principal difference between Simplified Motu, Hiri Motu, and Motu. Compared with Motu, Simplified Motu and Hiri Motu are generally much simpler in structure. They also include a number of features not found in Motu. The features which distinguish Simplified Motu and Hiri Motu from Motu are those set out in the Appendix together with comparative notes for a selection of other languages that are relevant to the problem of sourcing.¹⁷ Comparing the Simplified Motu and Hiri Motu features, it is to be noted that, except for four features for which there is no evidence in Simplified Motu (viz. 11, 13, 17, 18), the only features that distinguish Hiri Motu from Simplified Motu are:

- 2 “Have” and “have not”
- 3 Subject and focus markers *ese* and *be*
- 8 *Dekena(i)* as a generalized locative postposition
- 20 Word order flexibility

Such a correspondence between the two languages implies that many of the features found in Hiri Motu were acquired from Simplified Motu, and that Hiri Motu is indeed a continuation of Simplified Motu, as the social evidence presented above suggests.¹⁸ Where these features came from in Simplified Motu and Hiri Motu is, however, another question and one the linguistic evidence cannot answer unambiguously. On the one hand, most of the features that distinguish Simplified Motu and Hiri Motu from Motu have parallels in one or more of the languages the Motu were in contact with at the time of first European contact. On the other hand, all except perhaps feature 14 (*gwaurai*) can be accounted for as simplifications of Motu by the application of universal simplifying principles. But without further evidence it is not possible to make out a convincing case for the primacy of either of these two sources over the other. Indeed, it is highly likely that contact-induced changes and simplifying principles conspired with each other to give the observed results.

Where Hiri Motu differs from Simplified Motu, however, it must be the case that Hiri Motu developed those features independently after it diverged from Simplified Motu, that is, after Simplified Motu began to be used in a wider context. As already noted there are four features involved (2, 3, 8, and 20). However, as two of these (3, 8) have similar structures in one or more of the languages that the Motu were in contact with at the time of the foundation of the first police force, or that the police themselves spoke, and as they are, at the same time, derivable from Motu by universal simplifying principles, it is clear that they are in very much the same category as the similarities discussed above, i.e. they most probably result from the interaction of simplifying principles and contact-induced change. The remaining two features are of a different kind because they are not found in Motu and cannot be said to be simplifications of Motu. In fact feature 2 is as complex in Hiri Motu as in Motu and feature 20 is more complex in Hiri Motu than in Motu. Taking each of these in turn:

- (a) Feature 2: “have” and “have not”

In Simplified Motu the method of indicating “have” and “have not” appears to have been similar to the Motu method in which the prepositions *mai* “with” and *asi* “without” are used without a verb, as in examples (1) and (2):

- (1) *Lau na mai egu ira.*
 I be with my axe
 “I have an axe.”
- (2) *Lau na asi egu ira.*
 I be without my axe
 “I have no axe.”

In Hiri Motu “have” and “have not” are expressed either by using *dekena(i)* “at” with *noho* “stay” or *noho lasi* “not stay”,¹⁹ as in example (3), or by using the possessive pronoun with *noho*, as in (4):

- (3) *Lau dekena(i) be ira ia noho (lasi).*
 I at focus axe it stay (not)
 “I have (no) axe.”
- (4) *Laegu ira ia noho (lasi).*
 my axe it stay (not)
 “I have (no) axe.”

Interesting as these differences are, however, it is not possible to source them unambiguously. The reason is that there are many competing possibilities. First, they could represent independent developments. Second, they could represent changes induced by contact with the HTL(E), which has a (partly) similar construction. A third possibility is that they could represent developments induced by contact with the form of “broken” English assumed to have been spoken by unofficial “visitors” and the founding members of MacGregor’s police force recruited in Fiji. This is so because one way of expressing “have” was probably (judging by the fact that it is currently used in Bislama and other modern forms of the “broken” English spoken in the South Pacific in earlier times) to use a possessive construction with *stap* “to be”, as in the following example from Bislama:²⁰

- (5) *Akis bilong yu i stap?*
 axe of you be
 “Do you have an axe?”

A final possibility is that the constructions could have resulted from changes induced by HTL(E) and “broken” English constructions. Yet despite the uncertainty surrounding the origin of these “have” constructions, one thing is clear and that is that the constructions could not have come from the native languages spoken by MacGregor’s policemen and those joining later, as these were Papuan languages which do not use similar constructions. Koita is excluded for similar reasons.

(b) Feature 20: word order

Word order in Hiri Motu is quite varied, depending on whether the subject (S) and object (O) are nouns or pronouns. There are four possibilities:

(i) When both S and O are nouns the order is S *ese* O V, as in example (6):

- (6) *Sisia ese boroma ia itaia.*
 dog pig he see
 “The dog saw the pig.”

(ii) When S is a noun and O is a pronoun the order is O *be* S *ia* V, or less commonly SVO, as in (7):

- (7) *Lau be sisia ia itaia. ~ Sisia ia itaia lau.*
 I dog it see dog it see I
 “The dog saw me.”

(iii) When S is a pronoun and O is a noun the order is OSV, as illustrated in (8):

- (8) *Sisia lau itaia.*
 dog I see
 “I saw the dog.”

(iv) When S and O are pronouns the order is OSV, or less commonly SVO, as in (9):

- (9) *Oi lau itaia. ~ Lau itaia oi.*
 you I see ~ I see you
 “I saw you.”

In Simplified Motu, however, word order was apparently invariably SOV (although there is unfortunately no evidence available for pronominal objects), as in (10):

- (10) *Ia mero itaia.*
he boy see
“He saw the boy.”

This means that sometime between the documentation of Simplified Motu and that of Hiri Motu word order developed considerable flexibility, a flexibility not found in Motu, which has the basic order SOV for nominal Ss and Os but uses prefixes and suffixes on the verb for pronominal subjects and objects. Excluding *ese* and *be*, which are Motu features, either this development must have been an independent one or it derives from the pidgin Englishes and/or other languages spoken by unofficial “visitors” or the first policemen. A further possibility is that it derives from Koita. Of these the most likely source is Koita, if any one particular source was responsible for this development in Hiri Motu, as it has some of the same flexibility as exhibited by Hiri Motu. For example both SOV and OSV word orders occur depending on the nature of the sentence (Dutton 1975). Whether or not Koita was the only or principal source, it would seem that the other possible sources named above could hardly have been sources as (i) the “broken” Englishes presumed to have been spoken by “visitors” and the early policemen did not have this kind of variation (judging by modern forms of them) and (ii) the majority of native languages spoken by the “visitors” and early policemen were Austronesian (including Indonesian, Solomon Islands, Vanuatuan, and Fijian languages) and Papuan ones which did not have this kind of variation. Clearly then it is not possible to identify the source or sources of word order flexibility in Hiri Motu with any confidence.

5.3. Vocabulary

The vocabulary of modern Hiri Motu comes from several different sources. The largest percentage of words comes from Motu itself, as the name suggests. This percentage includes the language’s most basic vocabulary (that is, its pronouns, its names for common objects, body parts, kinship terms, adjectives, and simple action verbs) as well as a number of other words introduced by the South Sea Island pastor-teachers of the London Missionary Society who spearheaded the introduction of Christianity into Papua in the 1870s. These words include such items as *pakosi* “scissors”, *tamaka* “shoes”, *pavapavana* “king”, and *mamoe* “sheep”. The remaining Hiri Motu vocabulary is made up of words that come from other languages of Papua as well as

from “broken” or other varieties of English that have been spoken in Papua throughout its history. Thus Hiri Motu contains such words as *namba wan* “first”, *bulamakau* “beef”, *rais* “rice”, *ti* “tea”, *kesikesi* or *bisikesi* “biscuit”, *traim* “to try”, and *mikisim* “to mix”, which were part of the contact vocabulary used by foreigners speaking “broken” or other forms of English, who came to the Port Moresby area in increasing numbers in the 1870s and 1880s. Subsequently other English words were added as new ideas and goods flowed into the country. The introduction of some of these can be dated quite precisely and their nature has changed over time as changes in technology and in English usage have occurred. The best examples of these are words for such introduced vehicles as aeroplanes, motor vehicles, and boats. Thus when aeroplanes were first introduced into Papua in the 1930s Papuans learned to refer to them as *plaimasini* or *plaimasi* “flying machines” in Hiri Motu. However, as aeroplanes became more popular and English speakers referred to them more generally as “aeroplanes” and eventually “planes”, so the Hiri Motu word changed from *plaimasini* or *plaimasi* to *elopleni* and *pleni*. Similarly trucks (*traka* in Hiri Motu today) were apparently first referred to as *lori* (from English “lorry”), and ships (*boti* in Hiri Motu today) as *sisima* or *sitima* (from English “steamer”).

A small part of Hiri Motu vocabulary is also made up of words that come from languages both related and unrelated to Motu in Papua, and it is suspected that many more such words were once part of the language.²¹ Some, such as *kamkam* “fowl, bush fowl”, *o kapore* “oh sorry”, *dimdim* “white man”, and possibly *susu* “milk”, can be traced to Suau, the Austronesian language related to Motu along the southern coast of the mainland just west of Milne Bay — see map. Others have come from Koriki (*nakimi* “brother-in-law”), the substratum language of the HTL(K) trade language referred to above, from Binandere on the north coast (e.g. *kiki* “to yarn, tell a story”),²² and from languages of the Torres Straits (*mamoos* or *mamus* “chief, policeman”), all of which are unrelated to Motu.

Thus linguistic features of Hiri Motu support the view suggested by social evidence that Hiri Motu is a descendant of SM, although it is not possible to identify the source or sources of most features of Hiri Motu that distinguish it from Motu and its predecessor Simplified Motu. Many of these were common to other languages that the Motu were in contact with at the time of first European contact but could equally well, and most probably do, represent the results of several processes — the application of universal

simplifying processes to Motu, changes induced by contact with one or more other languages which have similar structures, and independent developments.

6. Conclusion

To recapitulate, in this paper I have argued, mainly on social grounds supported by comparative linguistic evidence, that Hiri Motu is not, as its name is meant to suggest, a continuation of one of the *hiri* trading languages used by the Motu in trading with linguistically unrelated peoples of the Gulf of Papua. Rather it is a descendant of a simplified form of Motu that was used by the Motu as a contact language with anyone coming to visit them in their own area. This language, unlike the *hiri* trading languages used by them, which were simplified forms of languages spoken by their Gulf trade partners, was a simplified form of their own language. This Simplified Motu was not related to those spoken on the *hiri* and was quite separate from them. It existed before the arrival of Europeans and other foreigners but was used by the Motu to communicate with the first European missionary in the area, Dr. Lawes, and taught to him as their language. The origin of this Simplified Motu is unknown, but it most probably developed initially out of the contact between the Motu and their closest neighbors, the Koita, although others may have been involved. After the 1870s this Simplified Motu was extended in use by the arrival of a relatively large number of unofficial “visitors” who came to the area before a strong Government presence was established there. Some of these foreigners were later employed by the Government as interpreters, guides, boatmen, and unofficial policemen and were probably largely responsible for a form of this language being adopted by members of the first official police force, from which the language took its early name, Police Motu. Thereafter the language became associated with the Government and the enforcement of law and order and spread with expanding Government control over the country. From that time on the history of the language became one of increasing competition with the other main lingua franca spoken in Papua before the Second World War, “broken” English. During this time also the language came into contact with other languages besides “broken” English as recruits were drawn into the police force from different areas and as the language expanded into different geographical areas. As a result the language

developed into two main dialects which varied in the sounds used and in some grammatical features (e.g. word order, object marking on verbs, possessive case) but especially in vocabulary (e.g. in non-Motu items obtained from other languages of Papua, “broken” English, and English). With the coming of the Second World War Police Motu was recorded and described for the first time and given official recognition. At the same time it was spread farther afield, was regularized, and was used increasingly for mass communication. After the war the language increased in status and “broken” English lost its identity as standard English was promoted officially with great vigor. In 1971 the name Police Motu was changed to Hiri Motu and the language began to acquire new ranges of vocabulary in keeping with increased contact with English and Tok Pisin, the other major lingua franca of Papua New Guinea since the Second World War, and in keeping with the changing social conditions in an increasingly complex society. In 1975 it acquired equal status with Tok Pisin as one of two unofficial national languages.

Appendix

Pidgin Features of Hiri Motu Compared with Those of Simplified Motu and Other Languages

In the chart below, HM = Hiri Motu, SM = Simplified Motu, HTL(E) = Hiri Trading Language, Eleman variety, HTL(K) = Hiri Trading Language, Koriki variety, and PPE = Papuan Pidgin English.

Feature of HM	SM	HTL(E)	HTL(K)	PPE
1. No irregular verbs	Yes? - most common ones like "come, go" appear in simple form as in HM	Yes, no irregular verbs	Yes, no irregular verbs	Yes, no irregular verbs
2. "Have" and "have not" expressed by <i>dekenai</i> + <i>noho</i> or by POSS + N + <i>noho</i>	Uses both full form and short form of Motu construction with postposition <i>mai</i> "with"	Sometimes uses <i>ita</i> "with", sometimes <i>amumuti</i> "stay", but neither in negative sentences	No verb used	?- no evidence but presumably <i>gat</i> and <i>stap</i> as in Torres Straits Broken (of which PPE was an extension) and Bislama
3. Uses <i>ese</i> and <i>be</i> as subject mrkr or focus elements	No subject or focus mrkr (although evidence very limited)	No subject mrkr but focus mrkr <i>maro</i> most commonly used after subject	No subject or mrkr	No subject or focus marking elements
4. Restricted dual pronoun form	Yes, same as in HM	? (free pronoun + <i>oraore</i> "two")	? (free pronoun + <i>rearea</i> "two")	? - no evidence
5. No bound pronoun subjects or objects on verbs (except in Central dialect); uses free pronouns derived from "true" Motu	Yes, same as in HM	Yes, no bound forms; uses free pronouns taken from Eleman languages	Yes, no bound forms; uses free pronouns taken from Koriki	Yes, same as HM, except uses free pronouns derived from English
6. Transitive verbs are marked by final <i>-a</i>	Yes, same as in HM	No, transitive verbs are not consistently marked	No, there is no transitive marker on verbs	No, although <i>-im</i> is often used in similar way
7. No noun classes based on possession (e.g. alienable vs. inalienable)	Yes, same as in HM	Yes, no noun classes but uses a relator <i>enane</i> derived from Eleman languages	Yes, no noun classes and no relators	Yes, same as in HM

8. <i>Dekena(i)</i> a generalized postposition	No, uses Motu postpositions	? - evidence patchy but when case is marked there is variation between suffix <i>-ai</i> (< Motu) and preposed forms <i>ta</i> , <i>ba</i> and <i>la</i> (< Eleman languages)	No, generalized postposition used for directions	No, uses <i>along/long</i> as generalized locative preposition
9. Generalized forms for “like this, like that” and “how”	? - no evidence	No, uses Eleman forms although these are similar in structure to HM ones, e.g. <i>ma-feare</i> (lit. this-like) “like this”	? - no evidence	? - no evidence
10. Restricted forms for “all” and “the whole”	? - available evidence suggests same as in HM	? - no evidence	? - no evidence	No, uses <i>all</i> and <i>altugeta</i>
11. Restricted adjective agreement	? - no evidence	No, no adjective agreement at all	No, no adjective agreement at all	No, no adjective agreement at all
12. Simple imperative	Yes, same as in HM	Yes, but using Eleman material	Yes, but using Koriki material	Yes
13. <i>Dohore</i> and variants used before verb to indicate future	? - no evidence of such use in available materials	? - no tense distinctions in verbs, these being indicated by adverbs of time such as <i>aire</i> “later, afterwards”, or <i>vevere</i> “tomorrow” for future; <i>mamaro</i> “now” for present. There is no evidence for past tense. If there is no adverb of time in sentence the tense can be read as past, present or future	No, but Koriki material can be used in similar way although future tense is mostly indicated by <i>-varia</i> on verbs	No, but <i>baimbai</i> used in similar way
14. Uses <i>vadaeni</i> , <i>noho</i> and <i>gwauraia</i> after verb to indicate completed, continuous, and intensive/inceptive aspect	No evidence of use of <i>noho</i> , but <i>vada</i> is used before verbs to indicate completed action (as in Motu) and <i>gwauraia</i> after verb (as in HM) to indicate intention	No, uses <i>kaolaia</i> after verbs for completed action and <i>sinanaia</i> (which is translation equivalent of <i>gwauraia</i> in HM) or <i>mamaro</i> after verbs for intention (which is translation equivalent of <i>vadaeni</i> in HM)	? - but <i>-varia</i> may be used for intention	No? - but some evidence that <i>finis</i> is used in similar way for completive; evidence lacking for continuous and inceptive aspects

15. Uses <i>lasi</i> as generalized neg-ative: (a) after verbs; (b) after adjectives	Yes, same as in HM: (a) <i>lasi</i> after verbs; (b) <i>lasi</i> after adjectives	Yes, same as in HM: (a) <i>lasi</i> after verbs; (b) <i>lasi</i> after adjectives	No, but <i>pea</i> is used in similar way: (a) <i>pea</i> after verbs; (b) <i>pea</i> after adjectives	No, uses: (a) <i>no</i> before verbs; (b) <i>no</i> before adjectives
16. Reflexivity expressed by <i>sibona</i> without special verb forms	Yes, same as in HM	? - no evidence	? - no evidence	? - no evidence
17. Temporal clauses marked by <i>negana(i)</i>	? - no evidence in available materials. Juxtaposition the main relating device	? - no evidence. Juxtaposition the main relating device	? - V + <i>ane</i> "and, when, if" or juxtaposition used in available materials	No, uses juxtaposition only
18. Uses <i>bema</i> as conditional clause marker	? - no evidence in available materials. Juxtaposition the main relating device	? - no evidence	No, uses V + <i>ane</i> "and, when, if" or juxtaposition in available materials	No, although uses <i>sapos</i> "if" in similar way
19. Uses <i>vadaeni</i> "enough, okay" as sentence connective	Some use of <i>vadaeni</i> similar to HM	No, although form <i>tora</i> "enough, okay" used in similar way	No, although form <i>oao</i> "enough, okay" used in similar way	No, although <i>finis</i> "finished" and <i>orait</i> "okay" used in similar way sometimes
20. Flexible word order depending on whether subjects and objects are nouns or pronouns	? invariable SOV like Motu although no evidence for pronouns available	SOV	SOV	SVO

Notes

1. This paper is a condensed version of my book *Police Motu: iena sivarai* (1985).
2. For descriptions of Motu see Lister-Turner & Clark (1930) and Taylor (1970). The standard variety is taken to be that described by Lister-Turner & Clark.
3. Tok Pisin is the fastest growing language in Papua New Guinea. Until independence it was the principal lingua franca and unofficial language of administration of the northern half of the country, or that part of it that was known as the Territory of New Guinea. For detailed descriptions of it see Wurm & Mühlhäusler (1985) and references therein.
4. For example, Chatterton (1950:5) says, "its origin dates back to before European penetration of Papua, when it was the trading language between the Motuans and their customers along the shores of the Gulf of Papua, to whom they bartered pots for sago."

5. This was a movement led by Tommy Kabu. As a result of his wartime experiences Tommy Kabu felt that the only way to improve the living standard of his and other linguistically related peoples in the area was to adopt a single unifying language, Hiri Motu. At the time the population of the delta was estimated to be 6000, most, if not all, of whom belonged to the movement (Hitchcock & Oram 1967:5, 18).
6. As will be indicated below, a form of Pidgin English now often referred to as Papuan Pidgin English following Mühlhäusler (1978) — but actually only an extension of the pidgin English formerly spoken in the Torres Straits and now creolized and referred to as *broken* (Shnukal 1988) — was spoken in some parts of Papua before Police Motu began to be disseminated.
7. This is so mainly (a) because of its historical association with its parent Motu; (b) because this was the form of the language most similar to that propagated in early primers of the language; (c) because Central dialect speakers were the best educated (having been the first to be brought under mission and government control); and (d) because Central dialect speakers were readily available to act as translators and interpreters in Government offices (on account of their distribution around Port Moresby, the administrative centre). Hence the impression usually given is that the Central dialect is the standard dialect, whereas there is no official standard dialect.
8. The evidence for this claim is to be found in the various handbooks and language learning courses available on the language (e.g. Chatterton 1946 and others, Dutton & Voorhoeve 1974, Wurm & Harris 1963).
9. Even so it was only with difficulty that Lawes was able to learn the true language, because many of the villagers were still opposed to imparting this knowledge to strangers, a position some of the older men maintained until the 1920s (Chatterton 1970:95).
10. The use of the term “broken” English dates back to the very early days in Queensland. However, despite its name this language was really a pidgin language with features similar to those found in pidgin Englishes in the South-West Pacific and elsewhere today. In fact it is still referred to as Broken in the Torres Straits, where it has become creolized, as already noted.
11. For example, Lawes notes in his journal on 4 April 1876 at Mailu (some 250 or more kilometers east of Port Moresby) that “as most of them know a little of the Port Moresby dialect I find I can communicate with them pretty freely”, and again in June of the same year at Hula (about 100 kilometers east of Port Moresby) he notes, “most of the Hula natives understand more or less of the Port Moresby dialect”.
12. I say “presumably” here because without any evidence of the language learning abilities of these foreigners it is not possible to be more precise. Yet we know that individuals in general do display different language learning capabilities, and that level of education is not necessarily an indication of that ability. Thus, for example, J.H.P. Murray, the renowned Lieutenant-Governor of Papua for thirty-three years, admitted to attempting to learn “true” Motu but did not get very far with it. “It is said to be easy,” he wrote in a letter to his brother George on 14th March 1904, “but for some reason or other I cannot get the hang of it” (West 1970:35). This lack of success annoyed him, the more so because of his knowledge of Latin, Greek, French and German — he was a judge and classical scholar. By way of contrast, most Papua New Guineans are excellent language learners and many are multilingual without ever having been to school.

13. Bau and Kadavu are dialects of Eastern Fijian, which is generally distinguished from Western Fijian or Wayan.
14. Hornbills are not native to Fiji.
15. In general these languages are similar to Motu in having open syllables, five-vowel systems, and consonant systems that differ from it mainly in the number of distinctions made at the alveolar point of articulation. Probably the most extreme cases are to be found in some languages of the Gulf of Papua which do not have contrasts between stops, liquids, and/or nasals. As a result common Motu words like *lau* "I" or *lao* "go", *dala* "road", *vanagi* "canoe", and *lasi* "no, not" which contain some of these sounds are generally pronounced as *nau*, *dana*, *maragi*, and *nasi* respectively.
16. These tendencies are apparently what has led some observers to claim that "it seems that there is some canon of "correctness" to which good speakers try to conform even when this involves distinctions which are not part of their native linguistic habits" (Wurm & Harris 1963:1). It has long been suggested by some that Hiri Motu, unlike Motu, has an /s/ phoneme. This latter claim must, however, be rejected as not substantiated by the data. Traditionally Motu had no /s/ phoneme — [s] was merely a distributional allophone of /t/ — although s was written by Lawes in reducing the language to writing and has become established. However, with the increasing familiarity with spoken and written English, from which many words are now borrowed into Motu, /s/ has become an added phoneme — e.g., *sobea* "to survey", *so* "saw, show", *Sabati* "Sabbath". The same has happened in Hiri Motu.
17. The Simplified Motu features are based on those enumerated and discussed in Taylor (1978) and Dutton (1986) and those for Hiri Motu in Dutton (1985:8-16), which, for space limitation reasons, cannot be included here.
18. Any other assumption is much more complex and therefore less preferable. For example, an obvious alternative is that Hiri Motu acquired its features independently of Simplified Motu and that both accidentally ended up with similar features because of similar social and linguistic forces acting on them.
19. Both *dekena(i)* and *noho* come from Motu although *dekena(i)* in Hiri Motu is a generalized form of Motu *deke* + pronoun + *ai*, a combination used to indicate nearness to persons, e.g. *lau deke-gu-ai* (lit. I towards-me-at) "near me" or "beside me". In Hiri Motu *dekena(i)* does not vary for persons and is used to express a wide range of locational meanings (such as "to, at, from") as well as the instrumental meaning "with".
20. The most common way of expressing "have" in Bislama and Broken is by using the verb *gat* (< English *got*), but the following construction using *stap* is still very common, especially when the speaker is referring to an object that is on or about his/her person at the time of speaking.
21. Thus, for example, Lock (n.d.: 3) noted that "nearly all the different tribes have their own formation of Police Motu" and (p.1) "the language takes its name from the Native Police Force whose members picked up more Motu words and added them to the Bastard language".
22. See my 1980 article (fn. 5, pp. 194-95) for a discussion of the origin of *nakimi* and my 1987 article for an account of the origin of *kiki*.

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