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MOUTON

Peter Mühlhäusler

PITKERN- NORF'K

THE LANGUAGE OF PITCAIRN ISLAND AND
NORFOLK ISLAND



DIALECTS OF ENGLISH

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Peter Mühlhäusler
Pitkern-Norfolk

Dialects of English



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Peter Mühlhäusler

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“Dedicated to the memory of my faithful ferret friends”

Foreword

In this monograph I have attempted not only to present a descriptive account of a fascinating contact language but also to spell out the numerous difficulties experienced in trying to produce such an account. Whilst it appears in the *Dialects of English* series, like other languages subsumed under this label, the status of Pitkern and Norf'k as an English dialect is problematic. It is true that Pitkern and Norf'k meet the criteria of being geographically bounded and being spoken in territories without their own army and navy. However, other criteria such as mutual intelligibility with English, shared basic vocabulary items in a Swadesh list or shared structural properties have yielded wildly different findings by different observers.

Categorizations such as Pidgin, Creole and Cant, all of them applied to Pitkern and Norf'k at one point or other, are problematic. The ontological status of forms of speech related to English is a matter of ongoing debate and it is for this reason that I have asked for the editor's permission to add a chapter on ontology, whilst generally following the layout of chapters of other books in this series.

Like other chapters of my account the discussion of ontology highlights a number of serious problems:

It is far from clear what linguists want to represent as there is no object language out there. Rather the notions of language, dialect, patois or Creole are derived from a reification metaphor that turns dynamic processes of human communication into discursively constructed bounded static objects.

Labels such as English or Dutch misleadingly suggest some sort of identity or at least continuity over time, but in the case of Pitkern and Norf'k this is hardly the case. There have been vast structural differences over time, changing overlap with English and major changes in transmission patterns. There also are no agreed criteria for deciding whether Pitkern and Norf'k are the same language and, if not, at what time they became different languages.

There is a persisting belief among linguists that there can be a straightforward iconic relationship between a representation and what is meant to be represented. I have tried to show in the chapter on phonetics and phonology why such a belief is entirely unwarranted.

Finally, there is a huge gap between what linguists and users of a language know, do and believe. One can dismiss the views of users as unreliable tertiary intuitions, as Bloomfield did and as continues to be in evidence in present-day descriptive, typological and creolistic approaches to languages. In my experience, the linguists, not the speakers and informants are the problem. Speakers are aware of numerous historical and contextual contingencies as well as the ambiguities and cultural implications of their ways of speaking. Linguists want

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to arrive at grand generalizations and achieve maximum comparability between the descriptions of different languages. Put differently, speakers know about parole/performance, linguists are after langue/competence.

Working with real speakers rather than abstract ideal speaker-hearers leads to an account that has many loose ends. My account is like an unfinished puzzle: There are some fragments where the pieces fit together, a lot of loose puzzle pieces and a lot of gaps. However, some of the fragments that I have been able to work out make sense to the users of the language and afford important glimpses at the nature of this intriguing language.

Working with real speakers also means to take their concerns seriously. The fact that the chapter on spelling is relatively detailed reflects the fact that spelling is central to the Norfolk community and, to a lesser extent, to the Pitcairn Islanders. Again, the question of the decline of both varieties and the wish of the Islanders to revive and strengthen their ways of speaking is paramount. Language for them is the primary expression of a distinct identity and its continued strength the means of preserving their way of life. A parameter-rich approach to description such as is subscribed to by integrational linguistics and ecolinguistics can help highlight parameters needed for practical applications, unlike stream-lined abstract accounts that do little for reviving languages. For a language to continue being used what is required is a complex ecological support system. Whether a dictionary, a spelling system or a structural description is part of such a support system is far from certain.

As I have shown in a number of cases, working with real speakers often yields multiple and conflicting accounts, which are difficult to resolve. Contested words, spellings and sensitivities are a sign of the viability of a language rather than of its decline.

I am a believer in slow fieldwork. My book is the result of over twenty years of work, which includes 30 visits to Norfolk Island, three visits to the Pitcairn Islands Study Center, visits to archives in Australia and the UK as well as intensive correspondence with stakeholders on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island and my academic colleagues. I am grateful for the insights they have given me and for sharing personal documents and observations.

I hope my collaboration will last for many more years and that what I am doing continues to help the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders to live how they want to live.

Stirling, South Australia, August 2020

Peter Mühlhäusler
*University of Adelaide &
 Linacre College, University of Oxford*

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To tell the story of the Norfolk Island language is to recount a moving tale of birth, growth, hardship and maturity. Unique sounding with a pleasant lilt, the Norfolk language reveals the evolution of a new culture: a direct reflection of the Islander's mixed Tahitian and English heritage. Born of a necessity for communication between two distinctly different races, the language termed simply 'Norf'k' has become an essential element of a Norfolk Islander's identity. (Grube 2013: 1)

1 Ontology

1.1 Introduction

Linguists hold many views on the nature of their subject matter, language and languages, though some at least have concluded that this is too difficult a topic and that it would be better to restrict oneself to asking 'What is grammar?' However, as grammars are grammars of some language or other, it is difficult to avoid questions about the nature of language and languages. Questions about language are concerned with generalities of human communication, questions about languages are concerned with peculiarities of individual languages, their origin and development, and shared properties of groups of languages.

A major obstacle to getting answers is that languages are not objects out there waiting to be discovered. They are processes of communication, ways of speaking that have been reified metaphorically into objects. They are constructs brought into being by historical contingencies and discursive practices. Linguistics has no methods for falsifying the claim that Bosnian or Norwegian are languages, that Bosnian and Serbian are two separate languages or that Pidgin English is English. Similar things can be said about the question: What type of language are we dealing with? There is much debate about the notion of Creole languages (Bakker 2014), whether they constitute a distinctive category, and whether they are exceptional because of their history, their communicative functions or their structural properties. Expecting historical, functional and structural criteria to coincide is naïve, and, moreover, such criteria are applied to descriptive accounts of languages rather than languages qua dynamic activities.

In my account, I shall refer to the forms of speech used on Pitcairn Island by its official name Pitkern (P) and to those of Norfolk Island by its official name Norf'k (N), where a distinction is required, and to P-N where no such distinction is needed. Languages change over time and a single label such as English or Pitcairnese is no warranty that it refers to a single phenomenon.

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Identity over time tends to be a particularly problematic notion with rapidly developing contact languages. In our particular case, the few early reported examples of P exhibit a number of properties reminiscent of a pidgin whereas the texts I obtained from present-day young speakers of N are modified English rather than a distinct language. Its use side by side with other older varieties and the second language learners' variety of NICS (Norfolk Island Central School) N suggests that several different types of languages may be spoken contemporaneously on Norfolk Island.

The choice of labels such as patois, pidgin, dialect or language may ultimately be arbitrary, as one cannot expect that there will be natural classes of languages. However, the choices made by linguists, speakers and other observers will have many consequences for a community. In the days when N was talked about as a debased form of English,¹ it seemed imperative to educators to exterminate it. Those who talk about P and N as a pidgin often evoke negative associations.

Such matters need to be addressed by anyone who wishes to find out more about P-N. Before arriving at any conclusions, I would like to examine what others have said. Essentially, we are dealing with two debates – one by outsiders and one by insiders. As regards the former, they are handicapped by many factors. The majority of statements surveyed give first impressions by outsiders who have made only brief contact with the Pitcairners or simply quote from one another. Reports about the language are handicapped by the practice of the Pitcairners (ultimately derived from the Tahitian speech act *ha'avare* or, in P *hypocrite har English* and in N *false face* 'dissemble, tell untruths to outsiders' or 'scrupulous lying to outsiders' (Christian 2011: 318). Just as there are many conflicting accounts about the mutiny and the first violent years of the Pitcairn settlement, there are numerous conflicting accounts about the past and present linguistic situation on Pitcairn and Norfolk. Even outsiders that have spent much time and effort do not necessarily get 'the real McCoy', as P-N, to a significant extent, is an esoteric language. Aspects such as the lexicon and grammar of social control typically have remained unnoticed and undocumented. Nevertheless, it seems essential to survey outsider judgements, if only because they constitute the visible body of opinions.

As regards the insider views, Roy Harris (1980: 9) observed: "To say that a language user already had the only concepts of a language worth having is not claiming that all language users have the same concept of a language".

¹ Speaking Norf'k was referred to as 'killing *the King*' or '*breaking the King's crown*' by school teachers in the assimilation days (first half of the 20th century) and children were punished for committing this 'crime'.

The aim of this book is to achieve an emic rather than a purely etic and descriptive account of P-N. Therefore, it is important to understand the different concepts held by Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders and to relate them to the discourses of education, language politics and linguistics.

1.2 Metalinguistic views

Different cultural groups can differ greatly with regard to their talk about talk. An overview over these varying cultural conceptions has been given by Carbaugh (1989). Interest in language and discourse about language can also differ at different times. In the case of P-N, the Pitcairners had few views and said very little about their language up to the turn of the twentieth century. No mention of a distinct language on Pitcairn is made in Rosalind Young's detailed *Story of Pitcairn Island* (1894), nor in John Buffett's account of *Twenty Years residence on Pitcairn Island* (1845–1846). It appears that the Pitcairners regarded P as a distinct way of speaking English rather than as a distinct language. When asked by visitors what they spoke they invariably replied 'English'. Metalinguistic discourse by Islanders on P and N is a recent phenomenon, coinciding with outsiders' attempts to eradicate their ways of speaking. It is for this reason that statements by outsiders are given more detailed attention.

The majority of outsider views are those of visitors, missionaries, members of the colonial administration and writers of literary fiction. Linguists only began to take note of the language from the middle of the 20th century. Whilst there have been few descriptive accounts until quite recently, a perusal of the vast number of books and articles written about the Bounty story reveals a very large number of comments about the ways of speaking of the descendants of the mutineers and their Polynesian spouses.

'Outsiders' is one of the names² given by the Pitcairners to short-term visitors to their island, whilst 'interlopers' is at times used for outsiders who settled on Pitcairn. Pitcairn was a port of call for a large number of vessels (Ford 1996) until the arrival of trans-Pacific air travel in the mid-20th century and many visitors have commented on the language situation on Pitcairn.

² *Ar English* is a common name for outsiders on Pitcairn, on Norfolk names such as *horse*, *loopies* or *toolies* are used for different types of short-term visitors and residents.

1.2.1 Outsider residents' and visitors' views on Pitkern

The first annotated list of quotations by outsiders was compiled by Maude (1964: 118–120) and the statements in this list continue to feature prominently in subsequent accounts of the language. Most of the comments by outsiders reflect prejudice and ignorance, but among the many dozens I have collected, some contain surprisingly perceptive statements.

Between 1790 and 1808, Pitcairn Island was cut off from the rest of the world, and when rediscovered by the American Captain Folger in 1808 was inhabited by a single surviving British sailor, ten Tahitian women and 23 island-born children.

Folger writes that he was addressed by the children in English³ and that they claimed to be English because their fathers were English: Subsequent visitors emphasised that the Pitcairners spoke English remarkably well and that it was the common language on the island. By the 1820s there were reports that their English was far from perfect. Ramsay noted their “childlike” speech patterns:

They have no idea of grammar hence they speak like a child, almost always leaving out the auxiliary verbs and often the participles. Example: I like much hear you talk – that very good – Captain Raine very funny man – we like to do well but we not know how – no good in doing wrong. When I do wrong something in my head tell me so – God have nothing to do with the wicked – Talk about that, I like hear you talk about that – that very good talk . . . (Captain Raine, recorded in the scrapbook of the ship *Surry* by the ship’s doctor, Doctor Ramsay, in 1821).

In the year 1840, a report by Robbins, the Captain of the whaling ship *Swift* (quoted in Ford 1996: 23), suggests functional differentiation between Pitkern and English for the first time: “The natives, before coming on board, very politely asked permission of the captain. They speak very good English when talking to English or Americans, but not intelligible at all to me when talking to each other, owing to their talking so very quickly”.

Similar comments on the emerging diglossia were made by Metoixos (1850, quoted from Ross and Moverley 1964: 120): “The language of conversation among themselves is fast degenerating into a dialect. They can speak English, when they take the trouble, with remarkable purity, but with a formality of expression, which shows it to have been acquired from books”.

It is deemed impolite by the Pitcairners to use Pitkern in the company of outsiders, and this may explain why the mixed Tahitian-English language has

3 The tradition of addressing outsiders in Standard English continues to the present.

remained invisible to visitors. Whilst it is rarely used to communicate with outsiders, it is spoken in front of outsiders to signal exclusion from communication and as a sign of defiance. The visibility of the language serves as an index of tensions between outsiders and Pitcairners and Metoixos' observations are repeated again and again in outsiders' writings. Some observers remain unaware of the presence of two languages on Pitcairn, for instance the anonymous writer of an article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* October 15th, 1899, titled *Home of the Mutineers*: "Everybody speaks with a more than pronounced 'Yankee' intonation, with a liberal use of 'Americanisms' due possibly to their contact from time to time with 'Frisco' sailing craft of all sorts and conditions as well as to the fact that several of their number have visited the United States".

Others notice the existence of a separate language: "They have adopted an extraordinary patois, derived from the language of the Tahiti women who accompanied the mutineers of the *Bounty* to Pitcairn Island, although most of the adults can speak the English language fairly well" (Simons 1905).

Among the *Parliamentary Papers* issued in 1901, one finds a report on the conditions of the Pitcairn islander by the commander of *HMS Icarus*. He identifies three difficulties facing Pitcairn Island: the difficulty of finding capable community leaders, the surplus of young females and:

The tendency is growing amongst the islanders to make use of a sort of language of their own, which I am told is a clipping of English words, and which is at the best, a species of Pidgin English. This shows signs already of making some of them appear slow of comprehension when addressed in English (Knowling 1901: 7).

Subsequent visitors comment on all kinds of aspects of the language, some emphasizing its American properties, some denying them. The following passage gives the impressions of one of the many short-time visitors: "They spoke English, though with an intonation different from that of the dominions, America, or the Homeland. A local patois is sometimes used on the island, which is a mixture of English and Tahitian, but pure Tahitian is not understood" (Routledge 1919: 306–307).

An interesting glimpse at the reasons for different views on the language situation on Pitcairn is afforded by the letters written by Southworth (2003: 119) during his stay in 1937. He comments on an address to the Pitcairn Islanders by the Colonial Service Deputy Commissioner James Neill:

An allusion has been made to the curious wording used on the island. Shapiro calls it Pitcairnese, the children speak it almost altogether and many adults employ it more or less – though they understand and speak good English when out on the ships or if other occasions require it. Mr. Niel (sic) made a surprising remark, supported only by his own

statement, that of present conditions continue those on Pitcairn will be unable, fifty years hence, to speak or understand English.

The picture of the future, that he viewed with so much horror as to repeat it, was looked upon by all those present without batting any eye. The reason for the indifference of the Pitcairners was obvious. When people are convinced that the end of the world is measured in terms of months or at least only a few years, they will not be excited or interested in what may happen fifty years hence. It spoke volumes for the fact how little Niel understands Pitcairn islanders, even though he has been here for over three weeks.

Southworth's own characterization of Pitkern was (2003: 117): "This admixture of modern slang with words of the South Seas, from Old England, and even of their own manufacture is, to me, a never-failing source of interest and, at times, amusement".

Among the long-term outsider residents were Agnes Ross and her sister Harriet, who mysteriously arrived on Pitcairn in the late 1920s. Agnes remained there until 1963. In her correspondence with Mrs Salvey (Grigore 2003), she comments on the language which is referred to for the first time by its name 'Pitcairn':

They can speak good English when they like, but they have got into this careless way of speaking amongst themselves. 'You make I (me) laugh.' 'I karwa' 'I don't know' 'I kar-where' 'I don't know where' I like to listen to them talking together, and they bring in as much Pitcairn as they can to amuse me (letter dated April 2, 1930).

Baarslag, marine radio operator, traveller and author, visited Pitcairn in the late 1930s and took great interest in the language. He characterises it as: "... it is composed of roughly 75% pidgin English, twenty percent of Tahitian derivation, and the remaining five per cent of unknown origin, possibly coined as a result of their long isolation and their peculiar idiomatic needs" (1940: 244).

Comments on the Pitkern language also feature in a report of the Naval Intelligence Division (1943: 84):

In conversations with visitors the Pitcairn people use ordinary English, spoken with some peculiarities of accent. Among themselves, however, they speak a dialect of English which, with its curious pronunciation, debased syntax and interlarding of words derived from the Tahitian, is at first almost incomprehensible to outsiders. The enunciation tends to be soft and slurred, though some of the men who have been to New Zealand or Australia have adopted a more cosmopolitan style of speech and modern slang phrases.

Yet another official report (British Information Services 1974: 3) states regarding the language of Pitcairn: "The Pitcairners speak their own idiom of English but with Polynesian intonation and turns of phrase".

There is a perception among many non-linguists that pidgins and creoles are artificial languages similar to Pig-Latin or Esperanto. Cooper (1949: 46) opines “This dialect might be compared to ‘Kitchin Kafir’ or Swahili, which are both manufactured languages. One can imagine the original mutineers, in a typical English way, coining Tahitian words with their own English pronunciation”.

Marden (1957: 728) observed: “Left to themselves, the Islanders conversed in Pitcairnese. Though difficult for an outsider to understand at first, this was not nearly so unintelligible as I had expected. They used many nautical terms, and the accent was somewhat like that of parts of the West Indies”.

Similarity with West Indian Creoles is not suggested by others. Deliberate language making, by contrast, is a persisting theme, as is evident from Ball’s (1973: 155) characterization of P: “Pitcairnese, the dialect that is in part invented, part pidgin English and part a melange of the English of George II’s time and the Tahitian of King Pomare”.

The characterization of Pitkern as a pidgin or a patois seems to persist, as can be seen from the following:

In 1998 I travelled to Pitcairn Island to film a documentary about the excavation of the wreck of the HMS Bounty, and the fate of Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers. It was a fascinating trip. It is safe to say that there is nowhere in the world like Pitcairn: the people, their culture and their language is an intriguing mix of 18th-century Britain (from the Bounty mutineers) and Polynesia. It is not uncommon to hear archaic words such as ‘yonder’ and ‘musket’ mixed into the pidgin language ‘Pitkern’ (Emily Fielden in *The Guardian*, 27 October 2004).

Souhami’s (2008) account, like many others, is a mixture of fact and fiction. She is of the view that “the women and children spoke a patois and that they mapped and named the island” (2008: 140).

1.2.2 Outsider views on Norf’k

Outsiders reports on the variety of the language spoken on Norfolk Island again are often inaccurate and prejudiced but, as on Pitcairn, have influenced educational and cultural policies. The first mention of the Pitcairner’s language habits on Norfolk Island appeared in the *Courier* (Hobart) of 21 June 1858:⁴

⁴ We are glad of an opportunity of laying before our readers the following extracts from a M. S. Journal of a visit to Norfolk Island in the winter (June-August) of 1856. We believe that the journal was kept by the lady of the Bishop of New Zealand, and the extracts have been reduced to a narrative form and copied by the Colonial Church Chronicle of January and February 1858 from the New Zealand Quarterly Review of July 1857.

English is spoken after a fashion of their own, which is not absolutely after ours; a stranger would often be at fault in a narrative from them, and still less could he follow their meaning when they were talking one to another. But the language is much improved since the time that the Tahitian mothers and their children formed the bulk of the community, when it was a strange jargon, unintelligible to English and Tahitians alike, a little Tahitian, some very marine English, and a gibberish arising out of the two, of which the construction remains, though English words have taken the place of the others. It is curious to hear our colloquial phrases in the mouth of an old woman from whom, by her looks, you would expect no English at all – nautical English least of all.

Mrs. George A. Selwyn also noted that “no-one, perhaps to prove their Tahitian descent, pronounces the letter ‘s’ at the end of a word if it can be avoided” (Belcher 1871: 280). This quotation presumably refers to the absence of a third person -s with verbs and the absence of plural -s, as there are quite a few Norfolk words that do end in an -s.

The Headmaster of the Melanesian Mission College and linguist of the Melanesian Mission, the Revd. Codrington, similarly suggests that one was dealing with an imperfect form of English. In a letter to his brother Tom he writes:

On Norfolk Island boys say they have heard five kinds of English, 1) what we speak, 2) the Carpenter’s, a North Country man whose accent they perceive to be different, 3) the Norfolk Islander’s, 4) the language of the sea e.g. whalers’ talk and sailors’ jargon words towards natives, 5) the Sydney language which is now brought here, that originated in relations between colonists and Australian blacks (Codrington, Journals and Letters (Reel M994) – Letters 4 Dec 1872).

The account of Bishop Montgomery’s visitation in 1896 includes a number of perceptive observations on the lexicon of N (1904: 25–26), which he refers to as a ‘language’.

From the 1890s onwards, an increasing number of outsiders settled on Norfolk Island but surprisingly little regarding their views on the language can be found in their diaries. In 1913, Norfolk Island became a territory of Australia and the first memorandum by a visiting Australian official, the Secretary of the Department of the Commonwealth of Australia, contains the following uncompromising lines:

The people all speak good English, in an easy, deliberate tone, with no perceptible accent, but amongst themselves those of Pitcairn descent generally employ a bastard jargon, partly derived from the Tahitian tongue of their grandmothers, and partly from carelessly pronounced and ungrammatical English. It is not picturesque nor effective, and justifies its description as ‘a barbarous attempt to garrotte the English language’ (Hunt 1914: 15).

Brazier (1935: 47), chaplain of Norfolk Island between 1916 and 1918, uses words very similar to those of Hunt, but gives a more charitable characterization of “this quaint language”: “The people all speak good English in an easy deliberate tone, but among themselves they employ a jargon, which they call ‘Norfolk’”.

Hunt’s characterization underpinned the Australian administration’s attempts to suppress the language and to institutionalize an assimilation policy. Its sentiments are echoed in subsequent official and unofficial statements by mainlanders, as the Australians were called. Thus, in 1915, one again encounters the discourse of deterioration to describe the language: “. . . amongst themselves the people used a jargon compounded of the deteriorated English of the eighteenth-century sailors, interspersed with many words of Tahitian origin” (Black 1915: 199).

The Australian administrators appear to have left language matters to the education department, though Charles Robert Pinney (1932–1937), who was particularly unpopular, took a more active role based on his perception of “the limits of expression of the lingo” and “the mental handicap the Islanders have been suffering from” (Pacific Manuscripts Bureau Manuscripts Series, PMB 11, Pinney Papers, 1937).

In post-war years, travel to Norfolk Island gained popularity and a number of articles in the journal of the Australian National Travel Association, *Walkabout*, comment on the nature of the language.

Gradually it becomes clear that the voice difference is more than a burr; it is another language, a mixture of Tahitian, West Country English and local slang – and surely at times a suspicion of Scots. To you, Norfolk Islanders speak English – with a difference; and among themselves, ‘a lingo’ (Rees and Rees 1949: 13).

They speak good English, but amongst themselves they chatter away in a dialect with a strong savour of West Country English and Tahitian (Robinson 1954: 32).

They speak their own language when in their own homes or when in the presence of other islanders. This is a harsh sounding dialect – a mixture of West Country English and Tahitian. Even when it is spoken at normal conversation speed, it is impossible for an outsider to follow (Kerish 1969: 17).

Ruth Scriber, an Australian journalist, comes up with a rather astonishing list of languages allegedly involved in the formation of P-N: “It is a soft and lilting tongue, said to be very descriptive. Called simply ‘Norfolk’, it is a mixture of eighteenth-century English, Welsh, Irish and Tahitian, with strong overtones of Gaelic. Scots are more easily able to pick it up than others” (White and Scriber 1968: 44).

Edgecombe, who has written several books on islands belonging to Australia, characterizes the source languages of N as follows: “They brought also a language of their own, a soft lilting tongue with a background of Tahitian and county English and Welsh – a language they still speak among themselves, in their homes, at work, at social occasions, in Church” (Edgecombe 1999: 50).

Tim Latham, author of a sensational account of a murder on Norfolk Island, comments on some of the different views on N: “A sign in Norfolk says ‘Welkam tu Norfolk Ailen’. In the bad light I interpret it as ‘Welcome to Norfolk, Aliens’. Depending on who you talk to Norfolk is a language in its own right, a quaint patois, or a bastardised version of pidgin English. Either way it’s the first point of difference from Australia” (Latham 2005: 2).

He subsequently settles for ‘patois’, though on what grounds is difficult to ascertain as his experience of the language, and indeed Norfolk Island, is very limited: “The English language is expansive when it comes to synonyms for gossip; the Norfolk language – or patois, a mixture of eighteenth century English and Tahitian – bundles it all into one saying. *Dem tull* was the first Norfolk expression I learnt” (Latham 2005: 11).

Macklin, author of the defamatory account of Norfolk Island (2013: 330–331), writes: “Outsiders are mistrusted and resisted, except on their terms. These require an acceptance of the Pitcairners’ illusion of their exceptionality, the mirage of their Christian righteousness, and the charm of the pidgin that passes for their so-called dialect: Norf’k.”

The ‘charm’ of N referred to by Macklin is a relatively recent discourse. Tourism on Norfolk has capitalized on the fact that it is a Pacific Island where everybody speaks perfect English for a long time. There has been a change recently, as changes in the information directory in the annual Jason’s *South Pacific Passport* show. Compare the entries for ‘language’:

1999: English is the common language on the island, although Norfolk is spoken by locals. This is a curious mixture of Tahitian and old English and was brought to the island by Pitcairn descendants.

2003: English is the common language on the island. Norfolk is spoken among the Islanders of Pitcairn descent.

2007–2014: English, but you’ll often hear the islanders speaking the Norfolk language, which is one of the rarest in the world – a mix of Tahitian and Old English inherited from the Bounty mutineers. Try the following phrases out:

Watawieh yorlyi – Hello and how are you?

I guud – I’m good.

See yorlyi morla – See you tomorrow.

The practice of featuring N in tourism brochures and in-flight magazines began in 2007 and has since proliferated. Tourism promoters, eager to brand the island and to identify what is 'very unique', have found the language a suitable candidate. The in-flight magazine of the defunct Norfolk Air (2007: 13) devotes half of its exposé of Norfolk culture to the language of the island:

The lilting burr that is the language called 'Norfolk' can confuse and confound you. It sounds almost like English, but not quite. Just as you think you can follow it, the meaning will slip away.

Norfolk Island has one of the world's rarest languages, a strange hybrid of Tahitian and Old English developed in the 18th century by the Bounty mutineers and spoken today by their descendents [sic].

Although the origins of the language were developed on Pitcairn Island before the arrival of 194 Pitcairn Islanders on Norfolk in 1856, it has evolved into its own distinct language with its own vocabulary, expressions and nuances.

1.3 Linguists' discourses

The first linguistic study of 'Pitcairnese' was carried out by Ross and Moverley (1964), who refer to it as 'a language' and the Australian linguist/dialectologist Flint also uses this label with reference to 'Norfolkese' (Flint 1964). Shirley Harrison, who grew up on Norfolk Island in an English-speaking family, initially characterised it as a conservative dialect of English (Harrison 1975). Subsequently, because of the large number of letters she received from creolists, she changed her stance.

In an informal article, Harrison (1987), is however credited (perhaps by an editor) with the remark that 'Norfolk . . . is something between an English dialect and a Creole and has a unique linguistic status as a result'. It is not clear what can be meant by this, in the absence of any clear-cut evidence that a dialect can become a Creole, or (more likely) a Creole can become a dialect. Although there may be rare instances of dialects arising from earlier Creole stages (the classic, but still disputed instances being Irish English and Black English), nevertheless, dialects are fundamentally different from Creoles, and do not normally arise from creolisation, or stabilisation of an unstable system by children (Laycock 1989: 609).

By the 1970s, the study of Creoles had gained considerable respectability within linguistics, particularly as they appeared to offer a window to observe linguistic universals. It is in this context that Reinecke et al. (1975: 590) in their *Bibliography of Pidgin and Creole Languages* wrote:

Pitcairn Island English with its offshoot on Norfolk Island is of extraordinary interest because it offers as near a laboratory case of Creole dialect formation as we are ever likely to have. The place, the time and sequence of events, and the provenience of each of the handful of original speakers are known as are most of the subsequent influences upon the Pitcairnese community and, to a lesser extent, upon the one on Norfolk. Only two languages, English and Tahitian, were in contact.

The term ‘laboratory’ used by Reinecke suggests the need for controlled empirical research. Regrettably, the majority of creolists commenting on the Pitcairn situation substituted speculation and selective evidence from secondary sources for primary research, and many problematic conclusions were reached, including:

Pitcairnese is the Creole descendant of the Pidgin English used by the original Bounty mutineers who reached the island in 1790 (DeCamp 1971: 18).

. . . one of the simplest cases of pidginization and creolization – one not mentioned at all by Bickerton . . . the data most constantly before the children in early childhood must have belonged to the various Polynesian languages the women would have used among themselves; yet the children, having the (much admired) models of Young (an educated Antiguan Creole) for a few years and Adams (a little-educated Londoner) and his Prayer Book readings before them for many years, developed in the process a creolized English in which the influences of the Polynesian language of the mothers are clearly evident.

(Le Page 1983: 260)

Pitcairnese certainly developed immediately as a Creole, without a definite Pidgin stage . . . like Afrikaans, it may be best classed as a semi Creole (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988: 148)

From Harrison’s description it would appear that Norfolk Island speech displays at least nine of the characteristics mentioned by Bickerton or Markey as features of true Creoles (Romaine 1988: 64–65)

Pitcairnese and Norfolk are two varieties of the creole spoken by the descendants of the British sailors who mutineed on the Bounty in 1789 and their Polynesian companions (Holm 1989: 546)

In David Crystal’s influential *Dictionary of Language and Languages* (1992: 270) mention is made of ‘an English-based creole, Pitcairn-Norfolk’.

In addition to the question of whether P-N is a Creole, there is the question of what the grammar and lexicon of P-N can tell us about its relationship to other Creoles. Using a limited set of diagnostic indicators to establish the relationship of P-N with other Creoles, Hancock (1971: 197) had already grouped P-N with the Atlantic Creoles and includes data in his 1987 survey of Atlantic Creoles from N. Baker and Huber (2001: 186–187), who establish a number of affinities of P-N with West Indian Creoles but argue that “this language is a very special case and differs from all other varieties considered”. Avram (2004), using a modified list of

features and the data of Källgård (1998), Buffett and Laycock (1988) and Ross and Moverley (1964), basically confirms Baker and Huber's findings and refers to P-N as "the only English Creole evincing both Pacific and Atlantic features". Faraclas et al. (2012: 56–63) argue that a large number of people from an Afro-American background were present in the 19th-century Pacific region and present a list of additional shared features, without examining to what extent these features are the result of nature or of shared history. They correctly identify "Ned Young's special role in shaping Pitcairnese" (2012: 178) but their inadequate account of the socio-historical context (six Tubuaian men and 12 Tubuaian women are said to have been on Pitcairn) and their failure to mention any feature of St. Kitts origin do not inspire confidence. Applying their own set of diagnostic features, Kortmann et al. (2005) suggest that P-N should be grouped with Pacific rather than Atlantic Creoles, and that it is closely related to the varieties of Pidgin and Creole English spoken in Melanesia.

The question to what extent Pitkern-Norfolk was a deliberately invented language remains hotly disputed ever since Laycock (1990: 622) characterized it as a "cant". It is true that the language is an esoteric insider language but deliberate language making is much less important than in genuine cants such as Shelta, spoken by Irish tinkers. Next to uncertainty about the nature of P-N, one also finds considerable disagreement when it comes to other matters.

As I have argued in my discussion of how linguists count and name Pidgins and Creoles in the Pacific (Mühlhäusler 1995), linguists have a poor track record in this area. Avram (2003: 44) has summarized their practices with regard to P and N:

The two varieties are sometimes given separate entries in lists of pidgin and creole languages (cf. Hancock, 1971, 1977 and 1987; Smith 1994, while others treat them as one Creole (cf. Holm, 1989: 546–551; Mühlhäusler, 1997: 18; Baker and Huber, 2001). Mühlhäusler is puzzled by 'Hancock's decision to provide two separate entries for the historically and structurally closely linked Norfolk Island and Pitcairn Island Creoles'.

Baker and Huber (2001: 162) use the name Pitcairn only, but specify that they have also used data from Norfolk Island. According to some commentators, the differences between the varieties "seem to be superficial" (Holm 1989: 550), while others are of the opinion that "Norfolkese [is] considerably more influenced by Standard English than Pitcairnese" (Sebba 1977: 137). Sebba's statement is particularly puzzling in view of many observations of the much stronger influence of American Seventh Day Adventists Missionaries on Pitcairn, who together with outside settlers and administrators, have had a much greater impact on the anglicisation of Pitkern than a comparatively smaller and less influential group of outsiders on Norfolk Island.

The question of whether N is an indigenous language, as Nash (forthcoming) has argued, has both a linguistic side and a social one. As regards the former, linguists can be confused about what is an indigenous language of Australia or an Indigenous Pacific language. For Indigenous Australia the Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association (<www.ourlanguages.net.au/home/about-us>) distinguishes a type of language called ‘Modern Indigenous Languages’:

Like other places in the world that have experienced similar social disruption and colonisation, forms of speech have quickly developed that reflect this contact. These new forms of speech include Creoles and pidgins as well as forms based closely on English, such as Aboriginal English. They are indigenous by virtue of the fact that they are spoken by those who identify as Indigenous peoples of Australia, but also because they preserve Indigenous words, pragmatics and some grammar.

What is meant by Indigenous ultimately is a matter of power. Whether Pitcairn Islanders are Indigenous to Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders Indigenous to Norfolk Island has been a bone of contention. The Norfolk Islander Ric Robinson (interviewed by Latham 2005: 97) states: “We were the first people as a whole to settle on Norfolk Island as a permanent homeland – now if you want a definition of indigenous that’s it, isn’t it?” To accept Norfolk Islanders as Indigenous people would have major consequences (among other things, financial) for the Australian Administration and they therefore refuse to accept this descriptor, whatever linguists or social anthropologists⁵ may have to say.

Linguists’ attempts to reach agreement on how to classify contact languages to date has not created widely accepted outcomes. The editors of the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Structures* (Michaelis, Maurer, Haspelmath and Huber 2013), circulated a proposal to distinguish five major categories of languages to its contributors, arguing that:

As one cannot draw a sharp line between pidgins, pidgincreoles and creoles, we did not at first attempt to classify the APiCS languages along this parameter. But non-experts may be confused by some of the language names, e.g. think of Gurindji Kriol, which is a mixed language, as a creole, or think of Nigerian Pidgin, which is a pidgincreole in Bakker’s terms, as a pidgin. We therefore thought that such a classification in the online database could help to avoid misunderstandings by naive users (email dated 11 Feb 2011).

They suggest the following definitions of the five categories:

- (i) creole: a creole is a language which has evolved in a sociohistorical setting of multilingual interethnic plantation societies (and similar socioeconomic

⁵ A detailed study of the notion of ‘indigenous’ among Norfolk Islanders can be found in Low (2012).

- situations). These languages are used as native languages as they refer/relate to complex social interactions.
- (ii) partially restructured variety: varieties which show structural similarities to known creoles, but whose historical settings indicate processes of a beginning creolization without being ever fully creolized.
 - (iii) pidgin: pidgins are non-native languages used in interethnic contacts, ranging from trade to religious activities and diplomacy (Bakker 2008: 136). They are not the main or default language of an ethnic, social or political group. Pidgins have structural norms and must be learned as such.
 - (iv) pidgincreole: pidgincreoles constitute a class in between pidgins and creoles. A pidgincreole is a restructured language which is the primary language of a speech community, or which has become the native language for only some of its speakers (Bakker 2008: 139). Often it is difficult to draw the line between pidgin and pidgincreole and pidgincreole and creole.
 - (v) mixed language: mixed languages normally evolve in situations of thorough bilingualism. They have 'numerically (roughly) equal and identifiable components from two other languages' (Bakker 2003: 108–110) and these languages are clearly identifiable.

An attached list of languages and their proposed classificatory status does not mention Norf'k.⁶ This proposal triggered a lively debate among the contributors. Don Winford, editor of the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* (12 February 2011), summarizes some of the problems:

I am less than happy with most of the other labels used. 'Pidgincreole' is especially unhelpful, if it refers to languages like Bislama. I personally prefer to refer to such languages as expanded or elaborated pidgins (but this is true also of Hawai'i Creole, which I assume is classified as a creole). So, there is no clear way around the problems with any classification.

I can't make head nor tail of what is meant by 'partially restructured variety', even with the definition that's provided. Which languages are supposed to fall into this category? Languages like Bajan? Most creolists would agree on 'creole' for this. African American English? Hardly. It's just as unhelpful to refer to such languages as 'semi-creoles' or 'creoloid'. I have no idea what it means to say a language underwent 'processes of a beginning creolization without being ever fully creolized'. Would so-called 'indigenized' varieties fall into this category? Or are we interested only in the labels that creolists use for contact languages?

⁶ In the published contribution (Mühlhäusler 2013: 232), I refer to Norf'k as a 'language' and note that its creole status is contested.

I would suggest that the term ‘pidgin’ be restricted to languages like Chinook Pidgin, Russenorsk, Eskimo Pidgin etc., which I refer to as ‘prototypical’ pidgins. There are languages like Yimas Pidgin which do not meet the definition of prototypical pidgins and might better be referred to as simplified languages. That too is a questionable term, but it’s at least better than ‘semi-pidgin’. Maybe we could include them as ‘pidgins’, with appropriate explanation.

Finally, ‘mixed language’ is very unhelpful as a label. There is more consensus on labels like ‘bilingual mixed language’ or even ‘intertwined language’. I personally prefer the former for languages like Michif, Media Lengua, and even Mednyj Aleut. Like Bakker, Ross and others, I’d distinguish such languages from what have variously been called ‘converted languages’ or cases of ‘metatypy’. These have many affinities to creoles, and I really don’t have a distinct label to suggest for them.

Winford suggests the following solution: “So that leaves only the following labels that make some sense, but are still far from satisfactory: creoles, pidgins, elaborated/expanded pidgins, bilingual mixed languages, other”.

Salikoko Mufwene, known for his objections to the exceptionalism approach to pidgins and creoles, suggests a more radical solution (12 February 2011):

How interesting that we all have problems with the terminology! May I also suggest to the editors that they change the title of the Atlas if they are going to attempt to classify the different varieties. Many of the proposed categories are not subsumed by the terms ‘pidgin’ and ‘creole’ as umbrella terms on the cover of the volume. Why not title it ‘Atlas of Contact Languages’? If you open one can of worms, you may as well open them all.

What this brief survey of linguistic accounts shows is a shocking readiness to make grand generalizations on the basis of virtually no information, not dissimilar to linguists’ statements about the number of Inuit words for snow (Pullum 1991). It also illustrates the futility of trying to establish whether something is a language, a Creole or a dialect unless we first acknowledge, as Harris (1990: 148) put it, that “languages presuppose communication”.

1.4 Metalinguistic statements in secondary academic writings

There is a vast amount of books, articles and research papers about the Mutiny on the Bounty and the subsequent fate of the mutineers and their descendants.⁷ They often contain statements on the language spoken by the Pitcairners, most of them perfectly unsubstantiated.

⁷ One of the best sources are the holdings of the Pitcairn Study Centre of Pacific Union college; many of their resources are now available in digital form.

The anthropologist Shapiro, who worked on both Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands, characterizes the speech of the Pitcairners as follows (1936: 209): “Whatever its precise origin, the Pitcairn dialect today consists of mispronounced English and Tahitian words with a spattering of coined words, employed in a degenerate English syntax”.

A well-researched book on Pitcairn Island by the British sociologist Silverman (1967: 203–209) contains several pages on the linguistic situation on Pitcairn. He dismisses theories of pidgin and creole origins of P but argues that: “It is equally difficult to trace the emergence of a third language, which may have been a parallel development, consisting of an amalgam of English and Tahitian into what came to be known as the Pitcairnese language”. He opines that “The first reference to this ‘third language’ found in the literature is the one above quoted from an 1850 visitor, although Pitcairnese could hardly have been an overnight development . . . The best inferential guess would have it emerging in the 1830s and 1840s”.

In his *History of Pitcairn*, the American historian Kirk (2008: 133) refers to “the Pitkern pidjin dialect”. He writes:

Today Pitcairners speak clear comprehensible English when dealing with visitors, but they speak a dialect among themselves that has been labelled Pitcairnese, or more properly Pitkern. Pitkern originated as a way for the mutineers and Polynesians to communicate; it was a hybrid pijin using Tahitian and English words. Among the second and subsequent generations it evolved into a nearly complete language with English predominating and Tahitian sublimated.

The anthropologist Garrett (2004: 46), referring to the writings of Sebba, Holm and other linguists with no first-hand knowledge of P, writes:

It is now known that this language, a creole now referred to as Pitcairnese – or Pitkern, in the language itself – combined elements of Tahitian and the various Englishes spoken by the original nine mutineers.

[. . .] Pitkern is not just a haphazard mix of Tahitian and English, and some of its grammatical features are not clearly attributable to either of its two source languages. Significantly, however, among these are features that Pitkern has in common with numerous creole languages around the world.

Glynn Christian’s (2011) account of the early days of the Pitcairn settlement is based on much research and personal knowledge, but like many other accounts of the Mutiny on the *Bounty* is a mix of fact and fiction. His remarks on the language appear in the introduction to his book (4):

Pitkern, the language of Pitcairn Island, is a true Creole language, with its heritage in both English and Tahitian. It is wrong to call it a ‘pidgin’ English. Just as its English origins

include regional words with roots from Cornwall to the Orkneys and the West Indies, Pitkern includes Ma'ohi variations from Tahiti, Raiatea and Huahine. But whether English or Ma'ohi in origin, many words have been adapted.

Low's (2012) PhD thesis contains numerous insights into the social uses of Norfolk, which he simply calls a 'language'. He perpetuates the myth about Old English, but takes on board recent findings on the important role of the St. Kitts Creole in its formation:

The Norfolk language is a variation of Pitkern, a contact language that developed on Pitcairn Island in the settlement founded by Bounty mutineers and Tahitians. It is a mixture of Old English and other English dialects, Tahitian and West Indian Creole. The exact point at which Pitkern began to develop is the subject of disagreement among linguists and other researchers.

1.5 Educational discourses

In 1937, Mr. J. S. Neill visited Pitcairn and was particularly concerned about the inadequacies of the local education system, including the use of 'Pitcairnese'. He characterises the language as follows: "The tendency to use Pitcairnese is very pronounced and is increasing. It involves a peculiar drone with words clipped and distorted" (Neill 1938).

Albert W. Moverley, the first teacher of the Government school from 1948 to 1951, made a public statement in the New Zealand Sun Herald (reported in Sanders 1953: 49) in which he characterized Pitkern as follows:

Because English is the predominant influence on the language, it is preferable to call it a dialect rather than a new language. Nevertheless, there is a leavening of Tahitian and possibly French, and other languages. Pitcairn has its own distinctive syntax; its tenses are almost the same as those of English, but its verb inflections are very different. You would not be able to understand it. I was amazed at the distortions and corruptions of English and Tahitian words.⁸

The relocation of the Pitcairners to Norfolk Island was referred to by the British Government as 'the experiment' (<<https://www.pitcairners.org/experiment.html>>) to isolate a small pious community on an uninhabited island and see it attain moral perfection. Because of the spectacular failure of this social experiment on Norfolk Island, Australia increasingly assumed control over its affairs,

⁸ According to a Pitcairn informant, Moverley was unsympathetic towards Pitcairn and given to punishing students who used it in school (p.c. Leona Young, June 2014).

including education, starting in the 1890s. Teachers were sent to the island from New South Wales and they found themselves faced with the fact that the majority of their pupils did not speak Standard English by the time they began school. The educators' view of what they spoke was very uncomplimentary. In 1912, School Inspector W. S. Ray described the language thus:

This jargon, which is the everyday medium of conversation between the islanders, is in no respects a language, it is not even a 'patois'. It is said to be a mixture of English and Tahitian. As a matter of fact, bad English, spoken by the Bounty men and imperfectly imitated by the Tahitians.

His successor was equally uncomplimentary:

The dialect is of comparative recent growth. Very little of it came from Tahiti. Most of the words are corruptions of English. Sullen for 'children' – larn 'to tell' – Larn a little sullen no do da, 'tell the little children not to do that'. If you pretend not to understand the lingo as most English people do in self defence you will hear one saying sneeringly, 'He's agamonin he car was it!' 'Car' is the negative of 'to do' and 'to know'. It means 'I cannot' or 'I do not know' and is the same for all persons (personal notes of Passmore, Headmaster 1916).

Attempts to demonstrate the inadequacies of Norf'k are also found in the next quotation:

The harsh patois (a corruption of 18th century English and Tahitian) which is adopted by the islanders in their intercourse with each other and which, in view of the fact that they speak beautiful English, and that this patois, harsh and unmusical is spoken nowhere else, should be and probably will be allowed to die out as the older generation drops out (Jacob Barnes, Head Teacher in 1922, in an unpublished guidebook to Norfolk Island, 1926).

Between 1914 and 1970, there was a deliberate campaign to eradicate N, which was not restricted to the school where children were punished for speaking it and admonished not to 'break the King's Crown', but also in frequent public meetings where parents were reminded of their duty to speak proper English at home. Some families were shamed into abandoning N, though the most immediate consequence was that the language became virtually invisible to outsiders, particularly teachers.

The educators' view exemplifies the prevailing educational theory of the times, which argues that non-standard forms of English prevent logical thinking and undermine moral progress. Such arguments were internalized by many, though not by all, Norfolk Islanders and until quite recently, the language was regarded as a second-class language by many of the islanders.

Educational discourse has changed radically since. The Norfolk Island Central School website currently informs: "It is a beautiful and colourful language, we

think, when spoken properly. Singsong is how it was often referred to by visiting naval captains of yore” ([≤www.nor.gov.nf>](http://www.nor.gov.nf)).

Teaching of N is encouraged by the administration and most of the principals and enjoys the support of the vast majority of parents. Details of educational debates can be found in Mühlhäusler (2007) and (2015).

1.6 The Islanders' views

There is a close connection between the metalinguistic views of members of a speech community and the fate of their language. Language attitudes certainly have had a great deal to do with the viability of Pitkern and Norf'k and are playing a major role in their survival. Being English-related forms of speech spoken alongside Standard English brings with it an additional consideration, i.e. the question to what extent one is dealing with independent forms of speech rather than sub-systems. I shall restrict myself to those views of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders that relate to the ontological status of their language(s):

1. The relationship between P and N
2. Views on the linguistic nature of P-N
3. The worth of P-N

Unsurprisingly, the views of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders are as varied as those of the other groups discussed here; though there is now growing agreement that theirs is a distinct language, and not, as I was informed in 1997 “a patois, because you cannot count in it”.

1.6.1 The relationship between Pitkern and Norf'k

Opinions vary generally as to whether P and N are the same language – some informants maintain that the two varieties are “as different as chalk and cheese”, others are of the view that it is the same language. The rationale for these two views is ideological rather than linguistic, for between 1856 and about 1980 there were few face-to-face contacts between the inhabitants of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island and the reactions of the Norfolk Islanders to the Pitcairners after contacts were re-established, ranged from a romantic rediscovery of lost relations to the view that Pitcairners were crude in both manners and language.

In a letter to A. R. L. Wiltshire dated 1939 (Källgård 1993: 11–12), Fred Christian from Pitcairn Island wrote: “I see by your letter that you have been to Norfolk Island and have learned some of the words that the people there use among

themselves. Now from what I have heard from those who have been there they use the same speech or dialect as we do”.

There are increasing contacts between Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders and some Pitcairners work on Norfolk. One of my Norfolk Islander informants expressed the view that the Pitcairner Trent Christian, a popular singer and entertainer, has influenced the pronunciation of younger Norfolk Islanders.

1.6.2 The linguistic nature of P-N

There are very few Pitcairners or Norfolk Islanders with any training in linguistics and they rarely express an opinion on this matter. As Ball (1973: 227) observed with regard to P: “Though of comparatively recent origin, their own language holds mysteries for most of them, mysteries that apply even to words the islanders have coined this century”.

The naturalist M. J. Nicoll paid a brief visit to Pitcairn in March 1903 in which he comments on the diglossia he encountered (1908: 357):

All the inhabitants of Pitcairn can speak perfect English, but when speaking among themselves they cannot easily be understood by a stranger, as they clip their words, sounding only the first and last letters. Why they do this is difficult to say. When questioned, they replied that they were talking their ‘own language’, adding that this language only differed from English in the above mentioned particular.

In 1921, the Pitcairn Islander Hilda Christian (appendix to Grigore 2003: 38) reported: “There are one hundred and seventy-four people on the island, two of them are Americans from Los Angeles, a father and a son by the name of Clarke, who married on coming to the island, and have lived here for ten years. The language spoken on our island is English”.

Julie, a Pitcairn Islander living in Auckland writes:

Last month we wrote about wanting to make sure the Pitkern language survives so I have written about the Wellington Bounty Day celebration in my version of Pitkern. Much of Pitkern as I know it is English written phonetically with a bit of Tahitian words thrown in.

When I was growing up there was no official dictionary of the Pitkern language and we were not allowed to speak the Pitkern language while at school even in playtime so there was no formal teaching of it either (*Pitcairn News* 3, 1 January 2009).

Shirley Harrison, who worked on the Norf’k variety for many years, obtained much of the information about the language from her father Moresby Buffett. In an interview (16th July 1979), Moresby emphasized that the special character of the language is due to its small number of speakers. The first two larger

publications compiled by Norfolk Islanders are Nobbs Palmer (1987) and Buffet and Laycock (1988). The former characterizes it as “the Norfolk Island patois”. What is meant by ‘patois’ is spelled out in Ed Howard’s foreword to Nobbs Palmer’s dictionary: “Their language is a glorious patois: a made-up language, compiled from pieces of English and Tahitian and from natural responses to the natural surroundings they live in”.

Buffett and Laycock simply refer to it as “the mother tongue of the people of Norfolk Island”. This minor terminological difference is overshadowed by the different solutions adopted as to how to represent the language in a written form.

The Norfolk Islander Marilyn Cooper produced a draft management plan for the conservation of “Norfolk’s cultural language” (Cooper n.d.), which she characterises as follows:

The Norfolk language, having derived from the 18th century English and Ancient Polynesian, remains the mother tongue of the descendants of the Pitcairn settlers, described above: The language is neither a Creole nor a variety of English – it is a language in its own right, has its own spelling system, which is entirely phonetic, but to a system, and it has its own grammar, fully analysed and described.

The acknowledgement of a strong Tahitian element in P and N is a recent development, following the revalorization of the Tahitian Heritage and a growing trend to identify as Pacific Islanders. By contrast, there is little awareness of their West Indian roots.

1.6.3 Views on the worth of the language

Until quite recently, language was not a matter discussed with outsiders and there are relatively few records of Islanders either denigrating or praising the worth of their language. One of the reasons are the Australian assimilation policies and systematic attempts to get rid of the language, which resulted in feelings of guilt and shame and a reluctance to pass it on to the next generation. In a conversation recorded by Harrison in the 1970s, two Norfolk speakers express their views as follows:

Speaker 1: *Dem English sullun yusa laugh fe ucklun way’ we talk but dem car understarn ouwus laengwidje en wish dem el tork jus like ucklun.*

‘Those English (Mainlander) people used to laugh at the way we talk but they can’t understand our language and wish they talked just like us’.

Speaker 2: *Es dar de waye cos too gud fer talk Norf'k.*

'That's right, because it is so good to talk Norfolk' (Harrison 1984: 119).

The local poet Archie Bigg expresses what most Islanders think today: "I am absolutely passionate about the Norfolk language. I think in it and it's such an important part of our heritage and needs to be passed on to our children".

These positive attitudes are increasingly prevalent among the younger generation. The actions of Islanders speak even louder than their words: They show their appreciation through volunteering in the school and at the annual Language Camp, through public signage and through initiatives such as the Year of the Norf'k Language (June 2008–May 2009), the Language Display at the Museums, Song Competitions and Writing Competitions.

1.7 Internet information about Pitkern and Norf'k

The mixed quality of information found in earlier printed sources is somewhat disturbing but the amount of misinformation and outright rubbish on the internet is a cause for much greater concern. Far from enabling internet users to become knowledgeable about far flung places and their languages, they will encounter a profusion of unchecked claims. Thus, with regard to the composition of the language, we will learn, among other things, that the language of Norfolk Island is "a local patois brought to the island by the Pitcairners – a mixture of Platt Deutsch, 18th century English and Tahitian" (<ozemail.com.au/jbplpds/lang.html>).

This outrageous statement is probably based on the confusion of the language name Deutsch with the name of the Publisher of the first linguistic account of 'Pitcairnese' (Ross and Moverley 1964).

The site (<[http://citizendium.org/wiki/Pidgin-\(language\)](http://citizendium.org/wiki/Pidgin-(language))>) (14/4/11) states: "One of the most famous pidgins in the world is Pitcairnese, spoken mainly on Pitcairn Island, but also on Norfolk Island, an Australian territory". A different account is given on the Wikipedia site (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitkern>>) (14/4/11), which informs its users that:

Pitkern (also Pitcairnese) is a creole language based on an 18th century dialect of English and Tahitian. It is a primary language of Pitcairn Island with fewer than 100 speakers worldwide. However, the closely related Norfuk language has a few thousand native speakers. Pitkern and Norfuk are unusual in that although their home islands are located in the Pacific Ocean they have been described as Atlantic creoles.

This characterisation ignores that the creole status of the language is far from certain, that its formation involved more than two languages, that English is the primary language of most Pitcairners, that Norfolk Island officially calls its language Norf'k and that there are at best a few hundred native speakers.

Experts123 (<www.experts123.com/q/what-language-is-spoken-on-pitcairn>) (16/4/11) found the following answer to the question: 'What language is spoken on Pitcairn Island?'

Tahitian language is the first language of the population and is taught along with English being the second language. Pitcairn is basically a Creole language derived from English language in the eighteenth century. Creole language is a well-defined and stable language that has its origin from a non-trivial combination of two languages, with many features that are not inherited from family members. This language evolved from Pidgins, and has become the native language of a community.

Given that the last traces of Tahitian disappeared from Pitcairn Island around 1840, this information cannot be regarded as up to date. Regrettably, as I have tried to argue, regarding P-N as "well defined and stable" is hardly warranted.

Pitcairn-Norfolk language, represented in Wiktionary by the language code 'pih', is a creole or pidgin language written in Latin script (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:Pitcairn-Norfolk_language>, 22-4-2014).

Some internet sites inform us that Welsh is a major component of the language's heritage and that it is "one species of Pidgin English – Tahitian"; that Maori is spoken on Norfolk Island, and that there are still speakers of Old English to be found there.

The official names 'Pitkern' and Norf'k are rarely mentioned on the internet sites I viewed. Thus, the Commonwealth Secretariat in its 2008 Yearbook (<www.thecommonwealth.org/YearbookInternal/140403/140410/norfolk_island>) refers to the language spoken on Norfolk Island as "Nufka,⁹ a Polynesian dialect related to Pitcairnese". Previously, in the 2004 Yearbook, Nuffka was spelled with two f's. I have yet to meet a Norfolk Islander who knows that this is the name of the language.

James Harbeck, who regularly contributes articles on linguistic topics to *The Week*, in his article on the imminent extinction of the P-N language (<[the-week.com/articles/ . . . /why-fight-hard-preserve-endangeredlanguages](http://the-week.com/articles/.../why-fight-hard-preserve-endangeredlanguages)>) of 2 May 2015 does not use the official name 'Norf'k', does not properly distinguish between P and N, calls it a creole and does not mention the West Indian influence. "It looks a lot like a dialect of English with some Tahitian influence. Oh,

⁹ Nufka derives from 'Norfolk' and in Norf'k is the name for the local kingfisher. Sometimes it refers metaphorically to a 'true blue islander'.

yeah. That's the other thing. Pitkern (also called Norfuk) is a creole, a mix of English and Tahitian, and it's been around for just about 200 years". He deplores the fact that "even the Pitkern-language version of Wikipedia has been proposed for closure" twice.

A closer inspection of this website (<pih.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitkern>) reveals numerous problems with the spelling and information provided and looks more like English texts simply put into the Buffet and Laycock spelling system than original idiomatic language as in:

Pitkern esa laenghwij spoken i' Pitkern Ailen. Es riilated t'Norfuk.

As the internet is becoming the principal source of information for most linguistic students and probably quite a few of my colleagues, one is left to rely on the principle that cumulative ignorance leads to knowledge.

1.8 Conclusions

The question, 'what is a language?' is not one that is asked enough in linguistics. Linguists take languages as givens, something to be labelled and described. The dominance of standardized European national languages has reinforced such thinking. As I have tried to show, such an approach is very problematic when it comes to understanding the nature of the ways of speaking that have prevailed on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island.

Labels such as Pitcairnese or P-N hide the fact that we are not dealing with a single uniform phenomenon. Rather, at all times in the history of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands there not only existed a bilingual English-P-N speech community and, in the formative stages a multilingual one, where English dialects, St. Kitts Creole, possibly a Maritime Polynesian Pidgin and Tahitian were spoken. The resulting contact language does not demonstrate sameness or even similarity over time. Rather, a number of different ways of speaking must be distinguished, among them.

Up to 1830:

- The mixed English-Tahitian antilanguage used by the Bounty crew to taunt Captain Bligh
- The mixed Tahitian-English jargon used by the Polynesian women and the British sailors to communicate
- The mixed language of the first generation of children derived from their mothers' jargon, Edward Young's St. Kitts Creole and Young and Adams' English

- Possible merging of acrolectal English and the childrens' language (Harrison 1972: 213) due to the lack of role models
- Restoration of an English-Pitkern diglossia subsequent to the arrival of three British 'interlopers' (Buffett, Evans and Nobbs)

1831–1860s

- Development of a more focussed P during the disastrous resettlement on Tahiti in 1831 (see Laycock 1989)
- Grammatical and lexical expansion, core grammar and lexicon shared by the P and N varieties

1860s–1900

- Lexical and grammatical divergence between P and N varieties; accommodation of N to new social and natural ecologies of Norfolk Island
- Possible secondary creolization in a number of families living in remote parts of Norfolk Island
- American influence on both pronunciation and lexicon of both varieties

1900–1960

- P and N continue to diverge, particularly lexically
- Beginning language attrition on Norfolk Island due to government and educational policies
- Stable diglossia on Norfolk weakening
- With the establishment of a state school system, increasing influence of English

Post 1960

- Modified N begins to replace Broad N
- Accelerating language attrition on Pitcairn and Norfolk
- English becomes dominant or first language in a large proportion of families on both islands
- Formal teaching promotes learned rather than natively acquired P and N

At present, the Norfolk and, to a much lesser extent, Pitcairn Islanders are in the process of deciding on questions such as language name, lexical and grammatical norms, writing system and social role. To turn a large number of individual ways of speaking into a language in the sense of a modern standard language is a difficult technical and political process which leaves much room for conflict. It would seem very unwise for an outsider to tell people what their language is, or what it should be.

Whereas the recognition of Norfolk as co-official language in 2004 did not excite many islanders, the recognition of the language by UNESCO as an endangered language in 2007 was a major event for them. For a short period of time, the Norfolk language became the focus of international attention, with more than 200 papers worldwide reporting this event. For most Islanders, the preservation of their language is now an important aim, though disagreements about how to achieve this aim remain as large as ever.

The UNESCO recognition of Norfolk has motivated numerous Islanders to praise its beauty and to use this “very unique language” as one of the drawcards in tourism promotion. Yet, there is little agreement as to what their language actually is.

Orthographic choice for Norf'k is a somewhat controversial issue as Norf'k has not been a written language for most of its existence. There is no agreed upon way to write Norf'k and its written form has been the source of considerable dispute among speakers (Low 2012: xiv).

2 Orthography and spelling issues

2.1 Introduction

Pitkern (P) and Norf'k (N) have been oral languages for most of their history, co-existing with acrolectal English. The Pitcairners have been literate in English beginning with their sociogenesis and English literacy has been highly valued. Up to the middle of the 20th century, written communication among Pitcairners and by Pitcairners to outsiders was in Standard English.

After the Second World War, competency in P and N declined and we note a transition from a situation where speaking P and N were simply a part of living the islands' culture to a conscious reflection on its role in the future. Literacy began to be seen as a means of raising their status and as offering a chance of their survival. At the same time, islander identity had become part of the political discourse and literacy was regarded as a means of enhancing the status of P and N. On both islands, the development of literacy has become a contentious issue, due to the tension between prevailing local practices and the technical solutions introduced by experts from the outside.

2.2 English literacy on Pitcairn Island

Pitcairn Island has the enviable distinction of being the first English-speaking country to introduce universal compulsory education in 1838. This legislation formalized what had been common practice since about 1800. The first generation of children born on Pitcairn generally were taught to read the Bounty Bible and Prayer Book, though their teacher, John Adams, was barely literate. According to his son, Adams found a primer in the house of one of his dead companions from which he taught himself to read. John Buffett (1846) comments that Adams' skills and methods were dubious but apparently effective:

McCoy's son has told me, that they could not believe for some time that Adams understood what he read, but they thought (to use his own words) 'he spoke out of his head.'

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After Adams taught some of them they taught others, and when I arrived all but two or three of the first generation could read.

Adams had managed to inspire his pupils and the Pitcairners were anxious to read, as Captain King (King 1820: 385) of the *Elizabeth* found while visiting the island in 1820: “I now gave them a whale-boat, in return for their refreshments, some books, razors, combs, and, in short, everything they stood in need of; but nothing pleased them so well as the books; as they wished much to read and write”.

King and his crew donated more than 200 books for a population of 21 persons over ten years old. The young Islanders had begun to crave some further instruction. They applied to Britain for a schoolmaster. As a result, in 1823 Adams’ role was assumed by John Buffett. Buffett also began the Pitcairn Island Register. This important “publication” chronicles local events on Pitcairn Island (Maude 1964: 64–65). In 1828, he was joined and subsequently usurped by George Hunn Nobbs, under whose regime the Pitcairners achieved a high level of literacy.

The 1838 *Laws regarding the School* stipulated that “there must be a school kept, to which all parents shall be obliged to send their children, who must previously be able to repeat the alphabet, and be of the age of from six to sixteen” (Brodie 1851: 87).

Many books were provided to the Pitcairners by the British and Foreign Bible Society, but books continued to be requested from the captains of passing vessels. By the 1850s, the Pitcairn people were well educated and fond of reading, “but only books of sterling interest, and moral and religious character” (Warren 1855: 168). While the ability to read the Scriptures was of the highest importance to the Pitcairners, non-doctrinal literature was becoming popular. Shipley (1851: 6), who visited the Island in 1848, remarked that “in their library we found a few works of fiction by Scott, Cooper, James, Marryat and Dickens, besides many other popular works of fiction”.

Literacy in English, after the return from Norfolk of some Pitcairner families in the 1860s, remained official school policy, though the quality of teachers varied and in the first half of the 20th century, literacy declined, to improve only once the school had been taken on by the New Zealand education system after World War 2.

2.3 English literacy on Norfolk Island

After the Pitcairners’ relocation to Norfolk Island in 1856, George Hunn Nobbs continued as teacher. Up to the turn of the 20th century, the situation was little different from what it had been on Pitcairn. In 1857, the Governor of NSW, Denison, proclaimed laws and regulations which included: “. . . all persons

will send their children to school when they have attained the age of six years, and from that time will cause them to attend regularly till they have reached the age of fourteen years” (NSW Parliamentary Papers 1863: 450).

Nobbs was followed by Rossiter, who had been a master of the Church of England Industrial School in Hertfordshire and, whilst reading, writing, and spelling English remained important, he placed greater emphasis on vocational training (Nobbs 1984: 75). A report by the Reverend Elcum, who visited the island in 1880 (Mercer 2006: 8), reads:

. . . all that was done was well done and the whole tone of the education seemed to me about as different to the hollow superficiality of too many of our schools at home as possible. All read aloud, for one thing, as if they understood and appreciated what they read. They were in ‘standards’, but, in spite of the absence of boots and stockings, (uncommon articles for people on Norfolk Island) I felt I had to do with the set of children who were really being ‘educated’.

The quality of English literacy varied with the quality of teachers, but at all times the Norfolk Islanders have been functionally literate in English and a high standard of English literacy is in evidence in both private and official writings.

2.4 Early written documents in Pitkern and Norf'k

2.4.1 Background

A perusal of early documents written in P and N demonstrates the technical challenges their writers faced:

- P-N and English are not dialects of a single language and the pronunciation of P-N cannot consistently be derived from a base shared with English;
- P-N has a number of sounds that are not found in Standard English;
- P-N exhibits considerable variation in pronunciation among different families and individuals.

Whereas the writings of Islanders show the gradual emergence of written norms, documents written by outsiders remain individualistic and idiosyncratic.

2.4.2 Writings by Pitcairn Islanders

Kållgård has commented that

Only very seldom do we meet Pitcairnese as a written language: the Islanders sometimes write single words of it in letters, for fun; visitors to the island have written words in

Pitcairnese in articles, etc. These occasions are very few, however, and every time someone – Pitcairner or non-Pitcairner – tries to write Pitcairnese the question arises: how does one spell the words? The answer is, of course, that nobody knows, that the language practically does not exist as a written language, and, consequently, no conventions on the spelling of the words have been agreed upon (1993: 70–80).

The earliest examples of P spelled by an islander are a couple of words in John Buffett's diary (1846) *maro* 'loincloth worn by men' and *auti* 'paper mulberry'. The first examples of connected texts date from the 1940s (examples in Kållgård 1993). Further examples can be found in appendix 2.1.

2.4.3 Writings by visitors and outsiders

Representations of P in written form by outsiders are far more numerous, but the language is usually spelled either like Standard English or an aberrant version thereof. An early example of a longer text is a conversation recorded by Captain Raine in 1821:

Suppose one man strike me, I no strike again, for the Book says, suppose one strike you on one side, turn the other to him; suppose he bad man strike me, I no strike him, because no good that; suppose he kill me, he can't kill the soul – He no can grasp that, that go to God, much better place than here (Raine 1824: 461).

Shapiro (1936: 210), who conducted fieldwork on Pitcairn Island in 1935, "was unable to record what I heard in the approved phonetic symbols". However, he attempts to approximate the sounds of P with spellings such as *lebby* 'let be', 'leave it alone' and *solen* 'sole one' (see appendix 2.2.1.). One of the few outsiders who stayed on Pitcairn for an extended period (six months in 1937), the medical doctor Rufus Southworth uses spellings such as *ikawa* 'I do not know', *larn* 'to teach, inform' and *good-un* 'good' (predicative). Subsequent visitors have continued to employ an impressionistic rendering of the sounds of the language.

The most comprehensive body of data is found in the wordlists compiled by a number of long-term residents, particularly Maude (1940, see appendix 2.2.2.) and two school teachers, Moverley (about 1951) and Sanders (1953)¹. In his analysis of the Moverley list, Flint (n.d.) suggests that "there is some evidence that Moverley consulted the Shapiro list (1936) and was influenced by his

¹ Unpublished manuscripts untitled.

spelling". Sanders, by contrast, developed his own conventions. The following examples illustrate how these observers differ:

| Maude (1940) | Moverley (1951) | Sanders (1953) | meaning |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| yourly | yolly | – | you (pl) |
| gwen | – | gwan | going |
| nawe | na:we | naaway | to swim |
| ka | ka: | k'a | don't know |
| – | rum ⁹ | ruma | torch fishing |
| – | a:m ⁹ ul ⁹ | uma ola | clumsy |
| foot | fu', fut | fut | why? |
| orkle sullen | – | little sullen | child |

2.4.4 Writings by Norfolk Islanders

The earliest text found is the well known poem *Ucklun*³, written by headmaster Gustave Quintal around 1900 (appendix 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). The next substantial document is a wordlist⁴ compiled by Audrey and Olga Robinson around 1935 (appendix 2.3.3).

Flint collected a number of light-hearted documents written by Norfolk Islanders in the 1950 (appendix 2.3.4) and samples of written N (appendix 2.3.10). Occasional words and phrases in N are found in readers' letters to the local newspapers from about 1960. By that time, the Islanders had become aware of the decline of their language and writing it down was seen as a way to preserve it. A substantial list of expressions is found in Harrison's *Glossary*, privately published on Norfolk Island in 1979, followed by Ena Ette Christian's poems (1986), Nobbs-Palmer's dictionary (1986) and Buffett and Laycock's (1988).

Subsequent writings (appendices 3.4 to 3.18) were in part the result of competition between the users of the traditional writing conventions and those suggested by Laycock and Buffett. In addition, writing N symbolically distances Norfolk Islanders from the Australian administration. In the most recent past,

² 9 is the symbol Moverley used on his typewriter for schwa.

³ Never published piece of paper handed down generations of Norfolk Islanders, copied and changed over time.

⁴ Never published – known as the Pinney list – its provenance ascertained from members of Robinson family on Norfolk Island.

one can witness the creation of a N ‘landscape’ intended to enhance the tourist experience (Mühlhäusler and Nash 2016). Since the mid-1990s:

- N is used increasingly in the *Norfolk Islander* (favouring traditional writing) and *Norfolk Online* (favouring the Laycock-Buffett system)
- Public signage in N has become widespread
- The Norfolk Museums feature interpretive signage in both permanent and special exhibitions
- Local writers publish poetry, short stories and children’s books
- Up to the recolonization of 2015, N was used on official documents such as departure cards, the Hansard, postage stamps and the phone book.

The language has become highly visible but, in most instances, written N remains complementary to rather than replacive of written English.

2.4.5 Writing Norf’k by visitors and outsiders

The earliest examples of words spelled by an outsider are those of Bishop Montgomery (1896). Among them is the first example of the spelling *sullun* ‘people’.

Idiosyncratic spellings are encountered in the numerous reports by headmasters and school inspectors. They are interesting because of instances of mishearing and misinterpretation and because they demonstrate the unreliability of the data found in the accounts of short-term visitors.

Several wordlists have been compiled, including those by Wiltshire (1938), Rosenthal (n.d.) and Holland (1946), which offer different solutions to the spelling of N:

| Wiltshire | Rosentdal | Holland | meaning |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| naaway | narway | narwe | to swim |
| fut | fwhut | fut | why? |
| car-wha | kawa | car what | don’t know |
| boo’oo | – | boo-who | lump |
| yourlya | yorlya | yourl-yer | you (pl) |
| mussa | moosa | mosses | almost |
| ucklan | – | uckland | people of N.I. |
| sem is ways | – | semithway | peculiar |
| molla | Morlla | – | tomorrow |
| se | Sai | se | (copula) |

Several attempts to spell N were made by professional linguists. Flint supplements detailed phonetic transcriptions of his recordings with a quasi-etymological version to improve legibility and Zettersten (1981) again proposes a more accessible written version for his transcriptions. The two linguists arrive at quite different solutions (see appendices 4.1 and 4.2):

| Flint | Zettersten | translation |
|---------|------------|----------------|
| tatey | tatie | sweet potato |
| fer | fe | complementizer |
| pooh-oo | poo-oo | unripe |
| plun | plahn | banana |

Such one-off technical solutions do not provide solid material for the development of a writing system. By contrast, the conventions that developed organically over time in the community deserve to be taken far more seriously.

2.5 Community writing norms

2.5.1 The emergence of written norms in Norf’k

Coseriu (1975) distinguishes between three levels: system – norm – usage. Adapted to the problem of orthography these terms can be projected onto:

- linguistic writing systems, based on technical principles (system)
- norms that have developed among those who write the language (norm)
- individual practices/variation (usage)

Given the patchy record for P, I shall concentrate on the development of social norms for writing N. Norfolk Islanders are culturally traditionalists and to understand what is NFN ‘normal for Norfolk’ is essential when suggesting new practices in almost all domains of life.

If we consider the N documents produced prior to the time the first technical spelling system was proposed by Buffett and Laycock (1988 see appendix 2.8), we note a considerable degree of convergence. As in other societies, N ‘traditional spelling’ evolved over a relatively long period from early private correspondence, creative writing, and public signage to the local internet chat room. The traditional spelling norms were reinforced by the appearance of the *Sunshine Club Cookery Book* around 1965 (anon. no date). The popularity of this book undoubtedly contributed to the consolidation of spelling norms for many words.

About 80% of them are identical with the spellings in Beryl Nobbs-Palmer's dictionary (1986), which became similarly popular. Traditional spelling was taught for several years at the Norfolk Island Central School by Fay Bataille who retired in 1986. Recently discovered pages from her lesson plans illustrate how she taught the traditional spelling (see appendix 2.3.7).

When examining such documents, one notices a gradual narrowing of variation over time. Thus, Gustave Quintal's early spelling *you-all-ye* 'you pl.' or *na'wer* 'never' have given way to a commonly used *yorlye* and *naewa*. The norms underlying traditional spelling can be summarized as follows:

1. Monophthongs are written with English letter sounds; [ʌ] and [a] are represented by <u> as in *sullun* [sʌʌn] 'people';
2. [ʊ] and [u] are written <oo> as in *moosa* [mʊsa] 'almost';
3. [a:] is usually written <ar> as in *mard* [ma:d] 'mad';
4. [ɔ:] is typically signalled by <or> as in *nort* 'negator';
5. Both word final <a> and <er> represent [ʌ] as in *yenna* or *yenner* 'yonder' or *mudda* or *mudder* 'a local dish';
6. Double consonants following a vowel signal shortness, as in *sullun* 'people', *denna* 'dinner', *hilli* 'lethargic', or *ell* 'can, habitual'.

The spelling conventions for diphthongs are more variable:

7. [ai] is spelled variably <i> as in the first-person pronoun *I*; <y> as in first person possessive pronoun *myse* or signalled by a word-final <e> as in *mine* 'to mind';
8. [au] is usually written <ou> as in *doun ar toun* 'down in Kingston', though <ow> is also encountered. In words of Tahitian origin, there is a tendency for the letter combination <au> as in *rauti* 'ti plant';
9. The offglide [ʊə] is also often signalled by a word-final <e> as in *goode* or *gude* 'good';
10. The off glide after [ɔ:] is at times signalled by an added <u> as in *hoo-um* [hɔ:ʊm] 'home'.

For consonants, English spelling conventions are generally followed, though words that do not differ in pronunciation or meaning from English are at times spelled in ways that "create symbolic difference" (Sebba 1998: 230).

11. Traditional N orthography uses the symbols <x>, <q> and <c> where they also occur in the English etymon with the same sound value as in English;
12. <w> is used to replace the [v] of the English etyma in most instances as in *wattel* or *wettels* 'victimals';
13. Apostrophes are used to signal either possessives or to indicate that a sound of the English etymon is not pronounced;

14. There appears to be uncertainty as to how words of putative Tahitian origin should be written.

The vast majority of these conventions continue to be dominant, including in electronic communication.

2.5.2 Present-day Norf’k orthography

The evolution of agreed spelling norms by users of N would have continued, had it not been for a major disruption. In 1988, Buffett and Laycock introduced a radically different spelling proposal. Their new system was presented as a fait accompli to the community (appendix 2.3.11), with the claim that it was superior. This was met with disbelief and hostility by a significant proportion of Islanders and opposition has not abated 30 years later.

The appearance of the Laycock-Buffett system introduced meaning into the spelling debate. Islanders now had a choice and this choice was often framed in terms of good and bad. One of the consequences has been the development of considerable sentimental attachment to the traditional way of representing the language. A publication featuring the different Islander families states that the book uses the Laycock-Buffett spelling but that “departures from that spelling are at the request of individual contributors” (Partridge 2006: 5), which means roughly half the texts.

One finds a majority of Islanders who continue to write in the traditional way, a small number of writers who are competent in the Laycock-Buffett system and yet others who mix the two approaches. In order to establish the relative importance of these three spelling practises, I examined a number of contemporary documents. First, I considered a large body of post-1988 texts written in N in the island’s main paper, the *Norfolk Islander*, focussing on ten of the most frequent words of the language. It emerged that in seven out of ten cases, the most commonly used spelling is the traditional one of Nobbs-Palmer. Only three of the Laycock-Buffett spellings are preferred (see appendix 2.5).

Norf’k Orthography in the Norfolk Islander:

| Most common usage 2003–2006 | Nobbs-Palmer | Laycock-Buffett |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Yorlye | yorlye | yorli, yorlye |
| Sullun | sullun | salan |

(continued)

| Most common usage 2003–2006 | Nobbs-Palmer | Laycock-Buffett |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Ucklun | ucklun | aklan |
| Moosa | moosa | musa |
| Watawieh | Whutta-waye | watawieh |
| Hilli | hilly | hili |
| guud / gude | gude | guud |
| Jaero | Jarroo | Jaero |
| Look orn | Look-orn | lukorn |
| Lettle | lettle | lekl |

A second set of data examines passages in the Norfolk Internet Forum. Its contributors represent the younger generation who had been taught Laycock-Buffett spelling at the school. The findings are (details in appendix 2.6):

- Of the 100 most frequent words, only three are consistently spelled in the Laycock-Buffett system.
- In 15 instances, the Laycock-Buffett system is the most frequent spelling variant.
- In 33 instances, no one spells the word in the Laycock-Buffett system.
- Traditional spellings remain dominant.

Qualitative observations reinforce the impression that traditional writing conventions continue to prevail in the public domain, for instance:

- The *Ode to NICS*, the proposed official song of the Norfolk Island Central School written in 2002 by Archie Bigg with the help of the school children, features traditional spelling (appendix 2.3.13).
- The Bounty Committee invitation to the Bounty Day Celebrations reads: *Cum orn yorlye, es uckluns day!* (2 June 2007).
- A series of stamps issued around 2004 was called ‘*werken dar shep*’.
- The Norfolk Blue Restaurant, opened in 2009, invites its guests with *welcum tu awas world* and Hilli Restaurant features N words in Nobbs-Palmer’s spelling on the pictures on the wall.
- New business names since 2000 include *Big Suff* (‘big surf’), *Car Beat Ett* (‘can’t beat them’ – a car hire firm), *Se Moosa Bus*. (‘almost full to

burst’ – a mobile food outlet) and *Orn dar Cleff* (‘on the cliff’ – a venue for fish frying tours).

- The official (until 2016) Norfolk Island Departure Form contains the sentence: *All yorlye kum bak see ucklan soon.*
- A new street sign for *Bun Pine Alley* was erected in 2019.

The situation on Norfolk Island is reminiscent of that of other communities who speak English-related Creoles, such as Jamaica where “the phonemic orthography, developed by Cassidy (1978), is used almost exclusively by linguists, in spite of occasional attempts to promote its wider use” (Sebba 1998: 277). Some local linguists have opposed the phonemic spelling system for various reasons, including its failure to account for the variable nature of the language and its origin in colonial Western ideology. Meanwhile, a revised version of Cassidy’s proposal continues to be promoted without strong indications of community acceptance (<http://www.jumieka.com/>) (15/3/19). This website also contains a general discussion of the pros and cons of different approaches to writing. To date, no such examination has taken place for N. Without informed debate and without planning, the Norfolk Islanders will focus on spelling differences to the detriment of the more important issue of how to revive their language.

2.6 Language planning for graphization

2.6.1 Background

The approach of subsequent governments to the spelling issue has been one of *laissez-faire*. This is understandable, as the problem was too sensitive for them to make a decision. There are many community members who would like to see a resolution. The Council of the Elders has advocated a single spelling for the language when used in official business but has not endorsed any particular spelling.

There are many issues that need to be addressed before the present confusion and hostilities can be resolved. To begin with, one needs a more comprehensive audit before planning and implementation can be considered.

2.6.2 Language audit

A language audit considers existing practices and attitudes, identifies issues and applies the criteria of systematic, social, historical, economic and psychological

adequacy to existing spelling practices and proposed spelling proposals. As observed by Low (2012: xiv):

In conversations about language, various speakers of Norfolk expressed their allegiance to one spelling system or the other – and importantly to those that wrote them – while some claimed to write it their own way distinct from these books. The main disagreement is that between the advocates of keeping the traditional norms and those who favour making the Laycock-Buffett system official.

The consequence of the persisting confusion and disputes is that many initiatives that could strengthen the language are jeopardized. For instance, mainstreaming the language at the school remains difficult. Attempts by the government to install dual-language signs in the Laycock-Buffett system were halted because the persons charged with this task preferred a traditional spelling. Some of the signs that were eventually erected have been vandalized. This raises a number of issues.

2.6.3 Issues

I have identified a number of issues in conversations with Norfolk Islanders and in letters to the local newspapers. However, neither is there a community-wide discourse about these issues, nor is there much awareness of other hidden issues, which impinge on the success or failure of spelling proposals.

2.6.3.1 What are the main areas of disagreement?

The community is divided as to whether texts written in the Laycock-Buffett system are readable or not. Many of my informants claim that such texts make no sense to them. There is a smaller group of Islanders who claim that this system is easy to write and easy to read, though most users of the Laycock-Buffett system experience difficulties with apostrophies and some vowel symbols.

The spelling of personal names and placenames is particularly prickly. In the Laycock-Buffett system they are spelled in a quasi-phonetic manner. This has offended a number of members of the community who prefer to remain Quintal and Adams rather than being *Kwentl* and *Aedams*.

The spelling debate does not address the merits of the competing approaches to spelling other than the claim by both sides that their spelling represents the language “as we say it”. The debate tends to be narrowly focused on a small number of words. Two of them involve interlingual taboos, i.e. the spelling *cum* ‘come’ in traditional writing and the spelling *Norfolk* in the Laycock-Buffett system. This spelling is surprising as the vowel in the second syllable has been transcribed with a schwa by every single phonetician other than Laycock.

Other words that feature in the debate are high frequency words such as *aklan* vs. *ucklun* and *salan* vs. *sullun*, but any spelled word has the potential of engendering a dispute. Thus, a parent complained to a school teacher about a Mother's day card featuring the form *mada*. According to the complainant, this is how you spell a well-known Norfolk Island dish.

2.6.3.2 Does Norf 'k have to be a written language?

The answer most commonly given is that writing will help preserve and revive N and that a written version of the language will in part compensate for the loss of spoken N and for the declining number of fluent speakers.

Written documents are necessary for recording and preserving dying languages, but their role in keeping these languages alive and viable is limited. What determines the vitality of a language is that it is used orally, that it is passed on to a next generation of speakers and that there are a range of functions and domains in which it is used.

Writing systems do not revive languages nor do they necessarily strengthen them. They are at best supplementary to strategies of keeping the languages spoken. A better question is: How can a writing system for N be used to complement other strategies of strengthening the language?

2.6.3.3 Does a diversity of spellings confuse readers?

Experienced readers are perfectly capable of coping with a range of different spellings. Just as hearers can normalise different sounds signals, readers can normalise varying spellings. Parents can usually decipher the imperfect literary products of their young children. Spelling errors, abbreviations, SMS messages and such do not cause major reading problems for competent readers.

I have read N documents following all kinds of spelling conventions, occasionally I get slowed down, but on the whole it does not matter greatly. Languages have enough redundancy for spelling variation not to affect intelligibility.

2.6.3.4 Are there disadvantages to writing down a language?

There are a number of potential dangers, including that of artificially fossilising a language, and showing its limitations vis-à-vis another more powerful language. Perfectly produced written documents can create a perception in semi-speakers that they have lost too much of their language to ever re-acquire it and discourage their participation in its revival.

Disagreements about writing systems can prevent joint action or divide language revival movements and thus negatively impact the vitality of a language.

It is unfortunate that Norfolk Islanders have not set up an organisation for the protection and revival of their language.

2.6.3.5 Should there be a single standard writing system?

There is confusion regarding standardization as neither the traditionalists nor the advocates of the Laycock-Buffett system exclude variant spelling of the same word. Most Norfolk Islanders are happy with variation that reflects the individuality of writers. Sebba (1998) described the views of some West Indian writers that a single standard would prevent them from capturing the many nuances of pronunciation encountered on the basilect-acrolect Creole continuum.

It must be kept in mind that languages for which there is only a single writing system are few and far between. British and American spellings differ, and Hebrew has three official spellings, Letzebuergisch has had three consecutive official spellings, which continue to co-exist. Tok Pisin has had up to nine spelling systems simultaneously. Most present-day Aboriginal languages of Australia have a number of spelling systems.

The rationale for a unified spelling are economies of scale. Historically, standardisation of English spelling was driven by the print industry, which required a single standard. Other frequently mentioned reasons are administrative and educational ones. There is also a perception that having a single system is a sign of a language being a proper language.

2.6.3.6 How different from English should written Norf'k be?

The majority view of present-day Norfolk Island residents is that N is not an English dialect and that it is therefore desirable to have a distinct way of writing it.

The question is how many orthographic differences are required to signal the distinctness of a language, and here the views differ. The notion of *abstand* 'distance' planning (introduced by Kloss 1967) refers to deliberate measures to make related languages visually distinct, such as when the mutually intelligible languages Serbian and Croatian employ different scripts, or when Portuguese and the closely related Galician (Galego) employ different spelling conventions. The Laycock-Buffett proposal exemplifies an attempt to create maximum distance.

However, most Norfolk Islanders appear satisfied that the suggestions made by Nobbs-Palmer (1986) are sufficient to signal distinctiveness from English, without sacrificing speakers' awareness of numerous historical communalities.

The above issues can best be resolved by applying the criteria used by language planners to determine the adequacy of proposed solutions.

2.7 How to determine the adequacy of a spelling system

Language planners appeal to a range of criteria when asking this question; these include:

- systematic adequacy
- social adequacy
- historical adequacy
- psychological adequacy
- economic adequacy
- adequacy for language revival

Applying such criteria is useful but will not lead to the identification of an optimal system. To demand a writing system that is optimally adequate in all respects is asking for a milk-giving, egg-laying wool-pig. The problems facing anyone who sets out to develop a writing system are similar to the ones faced by a cartographer who wants to represent the globe on a two-dimensional map. One can either represent the shapes of the continents accurately or their surface size. On the widely-used Mercator projection, the size of the land masses nearer the poles is greatly exaggerated, whilst the map more or less accurately represents their shape. Cartographers like the designers of writing systems are constrained by a very simple principle: one cannot maximise more than one parameter in any equation.

2.7.1 Systematic adequacy

This criterion implies, among other things, that each letter always represents the same sound. An associated principle is that spellings should represent words as carefully read from a list.

In the spelling system proposed for N, Buffet and Laycock (1988) applied the so-called *phonetic principle*: one sound = one letter or letter combination. This approach admits multiple ways of spelling the same word. Buffett (1992: 76) explicitly stated “many words differ in pronunciation among the Islanders, and this system allows people to spell the words as they sound to them”. Buffett’s Encyclopedia (1999) lists variant spellings for some words and not for others. Examples of the former include:

- *teyateya, teatea* ‘ragged’
- *tabet, tabe, tabi* ‘to stop, pause’
- *gua, goe* ‘to go’
- *fehmlē, faemli* ‘family’

In other instances, only one variant is listed. The [kl] vs. [tl] variation is widespread in N. Buffett arbitrarily lists *wetls* ‘food’ but not another common pronunciation *wekls*. Again, she has an entry *kekl* ‘kettle’ but not the variant *ketl*.

No phonetic writing system represents all aspects of the actual physical speech sounds. The designers of most writing systems, including Buffett and Laycock, do not indicate stress, which would have been very useful in words such as ‘*aataren* ‘to look at with admiration’ or *yes’tedi* ‘yesterday’. They also ignore most indexical properties of speech sounds, including:

- that men and women speak at a different pitch
- that some words are pronounced more loudly
- that speakers have different voice qualities.

There is an excellent reason for this. Even small babies recognise their name when it is pronounced by mum or dad or a sister or brother, even when mum has a cold, when dad whispers or shouts it, or it’s spoken faster. The ability of human beings to process quite different physical signals as mentally the same is called normalisation. This ability is not shared by machines, which is one of the reasons why speech recognition technology still remains unsatisfactory.

Ignoring indexical properties of speech sounds is one way of reducing the number of variant transcriptions. Another approach is to represent pronunciations based on careful reading of single words from a wordlist only. The rationale is that faster pronunciations are derived from slower, careful ones by regular processes but not vice versa. The requirement ‘one sound, one symbol’ thus cannot be fully achieved in what claims to be a phonetic spelling.

This requirement, sometimes referred to as bi-uniqueness, also underpins another attempt to obtain systematic adequacy: phonemic writing systems. Siegel (2005: 147) gives two well-known reasons for selecting a phonemic writing system for Pidgin and Creole (P/C) languages:

- The symbols represent “the sounds that actually occur in the P/C”.
- “The phonemic orthography clearly makes the written form of the P/C look distinct from that of the lexifier”.

As regards the first claim, phonemic symbols do not represent sounds but abstract or psychological units. There is no reliable discovery procedure for discovering phonemes and the minimal pair test often appealed to can be highly arbitrary.⁵

⁵ There is the well known debate about the status of the velar nasal as a phoneme of English. Using the minimal pair *sin-sing* confirms its phonemic status whereas an equally well motivated minimal pair *sing-sink* disconfirms it, as do a number of other considerations.

Chao (1934) has demonstrated “the non-uniqueness of phonemic solutions of phonetic systems”, a demonstration that has not lost its relevance over the years.

As regards the logically independent second argument, the P/C and lexifier will never look totally distinct. How distinct will depend, among other things, on the arbitrary choice of orthographic symbols. It is necessary to consider how many differences are needed for a P/C to look sufficiently different from the lexifier. Arguably, the traditional spelling of N is felt by its users to meet the requirement of being distinct and some critics of the Laycock-Buffett version have argued that it looks too much like Dutch because of its numerous double vowels.

Another systematic approach is the phonetological one, which is based on the insight that the same psychological sound unit is realized differently in different environments. Spelling therefore should represent the unpredictable underlying forms and accounts for predictable variations by means of general phonological rules of the type ‘vowels in open syllables are longer than vowels in closed ones’. Thus, lexical words are always spelt the same irrespective of pronunciation differences; in the case of English, final [-r] in words such as ‘father’, ‘car’ or ‘four’ is always spelt even if it is pronounced in some varieties only in connected speech.

In N, this would mean that the following words should be spelled with a final <-r> because it is pronounced in inflected forms:

- *yollor* – *yolloren* ‘grater’ – ‘to grate’
- *wawahar* – *wawahares* ‘stuck up’ – ‘most stuck up’
- *weyar* – *weyaret* ‘to wear’ – ‘to wear it’
- *morgar* – *morgares* thin’ – ‘thinnest’
- *artar* – *artaren* ‘to admire’ – ‘to be admiring’

2.7.2 Social adequacy

Planning a writing system is not a straightforward job, as there are a large number of technical and social factors to consider. Importantly, the large number of requirements involved in designing a writing system are difficult to reconcile and any solution therefore can only be a compromise. As Barton (1994: 99) has observed, “the choice of writing systems is firstly a political decision”. More recently, Sebba (2007) has explored “why matters of orthography are of real concern to so many groups, as a reflection of culture, history and social practices, and as a powerful symbol of material and local identity”. The question of which writing system a language should adopt thus is not a technical linguistic question but a social one, and decisions which ignore existing social practices are made at their own risk.

The differences and disagreements encountered are compounded, in the case of N, by the absence of role models for the language and different degrees of bilingualism. Bilingual speakers whose dominant language is English will hear N differently from those whose dominant language is N or a language other than English. Spelling words whose pronunciation does not significantly differ between N and English is a contentious matter and individual practices vary widely.

Norfolk Islanders generally are bilingual and typically use both English and N in the same conversation, and often in the same sentence. N and English are closely related languages, and it is not always possible to say at what point speakers switch from one language to the other, nor is it easy to distinguish between inherited and borrowed words.

Harrison (1972: 285–286) tried to resolve this matter in the glossary appended to her MA thesis, which “is a combination of the vocabulary items of Norfolk which do not exist in Standard English or have a meaning different from Standard English and/or a form which is **markedly** different from Standard English”. This, of course, excludes many words inherited from English and have been part of the language from its beginnings. Whilst they have not changed much in pronunciation or meaning they are regarded by Norfolk Islanders as part of their traditional language. In her 1986 PhD, Harrison treats many such words as English for instance: *come, pull, back, thing, me, year, some, eye*, among numerous others.

In her extensive fieldnotes Harrison employs the traditional approach to writing N as can be seen in examples such as:

- *Mys horse se off* ‘my horse got loose’
- *Make a tun* ‘take turns’
- *Dunna mard* ‘stop being a fool’
- *Suff how guid* ‘how calm the sea is’
- *Dem come up talk gen uklun* ‘they came to talk to us’

Tahitian words are typically represented in an English spelling as in *mare-mare* ‘wrinkled’. Further examples are given in appendix 2.3.8.

Nobbs-Palmer (1986) uses etymological English spelling for words that have not changed in pronunciation, even where the meaning has, as in *sly* ‘deny, spy, peep’; *hide* ‘hide’ or *stick* ‘thick scrub, trees’.

By contrast, Buffett (1999) spells all words of English origin, whether inherited or borrowed, in the Laycock-Buffett system:

- *aansa* ‘answer’
- *ailen* ‘island’
- *anlaki* ‘unlucky’

- *baak* ‘bark’
- *baekloed* ‘backload’
- *jaem* ‘jam’
- *kreket* ‘cricket’
- *morfiin* ‘morphene’
- *ries* ‘race’
- *zilyan* ‘zillion’

There are numerous other such words whose meaning and pronunciation are either the same as in English or can be predicted by a simple conversion rule. This raises a general question – is it desirable or necessary to spell a N word differently if its pronunciation can be predicted by a simple conversion rule? Supporters of the Laycock-Buffett spelling would seem to argue that it is indeed desirable, if only to make the language look different from English.

There are, for instance, several anonymous websites on the internet, which represent all words of English provenance represented in the Buffett-Laycock (or is it Bafet-Liehkok) ‘system’. An example is the following entry in *Wikkapedyā*⁶

Norfuk esa creole laenghwij spoken i’ Norfuk Ailen, an es disended from t’ Pitkern laenghwij a’ t’ setlars from Pitkern Ailen. Es a’ miks a’ oel English en Tahityan laenghwij, wi’ English maeken mor influens. Mani word i’ Norfuk a’ f’ English, liik “ailen” an “tiemsoen”.

Norfuk es t’ ofishol laenghwij, with English, a’ Norfuk Ailen sens 2005. T’ orthografii dew-elaped bei Aelis Baffett an Dr. Dohnal Liekok es aksepted bei t’ Norfuk Ailen gawanment an ets aplekaeshan es enkriisin (<<https://pih.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norfuk>>).

It is unclear what work adaptations such as *aplekaeshan* ‘application’ and *enkriisin* ‘increasing’ actually do and many Islanders I have spoken to are highly critical of such a practice.

Most traditionalists have felt that this is not necessary. In Ena Ette Christian’s still popular poetry, inherited words are spelt as their English etymon: *come up, down, horse, cussed, proud, night, breech*. Borrowed words such as *century, tennis court, picnic, defy* or *small speck* remain unaltered. Words of Tahitian origin such as *futta-futta* ‘small island in a creek’ or *hilly* ‘lethargic’ are spelled the English way. Words that are distinct in pronunciation or meaning from their English etymon are spelled in the traditional way: *fuss* ‘first’, *ucklun* ‘we Islanders’, *walley* ‘valley’, *plun* ‘plantain’, *bun* ‘burn’, *tull* ‘tell’ or *fine* ‘find’ (see appendix 2.3.6).

⁶ The double /k/ is one of the numerous examples where the principles of this ‘system’ have not been heeded. Others are *Creole, Tahityan, laenghwij, mani* ‘many’, *liik* ‘like’, *tiemsoen* ‘time zone’, *Baffett, bei* ‘by’, *kontakt*.

It is important to document the various social practices and attitudes when devising a working system, as it is typically found that social acceptability differs considerably from what is systematically adequate.

2.7.3 Historical (etymological) adequacy

The requirement that the spelling of words should reflect their history constitutes both a technical linguistic principle and an ideological position. The dependency principle suggests that the numerous pronunciations encountered in different lects of a language can all be derived from the same underlying psychologically real base, which typically reflects historically older pronunciations (St. Claire 1974a, 1974b). Speakers of these various lects have internalized the processes that derive their pronunciation from such an underlying base, which therefore is a good choice for written forms. For instance, the advantage of English spelling (ignoring the “messy spelling” of a few dozen high frequency words) is that speakers of many different varieties can derive their pronunciations from a single spelling.

Because P and N came into being through the encounter of three typologically different languages (English dialects, St. Kitts Creole and Tahitian) a number of difficulties arise when it comes to identifying underlying historical forms:

- Different solutions to reconciling the differences in pronunciation between the three languages still exist.
- Mixing and creolization creates historical discontinuity. Phonetological rules of English do not have the same coverage in P and N. Thus, the variable omission of [t] after another consonant in syllable- or word- final position is found in some words such as *colleck(t)-collecktet* but not in others such as *fuss* ‘first’ or *hys* ‘hoist’. Some speakers prefer *dref-drefen* ‘to drift’; others prefer *dref-dreften*. Some words such as *moos* ‘most’ or *nasey* ‘nasty’ are likely to be of St. Kitts origin and thus never had an underlying [t].
- English words were added to the language over time and are subject to the principle that more recent additions are less likely to reflect older historical changes. Analogously, a French such as *chien* ‘dog’ was inherited from Latin *canis* and over time underwent many changes, whereas the French word *canine* ‘canine’ was recently borrowed from Latin.

N can be characterized as an Anglo-Polynesian language and awareness of the Polynesian origin of its lexicon has led to a different spelling for putative Tahitian words and those of English provenance. One aspect of the ongoing repolynesianisation of Norfolk culture is a wish to revive the lost Tahitian words of the language. However, it is not clear what symbols should be chosen, as the pronunciation

of present-day P and N words is not necessarily that of either contemporary Tahitian or Tahitian as spoken in 1789.

Consider:

| Tahitian | Norf'k | translation |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Rimu</i> | <i>lemo</i> | seaslime |
| <i>Namunamu</i> | <i>naminami</i> | astringent |
| <i>ovaovao</i> 'suckling pig' | <i>uwai</i> | half-grown |
| <i>paru</i> 'throw food in small pieces to hogs' | <i>palu</i> | berley |

There is no single standard spelling systems for Tahitian, and Tahitian pronunciation has changed considerably over the last 200 years, as has that of P-N. A particular difficulty is encountered when words are blends of Tahitian and English, such as:

- *hetieh* < here + *teie*, 'here goes'
- *iwi* < Tahitian 'iti' small, Scots 'wee' 'small'

In some instances, it cannot be established whether a word has Tahitian roots. Thus, the origin of *mada* 'banana dumpling' is unclear. Ross and Moverley mention the word *mata* 'raw, unripe' in other Polynesian languages (1964). It could also be derived from English 'mother' as Harrison (1972: 318) suggests: 'dish named after an old Pitcairnese woman who was called *Madder* (Mother)'.

Given the problems with the identification of Tahitian words, and the difficulties of giving them original pronunciations, it is near impossible to treat Tahitian words differently in spelling from other N words.

2.7.4 Psychological adequacy

It is simplistic to argue that writing systems simply represent speech sounds. There are good reasons why phontetic transcriptions are unsuited for creating easily readable documents. Written texts are are not transcripts of a spoken text nor are they necessarily meant to be read aloud. The reader requires that they should be easy to read. This requires language planners to consider:

- How are speech sounds processed by the human brain?
- How do people read?

The answer to the first question is that only a small subset of sounds made in any language are mentally real for its speakers (see St. Claire 1974a and 1974b). Even native speakers are not fully capable of observing their own speech sounds, not even when trained in phonetics. An instruction such as “spell as you pronounce it” is very difficult to operationalize, though it is constantly appealed to in the spelling debate on Norfolk Island. The difficulties are greatest with sounds that have no clear point of articulation such as vowels and diphthongs, as the numerous fanciful attempts to represent them show.

For psychological reasons, speakers ignore differences between sounds. In many languages the difference between [r] and [l] or [s] and [t] is not felt. Speakers can also hear sounds that are not pronounced – the [d] in *handbag* is rarely pronounced but felt to be somehow ‘there’ by speakers of English – and often native speakers do not hear sounds that are pronounced, as the [b] in family [faembli].⁷ The mental representation of words is more abstract than the actual physical signal. This is one of the reasons why some designers of new writing systems suggest that it should not be phonetic or phonemic but represent a more abstract level of awareness. One of the problems is that different user groups (beginning and fluent speakers, young and older speakers) may have different mental representations.

The same also goes for the second question: how do people read? Whether or not readers sound out words depends on a number of factors:

- beginning readers are more likely to sound out words – older, experienced readers recognise word shapes as wholes, and very experienced readers only read a few clues, from which they can recognise words and even larger constructions
- frequent words are more likely to be processed as wholes rather than rare words. Thus, the need to have a systematic spelling for frequent words is less than for unusual words.

An important psychological question is: To what extent does knowledge of English affect the reading of N? As a general rule: Children up to the age of 15 have no problems learning to speak and write more than one language without experiencing confusion. Grown-ups, whose dominant reading experience is in English, by contrast, will find that their old knowledge interferes with learning. A new spelling system can slow them down and confuse them.

⁷ A number of English-related Creoles have the form <faembli>.

The majority of fluent N speakers are middle-aged and old. They are likely to have difficulties because:

- a quasi-phonetic system such as the Laycock-Buffett system is too redundant, and
- the experience of written English interferes with the new task of reading a different N system.

Spellings that are closer to English are thus easier to process for older people. Younger learners can, in principle, cope equally well with a spelling that is not derived from English. In actual fact, they have many problems. Teachers at the school where the Laycock-Buffett system is taught have accepted the fact that their students find it difficult to consistently follow it and I have yet to come across a written document that does not contain deviations from ‘the system’. Claims to the effect that “the primary school children were able to use the system within twenty minutes of our showing them and that high school pupils could use it in ten minutes” (Buffett 1999: 73) come somewhat as a surprise. In spite of the fact that it has been around for more 30 years, many Norfolk Islanders do not understand ‘the system’ and cannot handle it.

2.7.5 Economic adequacy

Reducing a spoken language to writing can involve considerable costs:

- at the development stage
- in its implementation
- in the long term

It is important that the costs be kept to a minimum and that the benefits be maximised. It would not involve much to create a systematically more adequate version of Nobbs-Palmer’s suggestions. Making a phonetically based writing system for N systematically more adequate would require a thorough re-examination of all the phonetic transcriptions provided in Buffett (1999). It also requires community acceptance that there cannot be single standard spellings for most words, as well as a reassessment of the symbols chosen to represent phonetic units.

Language is meant to play an important role in cultural tourism, and when a writing system is decided upon, it should take into account the views of outside visitors. This is a particularly important consideration in public signage. The problem is how best to reconcile the different needs and expectations of groups for which the writing system is intended. Tourists like to see a different

language, but they need to be able to read it. The traditional spelling is suggestive of both the distance from and its historical relationship with English. The Laycock-Buffett system suggests distance alone.

2.7.6 Adequacy for language revival

It cannot be assumed that writing down an endangered language will do anything for its revival. True, it can be a way of documenting it, but proper documentation requires a narrow phonetic transcription combined with high-quality recordings.

Regrettably, the introduction of a writing system can be the cause of social conflicts and instead of concentrating on the common aim of reviving a language, different groups fight over the means. Orthography in particular has been a major source of conflict in many communities. Once a community is divided in their views on how the language should be written, it takes a long time to find an agreed solution.

It is important to ask for what purpose and for whom the spelling is to be devised: If the principal purpose of agreed spelling conventions is to strengthen the language for future generations, it is essential that the spelling should be acceptable to a sizeable majority of community members.

2.8 Case studies of writing systems for P and N

2.8.1 Pitkern: Källgård

Källgård (1989) developed a writing system for P, which is governed by the following principles:

- Words of Tahitian origin should be spelled like in modern Tahitian, except that vowel length is indicated by doubling it. Examples are: TANII ‘fair patches on dark skin’; HALIMAI ‘come and eat’; MAIOU ‘to weep’.
- Words of English origin whose pronunciation does not differ markedly from English should be spelled as in English, as in THATCH [saetʃ] ‘material for basket making’; HOLLOW [hɒ lɔ] ‘landslide’; YONDER [jɒnɒ] ‘over there’.
- The non-English vowels and diphthongs are spelled using single letters or digraphs. Long vowels are represented as II; AA EE and UU. Diphthongs as AI, OU and OI as in KLAAMI [kla:mi] ‘muddy’; JAHOOI [jhɔ:li] ‘dark blue fish’ and NIAU [ni?au] ‘coconut leaf’.

In her correspondence with Källgård, Harrison expressed major reservations against these spelling conventions. A perusal of Källgård's wordlist confirms his problems in operationalizing his proposals. Thus, UU is used to represent [u:] in KOOSHOO [ku:fu:] 'alright' (of N origin) but [ɔ:] in KOOPA [kɔ:pɑ] 'barrel in which water is kept and heated' and [oə] in BOOT [boət] 'bark of banana plant, used for making toy boats', which may be derived from either English 'boat' or Tahitian *pota*. Short U represents [ʌ] in BUBBY [bʌbi] 'breast, teat'; [u:] in PALU 'to use berley to attract fish'; [o] and [uə] in PUPU [popuə] 'vine with yellow flowers' and [ɔ] PULU [pulɔ] 'bait'.

In spite of Källgård's faith in the practicality of his orthography, it has not become accepted by the Pitcairn Islanders.

2.8.2 Pitkern: Meralda Warren

Meralda Warren, language teacher, collected and edited a volume of children's stories about places on Pitcairn (2007). She spells words of English origin that do not differ greatly in pronunciation as in English (appendices 2.1.3 & 2.1.4). She does not use Tahitian spelling conventions for words originating from this source. As in traditional N spelling, <u> represents the sound [a]; <ar> represents [a:] and <oo> represents [u]. Double consonants are used to indicate preceding short vowels. The spelling in Warren's writing is not entirely consistent and her use of capitalization is not clear. Consider:

Du Tedside es good un. Ms T. lev do dere. She come ya from Galapagos.

Mussa when he ell, Sambo go down fer feed her Mullon. Sometime wi si da Gott. We luv a go down fer swim un Fishen fer Nanwhere un a White Fish.

'Tedside is special because Mrs T. lives down there. She is a Galapagos tortoise, Sambo mostly goes down to feed her watermelon. We see goats there sometimes too. We swim down there and go fishing for nanwe and white fish.'

If there was a wish to develop a unified spelling for P and N, the differences between Meralda Warren's spelling and traditional N are easy to reconcile.

2.8.3 Norf'k: Nobbs-Palmer

Beryl Nobbs-Palmer was guided by the conventions of the informal norm that had become established by the 1960s. Unlike Laycock and Buffett, she did not provide an explicit statement about the rationale for her spellings, nor does she claim to have found 'the solution to the spelling'. However, it was socially

acceptable and the spellings in her dictionary were well-received and continue to have a considerable amount of support.

2.8.4 Norf'k: The Laycock-Buffett 'system'

The Laycock-Buffett 'system' was an exercise of deliberate planning, influenced by synchronic structuralist approaches to reducing languages to writing. They presented a technical proposal of how N should be written. Whilst it is commonly labelled a 'phonetic' system, it is actually based on a mix between broad phonetic and phonemic transcription. Laycock designed the orthography mainly as an academic exercise and presented the results to the community as a *fait accompli*. Alice Buffett regarded it as divinely inspired and hence the final word on this matter. She (p.c. 1998) informed me that "you cannot revise the system".

Laycock brought with him expertise in phonemics. He took surprisingly little note of Harrison's (1972) detailed phonetic analysis of N and appears to have been unaware of Flint's phonetic transcriptions. During his brief stay on the island, he was not in a position to resolve the numerous problems to be faced when dealing with a phonetically highly variable language. A number of central questions such as the phonemic status of vowel length, the glottal stop, or voicing of consonants remain unresolved. A particularly problematic feature of Laycock's phonetic transcription is the prevalent use of schwa instead of the more typical weakly stressed vowels. In a short unpublished paper, Laycock and Buffett (1986) discuss why they opted for certain symbols and symbol combinations, including:

- The spelling conventions are based on Tahitian where possible, but the smaller number of distinctive speech sounds in this language requires additional symbols for N. These should be chosen from English and/or European languages such as German and French. Thus, the English letter <c> becomes either <k> or <s> and <au> is chosen instead of English <ou> or <ow>.
- The same sound should always be written with the same symbol and any particular symbol should only represent one sound. This bi-uniqueness principle is violated in a number of instances, however. Diagraphs are used to represent single sound identified by the authors e.g. <th> and <dh> for [θ] and [ð], <sh> for [ʃ] and apart from doubling two vowel symbols as in <aa>, <ii> and <uu>, both <h> and <r> are used to represent what the authors perceive to be vowel length. <er> represents [ɜ:], <eh> represents [e:], <oh> represents [ɔ:], and [ɔ:] is written <or>.

- Some of the special vowel sounds of N are represented by digraphs, for instance <oe> for [œ]. The final sound of *bembare*, *bembeya* ‘lest’ was initially represented by <eha>, a solution not adopted in Buffett (1999).
- A particularly infelicitous choice of symbol is the apostrophe <'>, which represents the unstressed schwa [ə] in words such as *ap'trii* ‘pregnant’ as well as the glottal stop [ʔ] in words such as *ama'ula* ‘clumsy’. A third rather cryptic use is described in Buffett and Laycock (1988: xvi) as follows:

to write the little particle **a'**, which in Norfolk tends to stand for a lot of little English words like *a*, *the*, *of*, *for*. The apostrophe at the end reminds the reader that it only rarely means the same as English *a* – but the pronunciation is the same.

Though discouraged by Buffett and Laycock, users of the ‘system’ often mark the genitive possessive with an apostrophe as in *madha's* ‘mother’s’. The problems with this symbol are compounded by the specification in Buffett’s *Encyclopedia* (1999: 1) that the “apostrophe is the first letter, the first vowel, the first word in the Norfolk alphabet”. This is very difficult to handle in wordlists. Thus, in Buffett’s *Encyclopedia* (1999), we find systematic *d'* ‘definite determiner’ correctly listed as the first word under the letter D, but the entry *d'gaeda* ‘together’ after *daad'wieh* ‘this is the way’. Some Islanders who use the Laycock-Buffett system have discontinued using apostrophes.

Laycock and Buffett (1986: 9) claim that “all words of Norfolk can be written in the proposed system and that it can be learned within an hour”. The first claim is rendered problematic by the fact that N speakers do not have reliable intuitions about the sounds they use and that professional phoneticians have produced conflicting phonetic transcriptions to which the symbol conversion rules should be applied. The second claim is rendered problematic by the continuing inability of all users of the system to consistently follow it. Whilst Laycock and Buffett provide a number of arguments for rejecting the spelling <oo> for [u] and <u> for [a], most writers do this almost routinely, including Alice Buffett herself in her *Encyclopedia* (1999).

| Buffett 1999 | expected form | translation |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>bumen</i> | <i>bamen</i> | to bum around |
| <i>butt</i> | <i>bat</i> | butt |
| <i>upkuks</i> | <i>apkuks</i> | non-committal |
| <i>mustard</i> | <i>mastaad</i> | mustard |
| <i>hus</i> | <i>has</i> | husk |
| <i>s' cutet daun</i> | <i>s' katet daun</i> | was cut down |

The following “Key to the system of spelling and reading Norfolk” is given in a number of Laycock’s and Buffett’s papers:

| Vowels | Norfolk | English | Consonants | Norfolk | English |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| a | as in ‘about’ | about | b | borl | ball |
| e | as in ‘pet’ | pet | d | dorg | dog |
| i | as in ‘it’ | it | f | fut | foot |
| o | as in ‘hot’ | hot | g | guud | good |
| u | as in ‘full’ | full | h | hamp | hump |
| ie | as in ‘piej’ | page | j | jaj | judge |
| ae | as in ‘haet’ | hat | k | klaai | cry |
| oe | as in ‘hoem’ | home | l | lieg | leg |
| ai | as in ‘hai’ | High | m | musa | almost |
| ei | as in ‘hei’ | hey! | n | noe | no |
| eh | as in ‘keht’ | cat | p | plau | plough |
| oh | as in ‘rohtn’ | rotten | r | raep | wrap |
| | | | s | simis | similar to |
| | | | t | tintoela | sweetheart |
| uu | as in ‘muun’ | moon | v | verefai | verify |
| aa | as in ‘maach’ | march | y | yang | young |
| ieh | as in ‘dieh’ | day | z | zebra | zebra |
| au | as in ‘daun’ | down | th | Thing | thing |
| or | as in ‘mor’ | more | dh | Madha | Mother |
| er | as in ‘berd’ | bird | | | |
| ‘ | as in d’ ‘d’guud’ | very nice | | | |

The complete list of symbols used by Laycock and Buffett underwent a number of changes before the definite list was published in Laycock and Buffett (1988: xvii–xx).

After publication in 1988, no further changes were permitted. I myself have been asked several times what makes the system so difficult and how it could be made more user-friendly. In response, I drafted a paper in which I showed how a particular text could be made more user-friendly by modifying the Laycock-Buffett spelling system. Informal testing suggest that such modifications have some merit (see appendix 2.7). However, the decision whether to adopt a modified Laycock-Buffett system or a regularized traditional spelling rests with the Norfolk Islanders.

2.9 Applying criteria of adequacy

2.9.1 Systematic adequacy

Neither the traditional nor the Laycock-Buffett approach to writing N attains systematic adequacy, in spite of repeated claims by Buffett that theirs is “a system”. To make this system more adequate, major changes are required:

- a principled agreement on a broad phonetic representation;
- accurate phonetic transcriptions of words read carefully from a wordlist;
- assuring that no symbol represents more than one sound;
- criteria for exceptional spellings;
- agreement on the number of variants for each word and criteria for distinguishing primary forms and variants;
- agreed principles for what counts as a single word in the language;
- criteria for inherited and borrowed words and a decision whether to treat them the same or not.

Whilst all of these criteria need to be applied to the Laycock-Buffett system, only the last three are needed to achieve greater systematic adequacy in Nobbs-Palmer’s version of traditional spelling.

2.9.2 Social adequacy

Traditional writing evolved organically in response to shared social needs and continues to be used in most private and public documents. Moreover, the norms that have developed on Norfolk are very similar to those prevailing on Pitcairn.

To what extent a more standardized version of this spelling would be acceptable needs to be ascertained.

The Laycock-Bufferett system has been accepted by a small number of individuals and it is taught by some teachers at the school. It continues to be regarded as *car doo* ‘inadequate’ by a significant number of Islanders and is not widely used by younger Islanders.

2.9.3 Historical adequacy

Traditional spelling provides etymological information for many words, but not in a consistent manner, as its users are not always aware of the *cumfrum* ‘historical roots’ of words. By contrast, the Laycock-Bufferett system disregards the historical roots of words, which may be one of the reasons why the conservative speakers of the language reject it.

2.9.4 Psychological adequacy

The Laycock-Bufferett system is based on physical sound units, not on psychological ones. Speakers of N cannot be aware, in principle, of all the physical speech sounds they produce. Weakly stressed vowels in fast speech may have the physical properties of schwa, but native speakers of the language are psychologically aware of differences. In consequence, the system has become prescriptive by default. Its users look up words in Bufferett’s (1999) *Encyclopedia*. Words that are not listed there are often written in idiosyncratic fashion. In the absence of an entry for ‘school’, the Norfolk Island Central School ran the Principal’s column (about 2000 to 2002) in the *Norfolk Islander* under the macabre heading of *Awes Skull Nyuus*. As the primary literary language of N speakers is English, their knowledge of English spelling can interfere when trying to use the Laycock-Bufferett system.

As high frequency words tend to be read as a whole gestalt, traditional writing achieves a greater degree of psychological adequacy, but not consistently so for low-frequency words. This is not likely to cause problems for fluent speakers but will cause problems for beginning learners.

2.9.5 Economic adequacy

Whilst the design of a unified writing system comes at a fairly modest cost, implementing a design and monitoring its use is more costly. The production of

materials for mainstreaming the language at the school or translation of official documents requires expertise and ongoing quality control.

Whatever future decisions about the use of written N, unlike Luxembourg that could easily absorb the costs of two radical revisions of Letzebuergisch orthography, Norfolk Island does not have the resources to get it wrong. Using two orthographies side-by-side, as is current practice in the museum, involves extra expense and cannot be sustained in all domains. Continuing to promote an unmodified Laycock-Buffett system could be very expensive. Agreeing on a solution that is acceptable to both traditionalists and supporters of the Laycock-Buffett system will be the cheapest solution.

The principal value of writing a language such as N is symbolic rather than instrumental. However, there are some direct financial benefits from publication: translating and producing signage and increased use in tourism will generate further income. Again, without agreement on spelling, such benefits will not be achievable.

2.9.6 Adequacy for language revival

The reasons most commonly given for wanting to write the N language and for having a spelling system is its dramatic decline as an oral language and the expectation that a consistent writing system could help (a) preserve the language through documentation and (b) revive the language by encouraging its use in a written form. I have a few reservations about the first aim, apart from the general issue of the coverage of such documentation.

Attempts to arrest and reverse the decline of N date from the second half of the 20th century, generally aiming to strengthen the language by means of a single written form.

The creation of a literate variety often has the unintended side effect of weakening a small and endangered language, an argument rejected by Crowley (2000). One reason is that literacy tends to reduce variation, which is essential for stylistic flexibility and change and adaptation of a language. Whereas the Laycock-Buffett system makes provision for writing variants, the fact that learners and semi-speakers rely on what is actually listed in the Encyclopedia means that the system has become prescriptive. In Buffett and Laycock (1988), the first person dual is represented as *hīmii* and this is taught at the school and written in documents using their ‘system’. In Flint’s phonetic transcriptions, the preferred forms are [hami] or [hemi], with [himi] a rare variant.

The relationship between spelling and language maintenance is a complex one. In many instances, as indeed has been the case with P-N, the endangered

language is used side by side with a more powerful metropolitan language with a strong tradition of literacy. The belief that a writing system can contribute to the sustained well-being of a weaker language is not warranted. Making the wrong choice can accelerate the weakening of small languages, for several reasons:

- It can stir up conflict between traditionalists and modernists.
- By extending the domains and functions of written language, established diglossia may become weakened and the L variety may become exposed to competition with the H variety.
- Resources needed for implementing literacy in the L variety may involve the opportunity cost of not having sufficient resources for strengthening oral proficiency.

This case study of N confirms that trying to impose a technical linguistic system without considering established norms and practices is a recipe for conflict. The numerous remaining issues can only be resolved once the social issues have been properly recognized and once the users of the language have been informed and consulted. I also note that attempts to develop a standard for N are fairly recent, and I do not know of any society where the acceptance of a writing system took less than a few generations. In the case of English, an agreed standard spelling took several hundred years to develop. For Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea, one of the nation's official languages, a standard spelling system was adopted by the churches, newspapers and some government bodies in 1954, but the majority of written texts other than the Bible do not conform to it even today. The writing system that was proposed for Haitian Creole in the 1950s triggered social conflict, as did the writing system for Quechua when this language was made co-official with Spanish in Peru.

2.10 Conclusions

The reason why this chapter contains so many details on orthographic matters is that they provide important insights into the nature of the language and the speech community.

The first question I was asked on my first visit to Norfolk Island was: “What do you think of Alice Buffett’s spelling system?” and this question continues to be put to me after 28 visits to the island. I had to reply that I did not know the answer then and added that it would take a long time before I could make a pronouncement. During my 28th visit to Norfolk Island in 2019, I gave a public talk on the history of writing N and identified the technical and social issues without

recommending a solution. I strongly feel that it is up to the community to make their own decisions. As Rehg (2004) has pointed out, recommendations by linguists and missionaries can often have unintended harmful consequences.

Linguists and language planners with a structuralist background might have replied differently and opined that for any language to have a phonemic writing system surely was a good thing. Such a view comes from a tradition that regards theoretical linguistics as the means of solving technical problems and applied and socio-linguistics as implementers of technical solutions. For very much the same reasons, they would have welcomed standardization and modernization of the language.

The structuralist approach starts with language rather than people and assumes that language is a separate domain, which can be described on its own terms and be correlated with social parameters. Integrational linguistics and ecolinguistics have demonstrated that no such separation of language from the world is possible and that linguists do not necessarily have better knowledge of a language than its actual users.

Because of my theoretical position as ecolinguist and integrational linguist, I decided to learn about spelling from the people I worked with. This has not been an easy thing, as the spelling issue is an area of interpersonal and social conflict. Supporters or detractors of a particular way of spelling the language often have personal likes and dislikes, positive and negative experiences with language teachers, and many other agendas. In such a situation, it may be easy for a researcher to obtain a large body of opinions, but it is difficult to comment on them. I have learnt many of the reasons why particular individuals prefer a particular approach to spelling and that one is dealing with a social issue, not a debate about the scientific merits or indeed the usefulness of solutions to spelling problems.

What I could do, however, is to find out what people were actually doing when they were writing the language and what problems arose when they did it in one of the proposed systems. This required a large body of written documents and a lot of data crunching. The appendices to this chapter represent the kind of data I had to examine before being able to demonstrate that the so-called 'traditional' way of representing the language was in fact pretty consistent.

How do we know what we know? One answer is that one needs to work empirically. But this is not the full story. The selection of empirical data is determined by the theory with which one approaches sociolinguistic problems. Ecolinguists argue that there is no principled limitation to what counts as data and for this paper, I obtained knowledge from a very wide range of sources. Importantly, I approached the problem without any expectation that a phonemic solution would be either good, useful or otherwise, but heeded the ecolinguistic

principle that factors that are supportive in one language ecology may be detrimental in another one.

The relationship between spelling and language maintenance is a complex one. In many instances, the endangered language is used side by side with a more powerful metropolitan language with a strong tradition of literacy. The belief that any writing system can contribute to the sustained well-being of a weaker language is not warranted. As I have tried to show, making the wrong choice can accelerate the weakening of small languages.

The evolution of language is a puzzle that has intrigued and confounded linguists for years. The path languages take as they grow and evolve around the world brings new insights into the history of the human race and can answer some very important questions about how we evolved. New linguistics research has just come out which explores the relationship between location and language development, shedding light onto some previously unexplored territory. (Borneman 2015)

3 Geography, demography, cultural factors

3.1 Physical geography

New contact languages such as P-N come into being not just, and not primarily, from internal mental resources. Rather, their nature can be explained by a variety of external contingencies. The role of location in Creole formation has been acknowledged ever since Bickerton (1981) distinguished three prototypical locations: plantations, forts and ships.

A number of others have since been identified, including mission boarding schools. One needs to add a further prototypical location, the beach community (Mühlhäusler 1998) on small islands such as the Bonins, Palmerston and Pitcairn. Common to these is their being clearly bounded, remote and of limited size. The term *beach community* not only signals a geographical concept but also a social one. Linguists have tended to admit social factors as causes of the linguistic nature of contact languages, whilst remaining sceptical about the influence of physical ones. Ecolinguistics (surveyed in Mühlhäusler 2003a) has rediscovered the effects of natural environment on languages, however.

Both Pitcairn and Norfolk Island are Oceanic Islands, geographically distinct from the continent they are nearest to. Pitcairn is located 5,539 kms from the nearest point in South America and Norfolk Island 3,394 kms from Australia. Pitcairn's nearest neighbour is Mangareva, a French overseas territory 540 kms away. Pitcairn is administered and supplied from New Zealand, 5,519 kms away. Norfolk's nearest neighbours are New Caledonia, 934 kms to the north, and New Zealand, 1,460 kms to the south-east.

Pitcairn Island is the only inhabited island of an administrative unit of four islands – Pitcairn Island, Henderson, Oeno, and Ducie I – and is located at 25°04'S 130°06'W. Pitcairn Island is a volcanic high island (347 mts). Henderson is an uplifted coral island. Ducie and Oeno are coral atolls. Henderson, Ducie and Oeno are used by the Pitcairn Islanders for harvesting timber and seafood and for occasional outings. Pitcairn has a tropical wet climate with no dry or cool season; the yearly

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501501418-003>

rainfall averages 1700 mm and the average temperature is 22.5° C. Pitcairn has an area of 5 km² (about 3.2 kms long and 1.6 kms wide) and is only accessible by boat through Bounty Bay. It is one of the most remote sites of human habitation on Earth.

Norfolk Island is the only permanently inhabited of three small islands. It is located at 29°4'S 167°57'E and measures 8 kms by 5 kms, amounting to a surface area of 37 km². The highest point is Mount Bates (319 mts). Philip Island is located 6 kms (3.7 miles) south of Norfolk Island and has an area of 190 hectares. Whereas Norfolk and Philip Island are former volcanoes, Nepean Island was formed by wind-blown sand dunes between the last two ice ages and is about 10 hectares in area.

The climate of Norfolk Island is subtropical. Average minimum temperatures range from 13° C to 15° C in the winter and between 18° C and 20° C in the summer. The median annual rainfall is 1302mm. Rain is more common during winter, but light rain occurs throughout the year. There is little variation in monthly temperature throughout the year. The lack of proper seasons and the resulting monotonous climate has been associated by some past observers with the perceived “indolence” of the Islanders.

3.2 Physical geography and language

3.2.1 Isolation

One of the theoretical approaches underpinning this book is ecolinguistics, concerned, among other things, with the influence of the environment on language and vice versa. An outstanding characteristic of both Pitcairn and Norfolk Island is their extreme geographic isolation. The P-N language came into being while the mutineers of the Bounty and their Polynesian entourage were cut off from the rest of the world, a reason for researchers from several disciplines to portray Pitcairn Island as a “natural laboratory” to study race mixture, ethnogenesis and linguistic genesis. LePage (1989: 187), for instance, argued that “Pitcairnese in its origins reflects the nearest we are likely to get to an idealized desert island Pidgin-Creole situation.” The notion of “laboratory” has been critiqued by Young (2016a) and, with the exception of the period to 1808¹, when no observers were present, is indeed problematic. Records for the period 1790 to 1808 are very patchy.

¹ Le Page (n.d.: 188) states that “since their rediscovery and consequent contacts of course their language has undergone normal processes of change”.

Some of the language development may not have occurred in the putative island laboratory. The Pitcairners were amazingly mobile and had numerous dealings with the inhabitants of other Pacific islands. Thus, in 1831, the entire population of Pitcairn briefly resettled in Tahiti. Travel to Tahiti, Mangareva and Hawai'i has been common since the 1840s. At times, the islanders returned with plants and objects that recall their origin in P words such as *fahilo* 'toilet paper introduced from Hilo' or *Mangareva Bush*, *Mangareva Weed*, *Mangareva Cane* and *Mangareva Flower*. Between 1833 and 1852, no fewer than 355 vessels called on Pitcairn Island (Maude 1964: 75).

Contact with visiting whalers and traders was intense and some vessels and their crew were regular visitors and benefactors to the islanders. Name exchange among friends is a Polynesian cultural practice (Christian 2011: 58) and the reason why the names of ships' captains frequently became names of the Pitcairners, as in:

- Mayhew Young, 1823, after Captain Mayhew Folger;
- George Edwin Coffin Nobbs, 1843, after Captain James Coffin;
- Gilbert Warren Fysh Adams, 1845, after Captain Fysh;
- Abby Louisa Taber Quintal, 1846, after Master Walter Taber;
- William B. Swain Christian, born 1847, after William B. Swain who visited in 1832, 1833, 1844 and 1845.

Contact with the outside world promoted changes in dress, housing styles and diet. Exposure of the Pitcairners to acrolectal forms of English was massive and the instrumental value of English as the language of trade and requesting gifts was high.

3.2.2 The challenges of life on a high island

Both Pitcairn and Norfolk are high islands with few beaches and poorly developed coral reefs and a rugged and dangerous coastline. Neither Pitcairn nor Norfolk Island have a proper harbor. The P word *harbor* refers to any inlet, not necessarily a navigable one. Walking around the perimeter of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island or engaging in activities such as seabird egg gathering or rock fishing are very dangerous and have cost many lives over the years. This is reflected in the lexicon by the expression *fly down ar age* 'fall down a cliff face'. These dangerous conditions are reflected in P place names such as:

- Down-Side-Lin-Fall* – Lindsay Christian was badly injured by a fall on this rock;
- Down-Under-Johnny-Fall* – John Mills, aged 15, fell off this cliff while getting sea birds' eggs and died;

Howland-Fall – Howland Christian fell 250 metres here while gathering eggs;
Martin-Lasso Fall – the place where Mary ‘Lasso’ Christian and Martin fell;
O’er-Side-Lucas Fall – nine-year-old Lucas Kiprano from Mangareva fell 90 feet and was killed here;
Up-Side Nunk Fall – the place where Nunk (uncle) Alfonso Christian fell down a small cliff and survived.

Norfolk Island has the place name *Side Monty Down* near Rocky Point, which is where the nine-year old Monty Christian fell and drowned.

3.3 Plant and animal life forms

3.3.1 Endemic and introduced species

Because of their remoteness from large landmasses and their rugged terrain, both Pitcairn and Norfolk have many endemic life forms. A common problem in both island territories are introduced pest plants and animals, which over the last two hundred years have dramatically altered their ecology.

The flora of the Pitcairn Islands was first studied systematically by Maiden (1901) and more recently, Göthesson (1997). Mühlhäusler (2003a) demonstrates an interesting connection between language and extinction. Plants that have no local name are much more threatened than named varieties, which tend to be those with perceived cultural usefulness. About half of the taxa of Pitcairn are endemic to Polynesia. Less than half of the Pitcairn flora also occurs on nearby Henderson. Most of the endemic taxa (nine on Pitcairn and four on Henderson) have relatives elsewhere in southern, central or eastern Polynesia.

There is a high level of endemism amongst the insect fauna and half the molluscan species are thought to be endemic. There are no native species of reptile, amphibian or mammal. Henderson Island is regarded as being of great ornithological importance. All four land birds there – Henderson Crake (*Porzana atra*), Henderson Fruit-Dove (*Ptilinopus insularis*), Henderson Lorikeet (*Vini stepheni*) and Henderson Reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus taiti*) – are endemic. There is one endemic bird species, the Pitcairn reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus vaughani*).²

A number of mammals were introduced on Pitcairn: the first of which is the Polynesian rat, introduced about 800 years ago and now, no longer culturally used as a source of food, a major pest. The mutineers of the Bounty introduced pigs and goats as well as chickens, and later introductions include cattle, horses,

² (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?pageid=368>).

dogs and cats. In 1890, “acting on the biblical injunction that pork is ‘unclean’ meat, the Pitcairners destroyed all pigs on the island”³. Cattle and horses never did well on Pitcairn and caused massive environmental damage.

Norfolk Island is considerably larger than Pitcairn and exhibits a far greater variety of local and endemic species. Its plants received their first systematic study from Maiden (1904). Norfolk Island has 182 native plant species, of which 43 are endemic (Coyne 2011: 5).

Birds are the main vertebrate species on Norfolk Island. The island’s birds comprise 100+ resident and migrant species. Margaret Christian (2005) lists four extinct and seven surviving endemic bird species. The habitat of the native birds is threatened by introduced species such as the sparrow, red parrot, quail and, above all, feral chicken.

Two reptiles, the Lord Howe Island skink *Oligosoma lichenigera* and the Lord Howe Island gecko *Christinus guentheri* can still be found on Phillip Island. A number of endemic invertebrates occur, including 30 moths, 11 booklice, 65 beetles and one particularly impressive centipede which grows up to 150 mm long and 17 mm wide and is only found on Phillip and Nepean Islands.

Two species of bats are the only native land mammals recorded on Norfolk Island. They are the Norfolk Island free-tail bat, *Tadarida norfolkensis*, and Gould’s wattled bat, *Chalinolobus gouldii*. Both have become victims of habitat destruction.

There are several introduced species of mammals. The earliest one is the Polynesian rat, *Rattus exulans*, which arrived around the 15th century. The ship rat, *Rattus rattus*, appeared on Norfolk during the 1940s. The house mouse, *Mus musculus*, probably made its appearance in the early days of European settlement. Feral cats, *Felis catus*, are common around the island and seriously affect populations of both land and sea birds.

Domestic pigs, goats, sheep, horses and cattle have severely affected the integrity of the native forest by eating seedlings and trampling vegetation. The cattle industry became an important part of Norfolk’s way-of-life and even today, cattle can be seen roaming all over the island. Horses were once the main means of transport and their numbers were a major environmental threat before the arrival of motor vehicles. N has numerous expressions relating to horses, for instance *Logan se kiket* ‘to be ugly, after the name of a horse that kicked an Islander’s face’ and *horse* ‘intruder, unwelcome outsider’.

There are about 220 coastal fish species in Norfolk Island water, only four of them endemic to Norfolk Island. Trumpeter is the major commercial fish in

3 (https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/studycenter/pit_puc.shtml).

Norfolk waters and a very popular dish, though islanders disagree which part is tastiest, as the expressions *sweet as a trumpeta's tael*, *cheek*, or *he-ed* show. Larger fish commonly occurring include kingfish, snapper, trevally, tuna, bonito, rock cod, stingrays and sharks. Whales also pass close to Norfolk Island seasonally. They were taken from Norfolk waters intermittently during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Whaling on Norfolk culminated with a modern whaling station at Cascade from 1956 to 1962, by which time whale numbers had declined to the extent that whaling was no longer profitable. Whaling metaphors are still common in the speech of older Islanders.

3.3.2 Life forms and language

The presence on both islands of life forms unknown to the new settlers raises the question: which were named and what new names emerged? Comparative lists of names for Pitcairn and Norfolk flora and fauna are given in appendices I and II. A study of P names affords insights into the role of the different population groups in naming lifeforms as well as their cultural significance.

Contrary to expectations, Tahitian names for flora are not predominant: only 56 Tahitian names have been recorded, against 190 English-derived P names and about a dozen mixed Tahitian-English ones such as *bulb-tale*, *red fautu* and *pulau-gras* (see appendix 3.1).

Many plants that were culturally used in Tahiti were never named or used on Pitcairn. Only nine of its 26 fern species were ever named: three had a Tahitian name, six a P name such as *rockfern*, *blackfern*, *old man fern* or *creepy fern*. One of the unnamed ferns is used in 36 Tahitian remedies but none on Pitcairn, three other unnamed ferns were also used for medicinal purposes in Polynesia, two were used as a food source but none of them on Pitcairn. Eight of the unnamed ferns are threatened with extinction.

When P has a word borrowed from Tahitian and cultural use is made of a plant, the range of uses tends to be much narrower than in Polynesia. The *ti*-plant or *rauti* was used extensively in early years to distil a spirit but not used as fodder, eaten or used for medicinal purposes. *Api* 'giant taro' was used as food but not as a remedy. Single use on Pitcairn contrasts with multiple use in Tahiti and elsewhere in Polynesia. Plants that have no cultural uses are often grouped together under a single name, for instance *cockscorn*, a name given to a variety of species, *dock*, a name of various fern species and *jasmy*, a number of flowering plants. Names for animal life forms again are not predominantly of Tahitian origin (see appendix 3.2).

There are a number of interesting linguistic aspects of names for life forms in P. Fish are often named after the person who first received an unnamed species in a fish *share out* or who first caught it. Källgård (1981: 31) has an entry *miti/mite* as the ‘wrasse *coris aygula*’ and explains its name as “the first fish of this kind which was caught by the islanders fell on the share of Harriet Melissa McCoy (b. 1847).” Her nickname was *Miti* ‘kiss, cuddle’. Similarly, plants are typically named after the person who first cultivated or introduced them or after their place of origin. *Biini-cabbage*, *Brassica oleracea*, is a beach-growing wild cabbage named after Bernice ‘Biini’ Christian (1899–1993) who was the first person to cultivate it. (Additional examples can be found in appendix 3.3)

Naming practices in N are similar but the practice of fish share-outs was less central, as fish around Norfolk Island was much more plentiful. The pest plant ‘mist flower’, *Eupatorium riparium*, received its local name, *William Taylor*, after the Melanesian Mission mason, and a banana variety introduced by Dr. Codrington, headmaster of the Melanesian Mission, bears his name. *Isaac wood* is ‘a tree named after Isaac Quintal’ and *Siah’s backbone* is ‘a tree recording the strength of Josiah Adams’. In the 1930s, Tom Bailey introduced a particularly tasty sweet potato, which is known as *Tom Bailey tayty*.

Names of culturally useless plants are often compounds with the first element *bastard* ‘inferior or inedible variety of a plant’, a practice that probably originated in St Kitts. Examples include *bastard ironwood* and *bastard tarla*, ‘a wild, inedible variety of taro’.

3.4 Demography

3.4.1 Settlement patterns

Understanding the coming into being of P, its subsequent development, and spread depends on understanding the demographic factors in these processes. Both Pitcairn and Norfolk are very small islands with a high population density. On Pitcairn, it has varied between 10 and 60 per square km, with most of the islanders residing in a small area around Adamstown. On Norfolk Island, the population density has varied between 10 and around 75, with present density of around 60. Islander families are scattered all over the island, with the exception of the National Park areas. About 180 out of 1,900 residents lived in the commercial centre Burnt Pine in 2007.

3.4.2 Pitcairn Island

Pitcairn Island was discovered on July 2nd, 1767, during a voyage led by Captain Philip Cartaret, and named after Robert Pitcairn, the crew member who first spotted it: “It is so high that we saw it at a distance of more than 15 league, and it having been discovered by a young gentleman, son to Major Pitcairn, of the Marine, who was, unfortunately, lost in the Aurora, we called it Pitcairn’s Island” (Hawkesworth 1785: 52).

The mutineers of the *Bounty* were able to seek Pitcairn Island as their refuge in 1790 because they had on board Hawkesworth’s report of Carteret’s discovery.

Pitcairn Island served as a successful refuge for the mutineers for so many years because nobody in the Royal Navy knew precisely where the island was; the map and text published in Hawkesworth’s *Voyages* placed Pitcairn over 200 miles west of its true position, and the printed latitude in the first edition disagreed with the map’s position by an additional 350 miles! Of such errors are legends born (Ravneberg 2004: 13).

When in 1879, nine British sailors, 6 Polynesian men and 12 Polynesian women arrived on Pitcairn, they found it uninhabited. However, there were traces of a previous Polynesian settlement (Macnaughtan 2014).

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Polynesian population on Pitcairn probably did not exceed 100 at any one time. It also suggests close interdependency between Pitcairn, Henderson and Mangareva (Diamond 2005). As the Polynesians on Pitcairn, Henderson, and Mangareva inflicted heavy environmental damage, there no longer were sufficient trees for sea-going canoes and by the 17th century, trade between them ceased and the Polynesians on Pitcairn and Henderson died out. The dependency on outside goods was also a constant factor in the history of Pitcairn after 1790 and continues to the present.

Hiti-au-revareva was the old Tahitian name for Pitcairn. The literal meaning is ‘border of passing clouds’ (Wahlroos 1989). Its better-known Tahitian name dates after 1790, *Fenua Maitai*, Tahitian for ‘good land,’ and was the name the Polynesian companions of the *Bounty* mutineers gave to Pitcairn Island. Population statistics for Pitcairn Island have played an important role in the debate about the reasons why Tahitian did not become the language of Pitcairn Island. This issue was first raised and partially answered by Silverman (1967: 203–204):

How was it possible for the youth to grow up speaking the language originally exclusive to the lone male survivor with an excellence that astonished Captains Folger, Staines, and Pipon, and many others, when all their mothers had Tahitian or cognate tongues as their native speech? As Doctor Shapiro points out, “Not only do we usually think of mothers as

teaching their offspring the rudiments of language, but where the women so outnumbered the one surviving man who had no English companion to exercise and to keep agile his mother tongue, we might logically expect the natural influence of the maternal language would have predominated.”

Dening (1992: 322) again raises the issue without arriving at a satisfactory answer:

Having said that, it seems logical to see the women as the chief socialising force on Pitcairn, but to admit that we cannot say precisely how. I should say that the language of Pitcairn – surely a sign of socialising forces – was English, well, English enough to be recognised and understood by visitors from outside. Out of a polyglot of dialects – Philadelphian American English, London Cockney, Aberdeen and Ross-shire Scots, as well as dialects of the North Country, Guernsey Island, St. Kitts in the West Indies, Cornwall and Manx – came an English that has delighted phonologists. But it was not Tahitian. And we have the puzzle that English was the language of power – shall we say of the Sea? – and Tahitian the language of everyday social life – shall we say of the Land?

Arguments as to the relative numerical strengths of the different groups involved in the emergence of Creole languages have a long tradition (Mufwene 2002) but it is clear that numerical factors alone never decide on the composition of the lexicon and grammar of the resulting contact language. Still it seems worthwhile to briefly consider the statistics for the early years of Pitcairn.

First, we need to correct the perception that we are simply dealing with two groups speaking English and Tahitian, respectively. Among the nine male mutineers, two were possibly not native speakers of English. John Williams from Guernsey appears to have been a speaker of Channel Island French. As he died in 1793, his input on the language was probably minimal.⁴ Edward Young from St. Kitts would have been familiar with both a West Indian Creole and acrolectal English and may have been the originator of the institutionalized stable diglossia.

Note that the Polynesian entourage did not all come from Tahiti: of the six men, two came from Tubuai, one from Ralatea and three from Tahiti. Of the 13 Polynesian women, one, possibly two, appear to have come from Tubuai and one from Raiatea. Importantly, the Tubuaian and Raiatean women were the consorts of men from their home islands. Whilst the Raiatean dialect is a little different from Tahitian, Austral, the language of Tubuai, was probably not mutually intelligible with Tahitian in 1789. Of the Tahitian women, three were from an upper-class background and became partners of Christian Fletcher,

⁴ The word *fatu* ‘broken, exhausted’ could conceivably be retraced back to French *foutu* ‘fucked’.

Edward Young and John Adams respectively, the remaining ones were “non-descripts of the Polynesian lower classes who alone were normally permitted to consort with the crews of visiting ships” (Ross and Moverley 1964: 51). Importantly, 40% of the Polynesian women remained childless, either because of diseases sexually transmitted in Tahiti or because of contraception and abortion.

During the first ten years of settlement, there were dramatic changes in the composition of the population.

| Year | % of Tahitians | British men | Tahitian men | Other Polynesian men | Tahitian women | Other Polynesian women | Children |
|------|----------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------|
| 1789 | 50% | 9 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| 1794 | 36% | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 8 |
| 1799 | 25% | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 20 |
| 1800 | 24% | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 22 |
| 1823 | 8% | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 52 |

We note that at no point were there more than 50% Tahitians, that after five years, the percentage had fallen to 36% and that after ten years, when a significant number of children had been born, they comprised only 25% of the total population, though they outnumbered the British men by a factor of four to one. No children resulted from their unions with Polynesian men: “Though three Tahitian women were servicing six men of their own race, there was never a full-blooded Polynesian child born there, and this can only have been by design” (Christian 1983: 160).

Beechy, who visited Pitcairn Island in 1825 and obtained many details about its history from John Adams, regards the year 1799, when Adams and Young were the only male survivors and repented their previous lifestyle, as crucial in the cultural history of the island:

His reformation could not, perhaps, have taken place at a more propitious moment. Out of nineteen children upon the island, there were several between the ages of seven and nine years; who, had they been longer suffered to follow their own inclinations, might have acquired habits which it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for Adams to eradicate. The moment was therefore most favourable for his design, and his laudable exertions were attended by advantages both to the objects of his care and to his own mind, which surpassed his most sanguine expectations. He, nevertheless, had an arduous task

to perform. Beside the children to be educated, the Otaheitan women were to be converted; and, as the example of the parents had a powerful influence over their children, he resolved to make them his first care. Here also his labours succeeded; the Otaheitans were naturally of a tractable disposition, and gave him less trouble than he anticipated: the children also acquired such a thirst after Scriptural knowledge, that Adams in a short time had little else to do than to answer their inquiries and put them in the right way (Howe 1865: 248).

By 1799, there were 21 Pitcairn-born children, with remarkable predominance of boys in the first few years.

| year | males | females |
|--------|-------|---------|
| 1790 | 1 | 1 |
| 1791 | 2 | – |
| 1792 | 4 | 2 |
| 1793 | 5 | 3 |
| 1794 | 6 | 4 |
| 1795 | 7 | 4 |
| 1796 | 9 | 5 |
| 1797–8 | 10 | 6 |
| 1799 | 12 | 9 |
| 1800 | 13 | 10 |

Of the mutineers, Edward Young was the father of six and John Adams of three, Fletcher Christian and Manatua, who subsequently became Edward Young's consort, had three children, Matthew Quintal had five and William McCoy two children.

The mixed Polynesian-European settlement on Pitcairn, in spite of the high initial murder rate, grew rapidly and had reached 35 by the time the islanders had their first contact with the outside world in 1808. Intermarriages with outsiders began in 1824 when the “interlopers” John Buffett and John Evans married Dorothy Young and Rachel Adams, respectively. The Irishman George Hunn Nobbs married Sarah Christian in 1828 and whilst further intermarriages were discouraged, they became more common over time. Aunoa from Mangareva married Sterling Andrew Warren (b. 1910) in 1934. She was the first Polynesian addition to Pitcairn since the original settlers.⁵

⁵ (<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/WarrenJayden.shtml>). Accessed 16.01 2019.

Up to the resettlement of the entire population on Norfolk Island in 1856, Pitcairn's population grew to almost 200, outnumbering the putative carrying capacity of their island by two to one. By 1830, the effects of overpopulation and the seriousness of environmental degradation had become evident and led to the unsuccessful relocation of the Pitcairn Islanders to Tahiti in 1831. Detailed information about the demographics of his period have been given by Shapiro (1968) and by Refshauge and Walsh (1981).

Between 1859 and 1864, two groups of Pitcairners, numbering 43 in total, re-migrated to Pitcairn Island. Their number increased rapidly and had exceeded the carrying capacity of Pitcairn Island by the turn of the century. The all-time high of 233 was reached in 1937. By 1946, this figure had fallen to 126 but rose to a high of 187 in 1966. From 1971 onward, the population consistently remained below 100. In 2016 it stood at 49 and attempts to raise this figure to 80 through immigration from Norfolk Island and re-migration of Pitcairners living in New Zealand and Australia have been unsuccessful. There is now talk of Britain wishing to close down Pitcairn as an ageing population will no longer be able to man the boats needed to bring in supplies. Silverman (1967) reported that there were around 1,500 true Pitcairners: 45 on Pitcairn Island, 150 in French Polynesia, 160 in New Zealand, 400 in Australia, and most of the remainder on Norfolk Island.

In the past, a number of "interlopers" settled permanently or for extended periods of time on Pitcairn Island. A comprehensive list of these has been prepared by Herb Ford of the Pitcairn Islands Study Centre and can be found at <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/index.shtml>>. Ford also compiled a listing of all vessels calling at Pitcairn Island from 1898 to 2010 (Ford 2012). This information is of great value to linguists wishing to find out about language contact, potential linguistic role models and the different kinds of English prevailing on Pitcairn Island at different times. It is noted that, apart from those interlopers that married into the community, most residents from the outside acquired little knowledge of P, either because they were not interested or because it was deliberately withheld from them.

3.4.3 Norfolk Island

When Captain Cook discovered Norfolk Island in October 1774, he found it uninhabited but noted traces of a previous Polynesian settlement around Emily Bay, including plants such as bananas and taro, which are commonly associated with Polynesian settlements. A survey and a good list of references can be found in Sampson (2005).

In 1788, the First British settlers and convicts arrived, together with European livestock and seeds to set up an agricultural colony. The population peaked at more than 1,100 and about a quarter of the island was cleared, but in 1814, the settlement was abandoned. A second settlement, this time exclusively a penal colony, was set up in 1825 and lasted until 1855, when it was abandoned again. Up to 1400 convicts and a military garrison lived on the Island during this period. To sustain such a large population, more than half of the island had to be cleared of its original vegetation and introduced species caused major environmental changes. A brief history of the penal settlements is found in Hoare (1999). A more detailed account can be found in Nobbs (1988, 1991). Apart from a small number of caretakers, Norfolk Island was uninhabited when 196 Pitcairners arrived on Norfolk in June 1856.

Norfolk Island did not experience the same extreme isolation as Pitcairn. However, between 1856 and about 1900, the Pitcairn descendants had few dealings with the outside world and some families living in the remoter parts of Norfolk Island, referred to as *out yenna* 'out yonder' or *up in ar stick* 'in the remote forested parts', had virtually none. Isolation meant that the language developed from the internal resources.

In 1867, against the wishes of the Pitcairners who believed that Norfolk had been given to them by Queen Victoria for their sole use, the Melanesian Mission established its headquarters and boarding school on the Island and remained until 1920. The mission accommodated about 200 Melanesian scholars, mainly from the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands, and a constantly changing number (20–50) of British missionaries and personnel, outnumbering the Pitcairners after the return of a quarter of them to Pitcairn in the 1860s. The number of outsiders settling on Norfolk Island before 1900 was very low, as only qualified teachers and professionals were admitted. By 1900, the number of Pitcairners and their descendants had reached 500. The last person born on Pitcairn, Marianne Selina Buffett, died in 1943 aged 87.

With Australia assuming more administrative control after 1895, mainlander teachers and administrators began to arrive and, with the building of the Pacific Cable Station in 1902, twenty operators and their families, mainly from New Zealand, settled on Norfolk.

Population statistics, with the exception of census years, are difficult to obtain. In 1921, the official figure was 717. This brought with it an important change in the nature of community from a dense multiplex to a less dense communication network. Shapiro (1929: 24), who had spent 5 months with the Norfolk Islanders in 1926–1927, observed: "With the increase of numbers and more intimate contact with Australia, there has been a modification of numbers. In a population of more than 600 it is not possible to be on intimate terms with everyone. Consequently,

there has been a segregation which, although not a rigid one, is nevertheless felt by the islanders”.

This change of necessity impacted on some areas of the language, in particular the reduced role of eponyms which continued to thrive in P. It also promoted the development of dialectal diversification along family lines and places of residence such as the Steels Point and Cascade varieties.

By 1933, Norfolk’s population had increased to 1,231. During the 1920s, the number of permanent outside settlers, predominantly from New Zealand, increased, though frequent intermarriages attenuated their impact. The numbers of Norfolk Island residents declined with the Great Depression and the onset of WWII and stayed below 1,000 until after 1948. After 1941, a number of Norfolk Island males had enlisted and many families temporarily relocated to Australia or New Zealand. When in 1942, an air strip and New Zealand Garrison were established on Norfolk Island, the Pitcairn descendants were outnumbered again by outsiders. In an official record of the New Zealand involvement in the Pacific War, we read:

There were about 700 of them, living an uneventful and detached life on an island where natural beauty and an equable climate combined to make it most pleasantly habitable. They found that the influx of twice their number in service personnel gave an impetus and industry to their daily round such as they had never previously known, and they were soon to be linked with the outside world, hitherto available only by infrequent visits from ships, by a regular air service.⁶

Hayward (2006: 113) notes that the impact of the New Zealand soldiers was far greater than that of the Melanesian Mission, as they freely interacted with the locals and a number of intermarriages resulted.

Nobbs (2006: 186–187) provides additional observations on the growing number of non-Pitcairners. There was rapid population increase during the 1960s and 1970s, but the population has remained relatively stable since, ranging between 1,750 and 2,050 up to about 2008. Subsequent to the global economic crisis of 2008 and its severe effects on the economy of Norfolk Island, the population has declined to about 1,400 residents. Pitcairn descendants made up 45% of the population in 1954 and this continues to be the estimated proportion to date. In recent years, a growing number of Pacific Islanders from Fiji and elsewhere have settled on Norfolk, but the overall population decline has not been reversed.

⁶ http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH2Paci-_N89892.html.

3.4.4 Demographic factors and the P-N language

Both P and N are small languages and the very low number of speakers

- makes it possible to trace a significant number of words and constructions to individual speakers, and
- sustains expressions that require shared knowledge of the entire speech community.

A number of linguists, starting with Ross and Moverley (1964: 137), have commented on the differences between *normal speech communities* where “the linguistic influence of a single individual must always be extremely insignificant” and the situation during the formative years of P: “in such a tiny community the speech of every individual must have been of vital significance. Thus, the fact that both the Jamaicans and the Pitcairners use the same word in the same pronunciation for ‘thin’, viz. ‘morga’ is simply explained as due to a personal use of Edward Young from St. Kitts” (Ross and Moverley 1964: 137–138). Baker and Mühlhäusler (2013) have identified a large number of additional lexemes, pronunciations and constructions that can also be traced back to the only West Indian crew member of the *Bounty*.

Throughout the development of P and N, the influence of individuals and particular events can be pinpointed on occasion. They include eponymic expressions, which make up about 8% of the lexicon, and words introduced or deliberately created by individuals. Note, however, that there is often more than one account of their origin. Let us consider a few examples:

In P, there are two words for breadfruit: *bread* and *uru*. The Tahitian word must have been known to the British mutineers as well as the Tahitian women but *uru* does not appear in any of the early documents. The earliest placenames referring to breadfruit patches on Pitcairn include *John Adam’s Bread* and *Jenny’s Bread*. Källgård (1981) lists the common name *bread*⁷ as well as *uru* and comments “the Polynesian *uru* became popular on the island after the film *The Mutiny on the Bounty* with Trevor Howard and Marlon Brando was shown (again) in 1980 because it is frequently used there”.

⁷ *Skinner’s shit* (*Cyperus haemotodes*) is a coarse spiky sedge that was first documented in 1898 (Göthesson 1997: 91) but whose provenance remains contested. It was brought to the island with the fodder for either a cow or a horse. “*If you hold on you cut youse hand, Long, sharp sting like a brute . . . I kaa who’s Skinner.*” (1997: 91)

Anthroponymic eponyms in P include the following:

Allen (noun) – bad food, after Allen Christian (1879–1960) who, when disappointed with dinner said grace with the words ‘where’s the food we are about to receive?’

Christie drink – any hot drink which has been preserved in a thermos flask for a long time, after Christy Warren’s (b. 1898) habit to make hot chocolate in the evening, put it in a thermos flask and drink it the following morning (Källgård 1981: 17);

Eddie – a dish consisting of China bananas boiled in coconut milk, named after Eddie Christian (b. 1870) who on return on a schooner from Tahiti demanded *bail China en ha melk*;

Hare ‘useless, unreliable’ – classified by Källgård (1998: 131) as an English word that had its meaning changed on Pitcairn. In actual fact, the expression derives from Arnold Hare, nephew of the missionary Robert Hare, who was instrumental in the revival of the SDA church on Pitcairn in 1924. Arnold and his family visited Pitcairn in 1928 and he brought with him a petrol engine, which he attached to the longboat ‘Helen Hare’ on 24 August. “When he was motorizing the longboat, he turned the motor back to front and since then the expression *es hare*, which means ‘no good’ or ‘it doesn’t work’” (p.c. Meralda Warren November 2016.)

William ‘angry without reason’ – derived from William Christian (b. 1860) “who was a sensitive person who could stand no nonsense” (Källgård 1981: 28).

Similar expressions in N include:

Siah/Saia (verb) – to invite oneself to a meal, after Josiah Adams, born on Pitcairn in 1830, died on Norfolk Island in 1907. There is also a tree named after him: *Siah’s Backbone* – *strebius pendulinus*. He suggested the suitability of this tree for the keel of the ‘Resolution’, launched 1919.

Tom Bailey Pear ‘avocado’ – the avocado was unknown on Norfolk Island until the 1930s, when Tom Bailey bought four avocados in Auckland at the outrageous price of six shillings each for his sick mother-in-law and carried the seeds back to Norfolk. The avocados growing there today can all be traced back to this event.

Hoya ‘I say’, an expression of resignation – a German music teacher in New Zealand was in the habit of saying *hoja*, ‘oh yes’. His pupil, Harvey Christian, introduced the word when he returned from New Zealand to Norfolk Island in the early 1930s.

cushoo ‘comfortable, well’ – this word entered the language in the 1930s but there are many accounts as to who introduced it. It has been suggested by John

Christian that this word was brought to Norfolk circa 1925–1930 by Kit and Val Nobbs when they returned from their mainland education. There is also a story that in the early 1930s, one of CCR Nobb's daughters, Joan, had just returned to Norfolk Island from attending college in Sydney to marry a judge. When asked by someone here, 'How are you?' she replied, '*Cushoo*'. Alternatively, it has been suggested that *cushoo* in the meaning of 'on top of the world' may have been introduced to Norfolk Island in the 1930s by Rose *Moosha* Evans (Mühlhäusler, Nebauer-Borg and Coleman 2012: 49). Yet another account was given to the author by the musician Ms. Jaqui Chapman Shone from Auckland on May 5th, 2016. It illustrates not just the complexity of the social ecology in which new words emerge, but also the multiple competing accounts of pretty much any language matter that fieldworkers will encounter:

Our family story recalls that it was introduced to Norfolk Island in the late 1920s and early 1930s by Jacqui Chapman Shone's father William John Joyce (Bill) Chapman and interestingly the family names Evans, Nobbs, mentioned in the above referenced book all have a close connection and likely through him. Of course, for Norfolk Island this is not really surprising.

The evidence for Bill having introduced *kushu* to Norfolk Island includes the Chapman family story as well as one local identity who remembered Bill Chapman when he lived on Norfolk Island in the later 1920s. This was the late Amy Kathleen Bathie born Adams 1917 and she clearly recalled his name being associated with the introduction of *kushu* as his response to *wutaway* when flirting with young women and it was apparently intended to convey an interest to 'kiss you' but this eventually ended up as *kushu*. There is actually a short mention of this story in the Norfolk Islander newspaper about 2003 when Aunt Amy was still alive.

P shows many traces of American influence due to the number of Americans that settled on Pitcairn Island after 1863. Amongst them was Samuel Russell Warren, born 1830 in Rhode Island. He went to sea as a whaler, and ended up on Norfolk Island in the early 1860s. Here he met and fell in love with Agnes Christian from Pitcairn. They were married in December 1863 on Norfolk, and soon after, the couple moved with the second movement to Pitcairn in 1864, where he died in 1877. He fathered eight children, thereby founding the most important clan on Pitcairn. An event early in Warren's married life resulted in an interesting P place name:

It is said that they went night-fishing on the rocks, and one-time Agnes tucked her skirts up to traverse these treacherous obstacles. Samuel either pinched her bare behind or touched one of the burning *doodwi nuts* to it, and she reacted, resulting in either her, Samuel or both of them flying into a pool. The pool where his little prank went awry is known today as the Pool of Ooaaoo, the sound she made when she was touched on her behind (Dem Tull 2008).

Another account of this name is given by Chauvel Carlsson (2000): “Almost directly opposite, off the eastern coastline, is a rock called Oo ah Oo. Here, the story goes, several islanders were picking their way over the rocks, and a young woman coyly cried *Oo-ah-oo*, when one of the men playfully slapped her bottom”. Similar examples will be discussed in the chapter on the lexicon and its appendix.

3.5 Pitcairn and Norfolk culture

3.5.1 Background

A distinct culture developed on Pitcairn Island in the first half of the 19th century. Whilst it changed and adapted over time, these changes occurred in the isolation of Pitcairn Island: It was taken to Norfolk Island in 1856 when the entire community was resettled there and continued to develop in relative isolation until the arrival of modern communication technology, increasing numbers of settlers from the outside and assimilation policies of the Australian government, which eroded or rendered invisible some aspects of this culture.

Shapiro (1938) observed that Norfolk society had grown more complex than the original Pitcairn society, and that through contact with settlers, missionaries and administrators, as well as the sheer size of the population there were some slight, but not rigid, social distinctions. The old simplicity of the Pitcairners had also gone, but there remained “a charm of manners which springs from good humour and a fondness for people. The hospitality of the people is bounteous and always freely given” (Shapiro 1938: 32).

Greater cultural complexity did not lead to social stratification among the Pitcairn descendants, however: “. . . the feeling of common origin, the close relationships which they bear to one another, and the lack of wealth hold the people together as one group” (Maude 1964: 111). Linguistically, this close relationship is expressed by the pronoun *ucklun* ‘we, the descendants of the Bounty mutineers’, which contrasts with *we* ‘we, mixed group of descendants and outsiders’ and *dem* ‘the others’.

3.5.2 Biological and cultural distinctiveness

3.5.2.1 Physiology and genetics

The once common practice of equating ethnic with racial characteristics is no longer the flavour of the day among the scientific community, but it is very much alive in the everyday discourses of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders, who frequently

refer to themselves as a separate race. They are the result of mixture between Polynesians, Europeans and West Indians. Comments on distinct physical properties date back to 1808. Beechy, who visited Pitcairn in 1825 noted: “Although none of the Polynesian men fathered a child, the Polynesian genes were predominant in the shape of nose and lips, eyes were mainly brown, all hair was black and only one exception, and facial hair was very spare by European standards (Lummis 1997)”.

Stewart, the caretaker preparing the Pitcairners’ arrival on Norfolk Island in 1856, observed: “They appeared at first sights, very like the half cast Feejee men we meet at Ovalau, but without their energy and much dirtier, than ever I saw a half cast[e] boats crew. It seemed so curious to hear them talking English” (Chambers and Hoare 1992).

Shapiro, a biological anthropologist, researched Norfolk Island for five months (1923/1924) and Pitcairn for ten days (1934). He (1926) summarises his anthropometric research as follows:

To the anthropologist, the chief interest of the descendants of the mutineers of the ‘Bounty’ lies in the fact that here is an example of race mixture between two contrasted races. In studying race mixture, it is always discouraging when one attempts to define the ancestry precisely. Where the mixture has been long continued, it is frequently hopeless to obtain satisfactory genealogies. The Norfolk Islanders, however, have kept records of marriages and births, so that I have been able to make for all the islanders genealogical tables which go back to the original cross, and in that way determine the proportions of Tahitian and English in the population. There is somewhat more English ‘blood’ in the present generation [. . .] in a small proportion the recessive traits such as blue eyes, blond hair, and fair complexion, are combined in one individual. On the other hand, one finds, according to expectation, a number of individuals who are strikingly Tahitian in appearance. On the whole, Tahitian and English characters form a mosaic, the totality of which in some tends toward the English and, in others toward the Tahitian.

The Norfolk Island community has participated in a number of recent studies investigating the genetic determinants of disease, given their common genetic heritage. Such studies support the thesis that the Norfolk Islanders are a distinct genetic isolate: “the complete Norfolk Island pedigree includes 6,537 individuals and 11 meiotic generations” (Matovinovic 2011). This gene pool is of particular interest as:

- its origins are recent;
- genetic homogeneity remains strong;
- the susceptibility of the Islanders to diseases differs from that of other populations.

The Pitcairn descendants thus constitute a distinct genetic isolate. Their common ancestors are six British sailors and six Polynesian women.

3.5.2.2 Cultural aspects of ethnicity

An ethnic group can be defined as, “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland, a sense of solidarity” (Hutchinson and Smith 1996) and “core cultural values” (Smolicz 1981).

The Pitcairn Islanders whose ancestors founded their community continue to regard it as their homeland, and their descendants, who resettled on Norfolk Island in 1856, equally regard Pitcairn as their homeland. Until about 1900, Pitcairn Island was referred to as *hoem* by them and the prefix *hoem* was attached to life forms on Norfolk reminiscent of life forms on Pitcairn such as:

hoem narwei – a stream fish similar to the one that was found around Pitcairn Island

hoem rauti – a cordyline similar to the one growing on Pitcairn

hoem owl – a long-tailed cuckoo.

The Bounty Saga is part of the Pitcairners’ living culture. The prominence of Bounty mythology in present-day public culture on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island does not so much evidence an ‘ossified image of the past’, as a refigured one that complements a set of socio-political arguments and feelings that crystallised in the 1980s (Hayward 2006). Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders share the narrative of the Bounty Saga. The events of the mutiny are re-enacted and transmitted, e.g. the ceremonial burning of the Bounty on Pitcairn Island’s *Bounty Day* (January 23rd) or the Mutiny on the Bounty Show and the Cyclorama featuring the Bounty story on Norfolk Island.

The core cultural values of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders have remained similar, though 150 years of separate development also account for some differences. A shared value is ‘knowing one’s roots’. Knowledge of genealogy is important on both islands, though of much greater importance on Norfolk Island, and is kept alive both discursively and through a number of professional resources, e.g. the *Who are the Pitcairners* website of the Pitcairn Islands Study Center (<<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/>>).

Genealogy is particularly important on Norfolk Island, where it is used to distinguish oneself from the 60%+ residents with no connections to Pitcairn. The ability of the Norfolk Islanders clearly to identify common ancestors is described as *kumfrum* ‘come from, Pitcairn lineage’ and other residents are characterized as *nor gut kumfrum*, a word not used in P (Nash p.c. June 2017). “Islanders trace their ancestry through genealogy, history books, oral histories and through their embodied

performance of their relationships to first settlers on Bounty (Anniversary) Day” (Low 2012: 154).

Over the years, Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders have produced many writings about their islands and they legitimize their authorship by adding genealogical information. Alice Buffett’s *Encyclopedia*, for instance, is described as follows on the back cover:

Alice Buffett, O.A.M., Norfolk Islander, is a 7th generation direct descendant of *Bounty* mutineer Matthew Quintal and his Tahitian wife Tevarua; a 6th generation direct descendant of mutineer Edward Young and his Tahitian wife, Teraura through original Pitcairn settler John Buffett’s wife Dorothy Young; a 5th generation direct descendant of John Buffett who settled on Pitcairn Island with the mutineers and their wives in 1823; a 5th generation descendant of George Hunn Nobbs and his wife Sarah (Christian) through her paternal grandmother Elisabeth Harriett Nobbs. Through the various marriages of foregoing generations, the blood of most of the original forebears of the new community that settled Pitcairn after the mutiny on the *Bounty*, runs in Alice’s veins.

Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders regard themselves as a family or, in the words of Ena Ette Christian (1986: 24–25):

Moosa two hundred ‘ear, wi bin es one faem’ly.
Sock up through d’leag, es thing one sullen tulla me
 ‘Nigh on two hundred years here, we’ve been one big family,
 Soaked up through your feet, is what someone once said to me.’

On Pitcairn today there are the only three families with the names of the original mutineers: Christian (15), Evans (1) and Young (3), the three other ones being Brown (6), descended from an unknown sailor from the ship *Bowden* who married Anne Elizabeth Warren in 1893, Warren (10) and Warren-Peu (6). These surnames do not necessarily define what family someone identifies with.

On Norfolk Island, the Pitcairner community is split into smaller in family groupings whose members identify as descendants of one of the eight families (mutineers and interlopers) resident on Pitcairn in the first half of the 19th century. Their surnames are: Adams, Buffett, Christian, Evans, McCoy, Nobbs, Quintal and Young (see Partridge 2006). Though many Islanders have other surnames such as Blucher, Bataille or Snell, they identify with one of the mutineers’ families.

Sharing food and community spirit is an important marker of ethnicity on both islands. Shapiro (1968: 146) confirms the importance of sharing food on Pitcairn Island as a response to recurring food scarcity there.

But of greater interest in illustrating the foresight of the islanders was the general reserve supply of food and other articles maintained by the community. Food and other requirements were issued on account to any individual in need of them, to be repaid later. Or for an article in the common store which he lacked an islander might exchange something

from the abundance in his own supply. Salt for fresh provisions, and vegetables and fruit for poultry, were typical exchanges.

Particularly important were fish *share-outs*, as fish around Pitcairn is not plentiful and fishing requires a great deal of time and effort. A report from 1999 comments on a fishing expedition to neighbouring Oeno Island:

Back at Pitcairn, on Tuesday, December 7, the group did a fish ‘share-out,’ a decades-long island practice of sharing out equally to all island families gifts made by captains, crews or passengers of passing ships.

According to a report to the Pitcairn Islands Study Center, located on the campus of Pacific Union College here, 17 piles of 100 frozen fish each were shared out to the families on Pitcairn. With practically all Pitcairn homes having individual freezers, the shares promise a fish supply for several weeks into the future.⁸

Whereas Norfolk Island was far richer in resources and afforded the Pitcairners a life in subsistence affluence, sharing and exchanging gifts remains an important practice:

It is when trouble comes in times of sickness, or when death takes the breadwinner or deprives young children of a mother’s care, the islanders are seen at their best. Everything that can be done to alleviate suffering, to mitigate misfortune, is done, not perfunctorily or as a duty, but gladly and as a matter of course (Hunt 1914: 29).

Ena Ette Christian has captured the persisting importance of sharing in a poem about fishing expedition (1986: 28–29):

*En bin moos es religious rite sharen et out
Into one share f each dem, en one f dar boat
‘And it was like a religious rite, sharing them out
Into one share for each of them, one for the boat.’*

Democracy and egalitarianism have a long tradition. In 1838, Captain Elliott of HMS Fly drew up a constitution for Pitcairn Island as well as a code of laws selected from the laws already in force (see McLoughlin 1971).

A Magistrate was to be elected annually “by the free votes of every native born on the island, male or female, who shall have attained the age of eighteen years; or of persons who shall have resided five years on the island”. He was to be assisted by a Council of two members, one elected and one chosen by himself. This was the first-time female suffrage and compulsory schooling for boys and girls were was written into a British constitution (Brodie 1851: 87).

The Norfolk Islanders continue this tradition of political democracy. The rules of governance set up on Pitcairn Island in 1838 were adapted for Norfolk

⁸ <https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/news/releases/news09-12-11-99.html>).

Island, and remained in force until 1894. Since then they have been under a colonial regime, first British and since 1914, Australian. Norfolk became self-governing in 1979 but the Legislative Assembly was dissolved by Australia in 2016 and the island recolonized. The case for renewed self-government is at present before the UN's committee for decolonization.⁹

Love of Queen Victoria and the monarchy is very much in evidence in both the past and the present. There are many reports prior to 1856 that the Pitcairners felt a strong attachment to Britain and the British monarchy. Queen Victoria is said to have read many accounts of the islanders and to have been instrumental in the ordination of its first pastor George Hunn Nobbs in 1851, whom she granted an audience. Brodie (1851: 152–153) describes the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of Pitcairn Island's settlement (January 23rd, 1850) as follows:

This day was observed as the anniversary of the settlement of this colony, sixty years since. One survivor of that strange event and sanguinary result witnessed its celebration. At daylight one of the *Bounty's* guns was discharged, and awakened the sleeping echoes and the more drowsy of its inhabitants. At ten A.M. Divine service was performed. After the sermon, the various letters received from the British Government and principal friends, were read from the pulpit and commented upon. At twelve o'clock (noon) a number of musketeers assembled under the flagstaff, and fired a volley in honour of the day. After dinner, males and females assembled in front of the church (where the British flag was flying), and gave three cheers for Queen Victoria, three for the Government at home, three for the magistrate here, three for absent friends, three for the ladies, and three for the community in general, amid the firing of muskets and ringing of the bell. At sunset the gun of the *Bounty* was again fired, and the day closed in harmony and peace both towards God and man. It is voted that an annual celebration be observed.

Following the resettlement of Pitcairn in the 1860s, these ties continued. The Queen donated an organ to the community in 1879 and continued to take an interest in their well-being.

The Pitcairn descendants on Norfolk Island believe that *Kwiin Victoria giw et f' ucklun* 'Queen Victoria gave Norfolk Island to us'. She holds special importance for many Norfolk Islanders; her personage is intimately connected with local understandings of the very place and of the Islanders on Norfolk Island. In 2009, a Queen Victoria Memorial Garden was officially opened on Norfolk Island, featuring a bust of the Queen and the story of her relationship with Norfolk Island and its inhabitants. The Royal visit in 1974 is remembered by the street names Queen Elisabeth Avenue and Prince Philip Drive – no Australian administrator or politician ever had a similar honour given to them. Strong attachment to Britain

⁹ <http://www.norfolkschoice.com/united-nations/> (accessed 21/03/2017)

and the monarchy continues on Norfolk Island, where the British flag is flown together with Norfolk Island's own flag outside private homes and some community organizations as an act of defiance against Australian intervention. By contrast, events in the late 20th century have strained the relationship between Pitcairn Island and Britain.

Spirituality and religion have always played a central role on Pitcairn ever since one night around 1800 when John Adams saw the Archangel Michael, who instructed him that Pitcairn's children must be taught to read from the ship's Bible. The redemption of the surviving mutineers was a major topic in 19th century religious writing and resulted not only in numerous visits but also numerous presents from the Anglican establishment in 19th century Britain. Piety had become a commodity and was exhibited freely for all visitors to see. This may be the origin of the practice called *hypocrite har English* 'to simulate virtue in front of outsiders' and may also account for the adoption of Seventh Day Adventism once support from the Anglican Church had begun to decline.

Professor Raymond Nobbs, a Norfolk Islander, noted (1996: 19)¹⁰ that "nothing so excited the first visitors to Pitcairn as the evidence of piety and religious observance . . . Small wonder that the Pitcairners should be led to increase their emphasis on piety by the heart-warming chorus of praise which reverberated from the great nations of the world." However, "by the end of the 19th century, this sincerity was being questioned. Some paralleled the Pitcairners' actions to what Plato had identified in the Republic: I wonder if we could construct some magnificent myth that would itself carry conviction to our whole community. Whether the Pitcairners sought to defraud the world is beyond this review" (Nobbs 1996).

Pitcairn Island converted to Seventh Day Adventism in 1891 and: "Pitcairn residents have been known internationally for their devout Christianity and their adherence to a wholistic Adventist lifestyle. However, in recent years, as the island has opened up to more outside influences, the reality has been quite different", explains Coombe. Although the Adventist Church has always maintained a resident minister and nurse on Pitcairn, there have been fewer adherents and some church members have moved away from the island. By the end of 2000, regular church attendees among the island population of 40 numbered only eight. "Although an 'Adventist culture' prevails, Pitcairn Island is no longer the pristine example of the past," adds Coombe.¹¹

¹⁰ R. Nobbs (1996) *HMS Bounty: Legacy and Legend*, pp. 17–20, in Covacevich et al.

¹¹ <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2001-05%20%2028/turning-point-for-historic-adventist-community-on-pitcairn-island/>

Spirituality on Norfolk Island has remained stronger, though again the forces of secularism are in evidence among the younger generation. Anglicanism was brought to Norfolk Island from Pitcairn and sustained by the community's pastor, George Hunn Nobbs, and the Melanesian High Anglican mission on the island.

Two other forms of Christianity are important on Norfolk. Methodism was introduced by American whalers from New England and Seventh Day Adventism from Pitcairn in 1891. The religiosity of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands is reflected both in the pragmatics of language use, such as avoidance of profanities and the prevalence of euphemisms and the abundance of religious expressions in the everyday lexicon.

Gender equality dates back to the early days of Pitcairn. Compulsory education for girls and boys was introduced in the 1820s, and in 1838, women were allowed to vote. In Britain it was not until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 that women over 21 were able to vote and women finally achieved the same voting rights as men. In Australia, the first time women were allowed to vote was 1896 and to be elected in federal elections was 1902. The pioneer role of the Pitcairners in universal education and women's suffrage remains a strong memory in present day Pitcairn and Norfolk Islander society. The N term *foremothers*, 'for first-generation Polynesian women on Pitcairn', pays tribute to the important role women played in the sociogenesis and survival of a new society on Pitcairn.

Speaking Pitkern and Norf'k is integral to Pitcairner ethnicity. P has been a low status language and many Pitcairners share a feeling of linguistic inferiority. Nevertheless, "although the Pitcairners consider their language inferior, funny, and even ridiculous, one can hardly avoid noticing that they enjoy using it" (Källgård 1993: 91). In recent years, language has become more generally appreciated as part of the Pitcairners' cultural heritage. Language and culture are taught at the school by Meralda Warren.

By contrast, N has enjoyed higher status on Norfolk Island and, arguably, has become the High variety in the N-English diglossia. Some Islanders consider N as a form of cultural property belonging to Islanders. Such proprietary claims over N seem to indicate its status as a constituent part of Islanders' identities (see Low 2012: 184). The Pitcairn descendants refer to *Uckluns Norf'k*, i.e. they select the pronoun *ucklun* '1st person non-singular referring to a group whose members all are of Pitcairn descent' and the possessive ending -s, which signals an inalienable relationship.

3.6 Social structures

Social and socio-linguistic practices of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders are determined by a number of factors that are substantially different from those of Britain and Australia. Many of them are reflected in language.

The small size of the communities and land masses enables a dense, multiplex social network. The resulting shared knowledge accounts for the implicit nature of P and, to a lesser extent, N. A great deal of shared knowledge does not have to be expressed verbally but is simply implied.

The majority of the island's population organise themselves into large family groups who live, work and socialise in close proximity to one another. There is considerable competition between families, which finds its linguistic expression in family words, absence of focussing on a single role model (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) and the use of family slurs such as N *snell* 'not having enough to eat, to cater insufficiently', *buffetten* 'typical Buffett behaviour, indecisiveness', *McCoy boy* 'shady character', or *chucken a Quintal* 'to spit the dummy'.

The insular nature of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island limits access to the outside world and promotes psychological detachment from the outside world. A linguistic reflection is that words that are no longer used in larger English-speaking communities remain fashionable in P (e.g. *gaggle* 'to cackle', *jug* 'a lump or piece', *kit* 'a basket') and N (e.g. *spondoolicks* 'money', *yahoo* 'noisy reveller').

Haywood (2006: 224) notes: "Fundamental to any notion of Pitcairn identity, and to the identity of Norfolk's Pitcairn descended population, is the historical event of the *Bounty* mutiny and the settlement of Pitcairn by the mutineers and Tahitians".

Frazer (1979: 69–75) provides a detailed analysis of Pitcairner identity, which determines social interactions. He distinguishes:

- Pitcairners 1 – Those born on the island who accept and follow the traditional ways of life.
- Pitcairners 2 – Pitcairners who do not follow traditional ways of life, and often live away for long periods.
- Stranger 1 – Strangers who are friends and who accept local patterns of behaviour.
- Stranger 2 – Outsiders, ignorant or dismissive of local patterns of behaviour.

The non-singular first person pronouns of N, and to a lesser extent P, would appear to lend themselves to be organized along very similar parameters:

Pitcairner I

Ouwa, ucklun
‘we traditional
Islanders’

Pitcairner II

ucklun
‘we
Islanders’

Stranger I

hemmy, himii / we

you and me; we
(friends)

Stranger II

vme en hem, me en her, me en dem, ucklun en dem

I and him, her, them; us and them (social distance)

3.7 Distinct cultural features

Culture embraces both material culture and intangible culture. Many Pitcairner cultural features are gender-specific:

In general, it seems that the cultural pattern of Pitcairn society evolved from Polynesian or European practice according to the traditional role of male and female. After all, the islanders were not starting civilisation afresh. The Europeans had brought their skills and knowledge with them, as well as the arms, tools, pots and pans, canvas and cordage, and all the varied products that were on the ship; and the Polynesians brought their skills and knowledge of the trees and plants which enabled them to process these for both food and clothing. Apart from language and religion, these practices, in the early years, were set mainly by the women, as they controlled domestic life and child-rearing (Lummis 1997: 119).

Not all material culture is easily preserved. Because of the materials used (wood, plant fibres) by the Pitcairn descendants, many past material objects have disappeared or are known only from historical records (e.g. house styles such as the two storeyed wooden *double-cottage* on early Pitcairn Island), others have been recreated and modified over and over again (e.g. boats, buildings, fishing equipment, basket weaving, cooked dishes).

Intangible culture includes language, music, value systems and more. Some of the intangible culture is pre- or subconscious, particularly language and some of the ethno-pragmatic rules of communication.

A table of distinct Pitcairner cultural features and their provenance was compiled by Shapiro for Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. Shapiro does not state explicitly when these cultural traits came into being, though it seems that most of them, particularly the Tahitian ones, were in place before renewed contact with the outside world in 1808. Some traits were subsequently adapted and modified. The majority of the Pitcairn cultural traits as well as many material objects were taken to Norfolk Island, and remain part of the Norfolk Islanders’ culture. Some of them have been revived collaboratively by Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders, such as *tarpa*

‘tapa’ making,¹² tattooing, outrigger canoes or Tahitian dancing. The large number of visiting vessels on Pitcairn led to the development of a souvenir industry, much of which can be traced to the American Seventh Day Adventist teacher Hattie Andre (1893–1896), who introduced the *Hattie leaf* (*Bauhinia monandra*, traditionally dried and painted with designs on Pitcairn Island (Banks 1992: 64)) and the Austrian cabinet maker Loeffler, who inspired the Pitcairn Islanders to produce carved boxes and souvenir baskets such as the *Bible-box*.

Whilst private ownership of land is shared by Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders, the notion of ownership of chicken and trees is restricted to Pitcairn Island. Shapiro (1968: 288) gives examples of the 90 chicken brands and 125 tree brands recorded on Pitcairn. The P expression *you kaa mark a chicken* translates as ‘you are incompetent’.

As regards Norfolk Island, historical contacts with outside groups such as the Melanesian Mission, American whalers and the New Zealand garrison in WWII has resulted in a number of additional cultural forms, which have been incorporated into Norfolk Island culture. It is noted that Shapiro, like most other researchers, did not consider West Indian influence in spite of the fact that Edward Young from St. Kitts was the principal male socializer of the first-generation children born on Pitcairn. Kite-flying, knowledge of tropical fish, knowledge of sugar cane and its uses, numerous words and grammatical structures as well as the religious belief system exhibit signs of Edward Young’s influence (Baker and Mühlhäusler 2013). Shapiro (1968: 154–156) provided the following comprehensive table:

| | Tahitian | English | Original |
|------------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| household arts: | | | |
| underground oven | x | | |
| food preparation | x | | |
| tapa-making | x | | |
| use of calabash | x | | |
| dress style | x | | |
| hats | x | | |

¹² <http://norfolkislandmuseum.blogspot.com/2013/11/pitcairn-tapa.html>.

(continued)

| | Tahitian | English | Original |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| houses: | | | |
| building materials | | x | |
| structure | | x | x |
| roof thatch | x | | |
| arrangement | | | x |
| household equipment: | | | |
| furniture | | x | |
| linens | x | | |
| lighting | x | | |
| fishing: | | | |
| gear | | x | |
| methods | x | x | |
| boats | x | | x |
| agriculture: | | | |
| tools | | x | |
| methods | x | x | |
| family life | | | x |
| social life: | | | |
| social organization | | | x |
| separation of sexes at meals | x | | |
| position of women | | | x |
| dance | x | | |
| music | x | x | |
| surf-riding | x | | |
| kite-flying | x | x | |
| private ownership of land | | x | |
| common fund | | | x |
| education | | x | |
| religion | | x | x |

Summarizing the situation by this method, it becomes apparent that the Tahitian contributions outweighed the English. For reasons already mentioned, this is not unexpected: Pitcairn is more like Tahiti in its resources; the Tahitian women coming from a simpler plane of life were more efficient in adapting their culture to its new home; the Englishmen, conditioned by specialization and hindered by the absence of the necessary materials, were less able to draw upon their own background for contributions to their new existence. But the most unexpected findings of this survey concern the relatively large number of original adaptations to the exigencies of Pitcairn life, which this handful of people developed on a pinhead of land. Merely to list some of them is impressive: the original architecture, the modified Tahitian canoe, the patriarchal social organization, the development of a community chest from which an individual could draw and by which inequalities in production could be equalized, the position of women, which in spite of certain Tahitian conventions, permitted them greater freedom than was customary in the age and allowed them equal franchise and inheritance rights, and finally, a simple but personal faith that evolved from a crystallized, conventional religious system (Shapiro 1968: 157).

Most of these cultural traits survive on both Pitcairn and on Norfolk. The principal differences that emerged after 1864 are:

- the retention of Tahitian cultural traits and linguistic descriptors was stronger on Pitcairn Island
- significant contacts with outside groups differed
- different historical events are celebrated
- because of the larger population size and the need to adapt to a new environment, innovation on Norfolk was more pronounced.

Cultural practices such as the use of plants indigenous or endemic to Pitcairn could not be maintained on Norfolk. For instance, as George ‘Steggles’ Le Cren’s popular ‘Coconut Song’ (written in 1960) observes:

*We’ve gut everything Tahiti gut
We only not gut a coconut.*

Whilst coconuts were periodically imported by the Norfolk Islanders, the extensive terminology Pitcairners had developed for parts of the coconut palm and their cultural uses were not retained. P distinguishes (Källgård 1981):

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>‘a’a</i> | leaf stipules found near top of coconut trunk |
| <i>etu</i> | sprouting coconut |
| <i>faniu</i> | whole coconut frond |
| <i>niau</i> | coconut leaf |
| <i>niiaa</i> | green coconut, fit for drinking |
| <i>omutu</i> | coconut at a stage just before the meat can be grated |
| <i>o’p’a</i> | ripe coconut |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>oval</i> | coconut at a stage just before the meat is forming |
| <i>pulu</i> | coconut husk |
| <i>tree-cocknut</i> | coconut tree |

Only the term *niow* is found in N where it refers to the midrib of a palm leaf used in making yard brooms.

Tapa making, the use of calabashes, candle-nut or *dudwe* ‘candlenut lighting’ and roof thatching, documented on Pitcairn from the 1840s, are no longer found on Norfolk Island.

3.8 Significant contact between Pitcairn and Norfolk Island

The split of the community following the back-migration from Norfolk Island to Pitcairn in the 1860s did not constitute a clean break, as there were several important encounters between members of the two communities, which helped maintain their cultural and linguistic communalities. They need to be considered when defining P-N as a pluricentric language. Contacts include:

- John Buffett visited his daughter Mrs Mary Young. He arrived Feb 21st and left for Norfolk June 30th, 1871, accompanied by two other Pitcairners, James Russell McCoy and Benjamin Stanley Young. They both returned to Pitcairn in December 1873.
- In 1880, 7 young men from Norfolk Island visited Pitcairn whilst serving on the American whale ship *James Arnold*. “Scarcely any communication passed between the two islands, so that the event of their coming was improved in learning all about the state of the [Norfolk] Island and people they had lately left” (Ford 2012: 80).
- On August 6th of the same year, the American whale ship *Canton* “made a call at Pitcairn island, and as she had a boat’s crew of Norfolk Islanders on board, there was a joyful meeting. Souvenirs and letters were brought from Pitcairn Island.” The *Canton* stayed until August 13th (Ford 2012: 80).
- During the 1890s, a group of Pitcairn Islanders visited Norfolk Island in order to introduce Seventh Day Adventism.

It was a wise decision of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to introduce themselves by means of relatives from Pitcairn. James Russell McCoy and his youngest sister, Mary Ann McCoy, as well as Heywood Christian, all boarded

the *Pitcairn* during its first voyage with the idea of sharing their convictions with their relatives on Norfolk Island.

As the *Pitcairn* neared Norfolk Island on September 30, 1891, a whaleboat of men came out to meet them. The Norfolk Islanders had heard their relatives were on the way. Christian and the McCoys had left Norfolk Island and returned to Pitcairn when they were youngsters. Of course, during the thirty years or more everyone had matured. They landed on the north side at Cascade Bay. Everyone was excited to see them again and swap news. They introduced the American missionaries, Pastor Edward Gates and his wife Ida, as well as Albert Read and his wife Hattie, and the rest of the *Pitcairn* party. On October 3, 1891, the very first Sabbath after their arrival, Gates conducted a worship service in the home of Jane Quintal, the McCoys older sister who had remained behind on Norfolk Island over thirty years beforehand . . .

He then continued on to New Zealand with the *Pitcairn*, leaving behind the Reads and McCoys to do further evangelism. The following month, the *Pitcairn* returned and during the last weeks of November, Gates preached again, both in the Methodist church and Quintal's home. Gates found that Read had sparked some interest so Mary Ann McCoy remained behind for a short time with her relatives to further the mission. With such excellent contacts on Norfolk Island, the pioneers were confident of repeating the *Pitcairn* Island episode. The *Pitcairn* made a further brief visit in March 1892 (Hook n.d.: 2–3).

- In 1884, the Tahitian cargo ship *Taparo II* “brings a large number of visitors from Norfolk Island, Australia, New Zealand and French Polynesia” (Ford 2012: 252) to Pitcairn Island.
- In 1942, the steamship *Teucer* “took aboard some old people and took them to Norfolk Island, and to Auckland, where there was a special home for them” (Ford 2012: 153).

There are numerous other accounts of face-to-face encounters. Since the 1980s, some Pitcairn Islander have resided on Norfolk for extended periods and vice versa; members of the Pitcairn diaspora in Auckland frequently visit Norfolk and many Norfolk Islanders now make what is increasingly regarded as a pilgrimage to Pitcairn. One of my Islander informants, Mrs. Colleen Crane, spent several months on Pitcairn in 2014.

With the arrival of the internet and Skype, a new situation has arisen, and there is now more contact between Pitcairn and Norfolk than during the past 150 years. The inhabitants of the two islands continue to regard one another as relatives sharing the same blood and the same story of their origins, though they are also aware of major differences that have emerged. Interestingly, the ongoing campaign to repopulate Pitcairn Island has not resulted in a single application from a Norfolk Islander.

3.9 Contact with outsiders

The notions that P and N developed in virtual laboratory conditions and the associated belief that the two varieties are the result of a clean split are also rendered problematic by the numerous outside influences that have impacted on both islands ever since 1808. Examples of major influences include:

3.9.1 Pitcairn Island

The temporary relocation to Tahiti in 1831 enabled renewed contact with Tahitian language and culture and, according to Laycock (1989) led to an act of identity which consolidated the Pitcairners' realization that they were neither English nor Tahitian. Laycock argued that through this act, P was embraced as a key marker of identity.

In 1887, the entire Pitcairn community converted to Seventh Day Adventism (SDA), brought to them by American missionaries. The SDA Church remained in charge of education on Pitcairn until after WWII. This accounts for lexical items such as *preparation* 'Friday', *Sabbath* 'Saturday' or *see dar light* 'to become a Seventh-Day Adventist'.

Whaling forms an important part of the history and culture of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island and the involvement of the Islanders with American whalers over many years has left numerous distinct cultural and linguistic features:

Many vessels of all types called at Pitcairn Island. The whalers would tell of their adventures abroad and put a sparkle and twinkle in the eyes of some Islanders to roam again. Many stayed on their Island of Paradise to work the land, others learnt about whaling and the money they could earn. Passing whaling ships left whaling boats to help the Pitcairn islanders, but the Islanders were more skilled with canoes, darting through the waters of Bounty Bay, into which big swells rolled from the Southern Ocean (Tofts 1997: 17).

The numerous whaling vessels that called on Pitcairn (documented in Ford 1996) played an important part in the culture change in the first half of the 19th century. American whalers regularly traded for provisions and in exchange, provided the Pitcairn islanders with Western clothing, tools, musical instruments and books. This practice continued on Norfolk Island.

The visits of American whalers reinforced the fundamentalist Christianity of the Pitcairn Islanders and the singing of hymns. The "Pitcairn Hymns" include many American hymns with special meaning for the islanders ('The Ship of Fame', 'Let the Lower Light be Burning') and a few written by Pitcairners

themselves” (Wiseman 1977). P shows many traces of American influence during this period. This is also due to the number of American settlers on Pitcairn Island after 1863.

The wreck of the American vessel *Acadia* on Ducie Island in 1891 also contributed to American influence: Three crew and a youth remained on Pitcairn. Two of the men married, one of them, the Welshman John Volk, eventually taking his wife and children home with him to Wales where she died soon after from illness. The other man, the American Phillip Coffin, married a local girl and settled on Pitcairn, where he married Mary Jane Florence Warren in 1881, with whom he had ten children, thus laying the foundations for another important family clan. The third man, the Englishman Albert Knight, married Maria Jane Young, but as her family were not happy, he was compelled to leave.

A young American man who had left earlier with the greater part of the *Acadia*'s crew, Lincoln Clark, returned to Pitcairn many years later, following the death of his wife in America. Accompanying him was his son Roy, and the two settled on Pitcairn and married locals. Lincoln again had numerous descendants. Given the small local population and the prominent role that these three Americans played, their influence as linguistic role models would seem to have been important.

Apart from a number of already mentioned SDA missionaries, there were numerous visits from American vessels and short-term visits by Americans, particularly in the years after the opening of the Panama Canal.

Teachers from New Zealand contributed to the decline of P ever since the New Zealand Government formally assumed responsibility for education in 1948. A.W. Moverley was appointed as Education Officer in 1949, a position he held until 1951. My Pitcairn Islander informants complained about his aggressive attitude towards the SDA Church and the Pitcairners' language and similar attitudes among his successors. Their attacks reinforced the role of P as a marker of separate identity and its esotericity vis-à-vis unsympathetic outsiders.

3.9.2 Norfolk Island

The Melanesian Mission was established on Norfolk Island in 1867 and relocated (including its clock tower and most buildings) to the Solomon Islands in 1920. The remaining physical traces of the Mission include St. Barnabas Chapel, the garden of memory, Bishop's Court, as well as numerous exotic plants. English oaks and Melanesian cordyline are both in evidence *out ar*

mission ‘in the Mission area’. Three males employed by the Mission, the mission printer Menges/Menzies (an American of German extraction), the mission mason William Taylor and the mission blacksmith George Bailey (the latter two from England) married into the community, as did William Nihill Campion, the captain of the mission vessel Southern Cross, and culturally and linguistically integrated with them.

Specific linguistic influences of the Melanesian Mission include the names of mission personnel remembered in the “langscape” (linguistic landscape) of Norfolk Island: *Taylor’s Road*, *Bishop Patteson Drive*, *Mission Road*, *Selwyn Bridge*, *Selwyn Reserve* and others. Educated British English was spoken by the missionaries and British mission personnel. It reinforced the exposure of the Pitcairn descendants to British English.

The language of instruction at the Melanesian Mission was Mission Mota (2010) and a small number of Mota words are still found in the language. Including *furus* ‘fart’ and possibly *seplo* ‘syphilis.’ The first name *Mera* of the Island elder Mera Martin (née Christian) means ‘dawn’ in Mota (the time of her birth). The nickname *Yakimulimai* (from Mota ‘come here’) was given to one of Archie Bigg’s cousins.

Several N expressions recall mission days. The phrase *ar invitation fer Menzies* ‘to turn up uninvited’ is said to go back to the mission printer Menges/Menzies; *mission-cold* was the annual influenza epidemic brought to Norfolk by the missionaries from Melanesia, who spent their winter break at the Mission headquarters on Norfolk Island, and an introduced fern that still grows on the walls of St. Barnabas chapel is referred to as *mission fern*. *William Taylor* ‘mist flower’ is the name of one of the most noxious pest plants introduced by the mission mason and *Dr Codrington* the name of a banana variety introduced by the mission headmaster.

The everyday language of the Melanesian mission scholars from many language backgrounds was Melanesian Pidgin English (see Mühlhäusler 2010) and Pidgin English expressions entered N, including *walk-steal*, ‘to walk stealthily’, *tork-steal* ‘to talk stealthily’ and *do-steal* ‘to do by stealth’ as well as *mekaes*, ‘to hurry up, make haste’. Some Norfolk Islanders remember the exclamation *man-a-bush* ‘gee!’, which derived from the Melanesian Pidgin English word for a ‘bush-dweller’ or ‘uncivilised person’.

As on Pitcairn, visits from American whalers constituted an important catalyst for culture change. Kenny (2005) has provided a succinct history of whaling on Norfolk Island up to the present days of whale watching. A more personal account featuring tales and yarns from the whaling days is given by Tofts (1997).

An industry of whaling was taken up by the Pitcairn Islanders shortly after 1856. The young Pitcairners joined the visiting whaling crews, picked up techniques and built their own boats. These were modelled on two of the narrow double-ended whaleboats. The whaling industry on Norfolk Island came to an end in 1962, when the whaling station at Cascade was closed down. Its impact on the lives, culture and language of the Norfolk Islanders was considerable and both memories, traditions and material artefacts survive to date. In particular:

A large proportion of the male workforce was employed in the whaling industry over the years. This helped accelerate the transition from a subsistence style of life to a monetary economy. In addition to direct employment, selling wooden artefacts to American visitors provided additional income and helped establish a viable woodcarving industry. American furniture such as rocking chairs became models for furniture making on Norfolk Island.

Over the years, there were intensive contacts with American whalers and their wives. This led to the adoption of a number of cultural practices not found on the Australian mainland. The captains' wives introduced new cooking styles and dishes such as pumpkin and fruit pies, as well as the California quail, which is said to have come to the island on the American whaling vessels.

Whalers and whalers' wives spent extended periods of time on Norfolk Island and some whalers settled on Norfolk and married into the community. Among them was Pardon Snell, a whaler who had spent many years around Pitcairn Island. Being an outsider, he had to struggle economically, a fact that is reflected in the N expression *snell* 'to cater insufficiently, to be hungry'. The African-American John Jackson, *Johnnie Nigger*, married Evelina Eglantine Christian in 1879, with whom he had 7 children. One of Norfolk Island's most important public holidays, *Thaenksgiwen Day* 'Thanksgiving Day', dates back to contacts with American traders and whalers in the late 19th century.

Methodism was introduced to Norfolk Island by American traders and whalers (Wyndham 2018):

In 1879 an American whaling vessel called the 'Canton' anchored in the bay with a very sick cook on board who suffered from severe seasickness and other complications. Alfred H. Phelps had seen his time on board as an opportunity to see the world. Phelps, a man of God, took this opportunity to teach the people of Norfolk about the love of the Saviour. While recovering from his sickness he developed a love and a burden for the people of Norfolk Island. Friends who nursed him back to health heard the Gospel preached and a new movement began to grow (Tofts 1997: 31).

About 17% of Norfolk residents still belong to the Methodist Church, though with the emergence of the Uniting Church in the 1970s the number of distinct Methodists has declined:

3.10 Whaling expressions and expressions borrowed from American whalers

Contacts with American whalers contributed a number of words to N, in addition to the numerous whaling terms that were created by the Norfolk Islanders independently. Further research is required but the following examples seem likely candidates:

- The word *skunk*, *skank*, meaning ‘to fail to score at the card game Jaero’, or ‘to fail to catch a whale or fish’.
- The expression *cut sticks*, ‘to depart rapidly, to run away, make off’ is not listed in any of the Pitcairn Island vocabularies and appears to have entered N after 1856. ‘To cut one’s stick’ or ‘to cut stick’ is listed in the Webster’s Dictionary as of American origin.
- The greeting *halo*, *o me back* was common before the Second World War when encountering a man cooking a meal or boiling up the billy for tea. “A whaleship, the *Costa Rica Packet*, was manned almost wholly by Norfolk Islanders. They had a negro cook on board who suffered severe backache and was always repeating ‘o me back’. So, any man doing any sort of cooking is referred to as *o me back*” (Moresby Buffett in Shirley Harrison’s field notes 1979).
- The word *spondoolicks* ‘money’ is widely known on the Island. It appears to be a mid-19th century American slang word. *Spondulics* is listed in the 1913 Webster, but as early as 1885 Mark Twain used it in *Huckleberry Finn*. It might have been introduced to Norfolk Island when the Norfolk Islanders received their first wages whilst serving on American whaling vessels.

In sum, longstanding involvement of the Norfolk Islanders with American whaling resulted in a number of distinct cultural practices, some of which are actively carried on by the present generation.

3.11 Conclusions

As Rom Harré (e.g. 1986) points out, there are different types of realities that are differentially accessible to analysis. There are phenomena whose existence does

not require human observers (Pitcairn and Norfolk Island were uninhabited and not within the view of humans until a few centuries ago), phenomena that are discursively constructed by humans, such as ideologies or myths and phenomena which are a complex mix between their inherent nature and human discourses (e.g. many diseases and emotions, global warming and, as already said, languages). Discursive construction has been a powerful element in most accounts of Pitcairn and Norfolk and the perception of these islands and their inhabitants has been strongly influenced by the vast body of 19th century accounts of Pitcairn Island, hundreds of religious writings concerned with the redemption of the Pitcairn Islanders, Nordhoff and Hall's semi-fictional *Bounty Trilogy* (first published in 1936) and many similar publications romanticizing the *Bounty Saga*, a number of major movies between the 1930s and 1980s and the activities of Pitcairn Island enthusiasts such as the Pitcairn Islands Study Group.

In the last two decades a number of press reports and books sensationalising the dark side of the two islands have appeared, competing with the tourist sector's promotion of the islands as Paradise. Some of the accounts of outsiders have been internalized by the islands' inhabitants and this, combined with the esoteric nature of their societies, requires a special effort on the part of anyone who wishes to understand Pitcairn and Norfolk Island.

In this chapter, I have tried to explore some of the ways in which the external environment, demography and cultural factors of the two islands have impacted on their language and communication, a theme I will further explore in the chapter 8.

In Pitcairnese philology, it is always necessary to keep in mind the possibility of a linguistic feature existing at the Settlement being replaced, partially or entirely, under later English influence. (Ross and Moverley 1964: 142)

4 Phonetics and phonology

4.1 Constraints and opportunities

Accounting for the pronunciation and phonological processes of a language has the advantage that it requires fewer text samples than syntactic and lexical analysis as there are far fewer sound types than constructions or lexical types. Most sounds have a reasonable token frequency and one can expect that even a small range of texts provides an adequate database.

On the downside, sounds are more changeable than grammatical constructions and lexical items and there is a shortage of records. There are no sound records for either P or N prior to the 1950s and the vast majority of early written accounts feature impressionistic renderings of the forms heard by untrained visitors. Language, unlike climate or the evolution of species, has a very poor memory and we lack reliable information as to how Tahitian, English dialects and St. Kitts Creole were pronounced in the late 18th century.

Indicators of earlier pronunciations are names of people and places, as such names are less likely to change over time than other words of a language. Thus, the Pitcairn place name *Nedjan*, ‘place where Ned Young had his house or garden’, is suggestive of the presence of palatalization and the nickname *Mema*, ‘Main Mast’, suggests the importance of open syllables in the days of early language contact on Pitcairn.

Studies by Ross and Moverley as well as Källgård for P and Flint, Harrison, Zettersten, Laycock, Ingram and myself for N reveal a very large amount of individual and family-based variation in pronunciation. P and N are technically unfocused languages (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Because of the small size of the speech community and numerous instances of outsiders assuming important roles in the community, individual role models have changed many times in the course of history and created discontinuity. Reconstruction of the sounds of P-N using comparative and internal reconstruction methods is near-impossible. Again, using a variationist approach (e.g. Bailey 1996) is hampered by the absence of an implicational order of lects.

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Such problems are compounded by the fact that speakers of P-N have always been bilinguals. The distance of P-N from English has changed several times, as has the amount of code mixing and blending. Moreover, different speakers make individual choices as to the boundary between English and P-N. The choice of representative speakers is a factor that can influence the findings. Consider the research carried out by Flint and Harrison on Norfolk Island. Ralph Holloway, who was Flint's taxi driver in the late 1950s, reports (p.c. 2016) that Flint's recording equipment was very heavy and bulky and moreover required mains electricity, which in those days was not common. His informants therefore were more affluent Islanders who lived in places where many Australians and New Zealanders also resided. Harrison, by contrast, had her informants selected by her father Moresby Buffett, who used to live in the remote interior of the island. Flint was an outsider whereas Harrison was of Pitcairner descent and had grown up on Norfolk Island.

The most disturbing problem, however, is how the sounds of the language have been represented in transcriptional practice.

4.2 Transcriptional practice

Phonetics emerged as a branch of applied linguistics as a solution to a missionary problem: How to represent the unwritten languages encountered in the mission field on paper. By the mid-19th century, two proposals had been developed, one by Lepsius (1818), the other by Max Müller (1855). At a conference in London, an attempt was made to reconcile the two systems, but no resolution was found. Müller's system incidentally was used by Bishop Patteson and the mission linguist Codrington on Norfolk Island. In spite of later attempts to turn phonetics into a science, phonetics has remained unscientific in the sense that the notion of determinate segments is not an empirical fact but a useful fiction and that there are insufficient criteria for:

- determining whether a proposed transcription is observationally or descriptively adequate;
- determining whether one is dealing with a single or more than one phonetic unit;
- determining the sameness of two sounds;
- establishing phonetic similarity, as sounds that are deemed similar from the point of perception may be dissimilar in terms of production, for example P-N syllabic [l] and [u].

Phonetic transcription, being technically a representation, has no truth value and competing transcriptions can be assessed only in terms of criteria such as usefulness, suitability to a maximum number of languages, or economic considerations.¹

Ladefoged (1975: 26) has produced the understatement that “there are disagreements among texts on phonetics on how to transcribe sounds”, Kerswill and Wright (1990: 272–273) have spelled out the range of problems with conventional methods of transcription. Shibbles (1998: 173) notes that such problems are compounded by a range of factors in the transcription of Pidgins and Creoles derived from English, for which the 44 symbols chosen to represent RP English are unsuited. His proposed solution has had few takers and, in the case of P-N, none.

Available transcriptions of P-N include anything from attempted narrow phonetic transcription to a broad quasi-phonemic one. This makes comparison, an alleged virtue of phonetics, pretty well impossible. It also makes it impossible to answer the questions I had hoped to answer in this chapter:

- What are the speech sounds encountered in P and N?
- What are the phonotactic properties of P and N?
- What is the extent of phonetic variation in P and N?

There is no agreement among transcribers of P-N as to what counts as a phonetic segment, which level of abstraction is required for transcription (which, in turn, impinges on the question of which sounds are the same), which phonetic symbols from the IPA chart are best suited to P and N, and which unit size is best suited for comparison (word, sentence, discourse). Similarly, there is little information about formality and tempo. I labour this point because it has a consequence: The various phonetic representations of P and N and its putative source languages are not comparable, and the comparative and historical work they have been used in is at best a curate’s egg (good in parts), at worst entirely useless. They are also useless as a basis of phonemic analysis or a basis of a writing system. Rather than phonetics being the “indispensable foundation of all study of language”, as Henry Sweet opined (Henderson 1971: 26–29), phonetics is a very shaky foundation indeed.

As concerns phonetic representations of P-N, we find widely diverging transcriptional practices. Gimson (1964: 121–135) offers the first scholarly transcription

¹ Printing texts in Max Müller’s mission alphabet favoured by the Bishop of Melanesia was a costly and difficult exercise for the small mission press on Norfolk Island because of the numerous subscripts and superscripts required.

and this has remained the most widely used source for characterizing the phonetic properties of P. He uses 22 phonetic (IPA) symbols to represent consonants and 40 symbols to represent vowels and diphthongs. This includes the distinction between short, half-long and long vowels and a geminate consonant. These length distinctions are also featured in Ross and Moverley's word list, in spite of their own reference to "the Pitcairnese state of affairs in which quantity plays virtually no part" (Ross and Moverley 1964: 145). The quality of the tape was "very poor" when Gimson (1964: 121) transcribed it. Since then, it has become worn and virtually unusable.

Källgård (1998) employs 19 IPA symbols for P consonants and 32 for vowels and diphthongs. For the transcription of N, Flint (n.d.) uses 32 symbols for vowels and diphthongs (exclusive of length distinctions, which triples this figure) and 31 symbols to represent the consonants. Harrison (1972) employs 23 symbols for the vowels and diphthongs of N and 16 symbols for consonants, plus two idiosyncratic symbols for final clusters. Zettersten (1981) uses 22 symbols (including length distinction) to represent vowels and diphthongs and 18 for consonants. Buffett and Laycock (1988), in their discussion of the proposed writing system for N, which they claim is "entirely phonetic", employ 23 graphs or digraphs for vowels and diphthongs and 24 graphs or digraphs to represent the consonants. In addition, they use an apostrophe to represent both the schwa sound and the glottal stop.

From the various transcriptions, it is impossible to answer not only how many different phonetic units are found in P and N, but also what the sounds represented actually are. We are left with problems such as:

Is the sound [v] used?

Källgård never uses a [v] but consistently represents the labial voiced fricative as [w]. Flint observes that a bilabialized [v] is sometimes substituted for [w]. No other transcriber notes this.

Are affricates units or combinations of units?

The transcriptions examined use [tʃ] to represent the voiceless affricate, though at least one analyst (Harrison 1972) classifies it as a single unit. She also suggests that there is a single unit affricate [dʒ], which may result from speakers fluctuating between English and N, plus at least two word-final single unit affricates.

When is the schwa sound encountered?

Harrison (1972: 60) observes that the [ə] in weak syllables is rare and is usually manifested as [ɪ], [ʌ], [ʊ], [ɛ], [ɒ]. Most other transcribers have not noted this.

Do triphthongs exist?

Flint comments (n.d.: ix) that [aiə] and [aʊə] are not always triphthongs, because the [ə] is sometimes syllabic. Nevertheless, he uses the transcription [faiə] ‘fire’. Buffett and Laycock offer the transcription [faiya] instead.

Is vowel length present?

Flint distinguishes short, long and half-long vowels in N. The other transcribers only make a binary distinction. Buffett and Laycock, unlike Harrison and Flint, assume that length is distinctive rather than conditioned by environment.

Which vowel segments should be counted as single target sounds and which ones as diphthongs?

Harrison (1972: 8) comments that [e] and [o] “show a slight tendency towards two targets but are better classified as one target sounds”. Flint (n.d.: 14) arrives at the opposite conclusion.

Is there a distinction between a light [l] and a dark [ɫ]?

Word-final dark [ɫ] is not used in transcriptions of P where final [l] usually becomes vocalized. Flint lists it as one of the observed N sounds, but hardly ever uses it. By contrast, Buffett and Laycock as well as Harrison have many examples of this sound.

Cumulatively, the varying transcriptional practices have resulted in widely divergent phonetic representations of P and N words, as the following tables illustrate:

Pitkern:

| Ross and Moverley | Flint (transcribing a P speaker) | Källgård | Gimson |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| ʔaʔa | a ° a: | ʌ'ʌ | |
| aitəmaɪtəɪ | aitəmaɪti | æɪtəməɪtəɪj | aitəmaɪtəɪ |
| ʌklʌn | | ʌʔtə:n | |
| ʌtʃe | | a'tʃe | a. tʃe |
| ʔama'olə | a:məulə | ʌməul ʔmʌʔul | |
| ba:bləhülü | | bʌbʊhul bʌbəhulə | ba:bləhülü |
| kuməl | Kumala | ku:mɾʌ | kʊməʌ |
| lahɑ: | lahɑ: | lʌl | |
| lɔ:li: | lɔ:li | lɔ:li | |
| mʌtəpele | mʌtəpɪli: | mʌtəpɪle: | |
| pʌn | pʌn | pʌn | plə'nʔ |
| pəʔa:le | pə'ɑ:li: | pɪʔɑ:lə pɪ:ɑ:li | pəʔa:le |

Norŋk:

| Zettersten | Flint | Buffett and Laycock | Harrison |
|------------|---|---------------------|----------|
| wɪtlz | wætəlz wəkəlz | wetls | n/a |
| wɪhi | wi'hi wiʔhi | wɪhi | wɪwɪ |
| nɔ:fæk | nɔ:fæk | nə:fuk | nɔ:fæk |
| nevə | næwə næ:wa nawa nəwə nɛwɛ nɛwa | næ:wʌ | næwə |
| ɛwz | əwəʒ | ʌwʌs | ʌwɛs |

(continued)

| Zettersten | Flint | Buffett and Laycock | Harrison |
|------------|----------------|---------------------|----------|
| hoʊl | hoʊl | hʊəl | hoəl |
| tɛim | taem taim | taim | taim |
| tɛ:ti | tɛ:ti tɛ:tɛ | tɛ:ti | tɛ:ətɛ: |

There are numerous other differences, some of which will be commented on below.

4.3 Instrumental (acoustic) phonetic evidence

Studies of the acoustic properties of N sounds were carried out by both Harrison (1972) and Ingram and Mühlhäusler (2004).

Harrison (1972: 33–60) provided a detailed analysis of 11 single-target N vowels as well as a number of diphthongs. She compared them with both Educated Australian English and RP. I shall restrict myself to a few comments, and I shall also summarize some of Harrison’s most important findings. Note that these have a number of limitations:

- Acoustic information about St. Kitts Creole and Tahitian might have helped to strengthen her conclusions;
- Harrison presents a purely synchronic analysis. Given that N vowel pronunciation has changed considerably in the last 50 years (Ingram and Mühlhäusler 2004), her findings remain of limited usefulness;
- No data from P have been considered.

Harrison’s findings, such as they are, show that, unexpectedly, the qualities of N vowels and diphthongs are acoustically distinct more from Broad Australian than from Educated Australian English. Harrison (1972: 36) suggests that this is due not to historical connections but that “by coincidence, Tahitian influences have caused Norfolk to develop vowel qualities similar to the other”.

Harrison’s data (1972: 34) suggest that a distinction can be made between vowels that have a well-maintained target area, including [ɛ], [æ], [ɑ], [ɒ], [ɔ], [ʌ], [ʊ] and others whose acoustic specification varies a great deal. Variable vowels

include [ɪ], [i], [u] and [ɜ]. Harrison (1972: 35) claims: “Among Norfolk vowels [u] and [ɜ] show most variation. This means that each sound moves freely around the position indicated by the average score of formant frequencies”. She concludes that, broadly speaking, “it seems acceptable to classify Norfolk, as has been done for Australian English, as a kind of English dialect” (1972: 42).

Harrison presents conflicting findings when comparing acoustic measurements and observational impressions for a number of vowels (1972: 46–47). In the case of two target nuclei (diphthongs), there are highly significant differences between N and Educated Australian English. Harrison (1972: 54) states: “The main difference from Australian English occurs in component durations, not in nucleus length. Australian English has a long T1 and a short T2, whereas the N lengths are more evenly distributed”.

Importantly, all single target sounds, apart from [o] and [e] are significantly longer than corresponding sounds in Educated Australian English, whereas all two-target sounds are significantly shorter. Whereas length in Educated Australian English is a distinctive property of vowels, this is not the case in N. Instead “Norfolk vowels have a tendency towards an inglide” (Harrison 1972: 58–59). This tendency is used indexically by some N speakers to emphasize broadness (Harrison 1972: 60).

Ingram and Mühlhäusler’s more restricted study (2004) compares the acoustic properties of some vowel sounds collected by Flint in 1957 with those recorded by Mühlhäusler in 2002 and Educated Australian English. The data confirm that N has remained distinct from Australian English and that the two languages are not converging. Among their findings the following are noted:

Distribution of [æ] – [a] in N (Flint dialogues)
(N words represented in Buffett and Laycock orthography)

| [a] | [æ] | [æ] | [ɛ] |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>staan</i> ‘stand’ | <i>mæta</i> ‘matter’ | <i>aes</i> ‘as’ | <i>ketch</i> ‘fetch’ |
| <i>dat</i> ‘that’ | <i>æn</i> ‘and’ | | <i>glehd</i> ‘glad’ |
| <i>yarm</i> ‘yam’ | <i>hæt</i> ‘hat’ | | <i>benk</i> ‘bank’ |
| <i>dans</i> ‘dance’ | <i>sædel</i> ‘saddle’ | | |
| <i>haad</i> ‘hard’ | <i>tchæpel</i> ‘chapel’ | | |
| <i>staat</i> ‘leave’ | <i>thænk</i> ‘thank’ | | |
| <i>paatne</i> ‘partner’ | <i>fæshen</i> ‘fashion’ | | |
| <i>daalen</i> ‘darling’ | <i>ænthm</i> ‘anthem’ | | |
| <i>maa</i> ‘mother’ | <i>ænewersre</i> ‘anniversary’ | | |

The distribution of back vowels in N and Australian English is different. This reinforces the conclusion that the phonetic properties of P and N are not the result of sound laws affecting all segments of a particular specification but an instance of lexical diffusion (Chen and Wang 1975). This can be illustrated with correspondences between N and Australian English [ɒ] and [ɔ:]

| N [ɒ] | N [ɔ:] | N [ɔ:] |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Australian English [ɒ] | Australian English [ɒ] | Australian English [ɔ:] |
| <i>kos</i> because | ɔ: <i>f</i> off | <i>form</i> form 'person, guy' |
| <i>wos</i> what(s) | <i>lorng</i> long | <i>hors</i> horse |
| <i>got</i> got | <i>iorng</i> along | <i>thort</i> thought |
| | <i>orn</i> on | <i>orl</i> all |
| | <i>strorng</i> strong | <i>N</i> Norfolk |
| | <i>sore</i> sorry | <i>mornin</i> morning |
| | | <i>mor</i> more |

Harrison (1972: 59) noted that [ʌʊ] is a most variable diphthong. This was also found by Ingram and Mühlhäusler. N [ʌʊ] (*down, now, mouth*) showed a good deal of phonetic variability. In general, it shows evidence of incomplete lowering of the nucleus, as in other conservative regional dialects (Scots English, Canadian English, etc.). The range of phonetic variation for [ʌʊ] can be illustrated with the following tokens from a male speaker:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| [aʊt] [aʊt] | <i>out</i> |
| [dəʊn] [dʌʊn] [dʌʊn] | <i>down</i> |
| [mʌʊθ] | <i>mouth</i> |
| [nəʊ] | <i>now</i> |
| [ɹʌʊnd] | <i>round</i> |
| [plʌʊ] | <i>plough</i> |

A statistically non-significant comparison, based on formant values, between earlier and later N pronunciations with Educated Australian English suggests

that whilst there were a number of developments of vowel pronunciations in N, these were rarely in the direction of Australian English as the two tables show:

Short or lax vowels:

| N 1957 | N 2002 | AusE | |
|-----------|--------|------|---|
| ɛ | e – æ | e | ‘head’: [heid], [heɛd], [he:d] |
| a | a | a | No notable differences |
| a – æ – ɛ | æ̯ – æ | æ | ‘happy’: [hæ̯pɪ], [hæpɪ] (2002) wide allophonic variation (1957) |
| ʊ | ʊ | ʊ | No notable differences |
| ɒ – ɔ: | ɔ: | ɒ | ‘cloth’: [k ^h lɔ:θ] (2002) |

Long vowels and diphthongs

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---|
| ie – e: | eɛ – e: | æɪ – eɪ | ‘fatal’ [feɛtɪ], ‘face’ (2002) |
| ɔ:° | ɒ | əʊ | ‘home’ [hɔ:°m] (1957) ‘throat’ [θɔ:ɪt ^h], ‘goat’ [gɔ:t ^h] (2002) |
| ɔ: | ɔ: | ɔ: | ‘daughter’ [dɔ:ɪtə], ‘horses’ [hɔ:s], ‘thought’ [θɔ:t ^h] (2002) |
| əʊ – aʊ | eʊ | aʊ | ‘mouth’ [mɛʊθ] |

Harrison (1972: 29) attempted to use instrumental data to identify influence from English dialects and Tahitian. However, the limited amount of her data together with numerous methodological problems would seem to preclude any secure findings.

4.4 Phonotactics

Given the discrepancies between the various phonetic representations of the language, it is clearly impossible to reduce phonotactics to a simple formula like the one that Whorf devised for English (Whorf 1956: 223) to demonstrate

that linguistics is an “exact science”. Algeo’s (1978: 224) survey of 16 studies concerned with the phonotactics of English concludes:

We cannot determine, in any non-arbitrary, publicly verifiable way, whether a particular combination of sounds is possible, as opposed to actual, in English. And therefore, it is hardly surprising that attempts to make such determinations have disagreed. A detailed examination of the consonant clusters that are actually attested for English leads to the conclusion that phonotactics is not properly a set of generative rules, because the sequences in which sounds combine cannot be predicted categorically.

As regards P-N, some transcriptions do not identify an [ʔ] word-initially, others do. Whether a voiced [z] is recorded word-finally after vowels or voiced consonants varies from transcriber to transcriber. Flint (n.d.) for instance uses a subscript under final [z] to indicate devoicing, i.e. reduced vibration of the vocal cords. [z] word-initially is rare and reflects either idiolectal variation (noted by Flint n.d.) or recently introduced words. Buffett (1999: 115–116) lists more than a dozen N words in her *Encyclopaedia*, most of them as problematic, as the entry [zi:bu] ‘a domesticated ox with a humped back, but not found on Norfolk Island’. Again, disagreement of what are units and what are clusters, what are schwa-consonant sequences and what are syllabic consonants precludes a simple statement about phonotactics.

Harrison (1972: 21–22) has discussed the problem of “suspicious and ambivalent” clusters, including [ʔh], [nw], [ŋg] and [ŋgk]. She regards [ŋk] both as two units in words such as [bæŋk] but as a single unit in [θæŋks] in order to preclude three-consonant word-final clusters. In order to exclude four-consonant clusters in words such as [ekstre] ‘extra’, she (1972: 22) postulates that “The sequences [ks] and [tr] have been treated as being capable of interpretation as two units. In this way, the word will have a medial CC sequence which fits the characteristic VCCV word pattern of the language”. Flint (n.d.) by contrast does not subscribe to this practice.

There are two points on which all of those concerned with P-N phonotactics agree: the velar nasal [ŋ] does not occur word-initially and [r] does not occur word-finally.

In contrast to Tahitian, in P and N, as Ross and Moverley (1964: 163) have stated, “there is no aversion to, rather an abundance of ‘consonant groups’”. Many of the clusters of English have been retained. Others emerged independently in P-N through the loss of vowels such as [kɔ:ɔ:knut] ‘coconut’ or [‘ɔbru] ‘edible spinach’, which derives from Tahitian *oporo*. However, when compared to Standard English, a number of cluster reductions have occurred. This could be the result of a number of factors:

The English words of P-N derived from spoken forms, and P-N has remained an exclusively oral language for much of its existence. In spoken dialects of

English, the second consonant of word-final clusters such as [nd] or [d] is often not pronounced. Thus, we get forms such as:

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| [laen] | '(to) land' |
| [kain] | 'kind' |
| [bihain] | 'behind' |
| [spail] | 'spoiled' |
| [kɔl] | 'cold' |
| [oel] | 'old' |

The lost consonant does not exist underlyingly, as can be seen from inflected forms such as [oela] 'older' or [senen] 'sending'. Word-final [t] is also typically lost after [s] and [f] and [k] as in:

| | |
|--------|---------|
| [mʌs] | 'must' |
| [baes] | 'best' |
| [fʌs] | 'first' |
| [laef] | 'left' |
| [sɔf] | 'soft' |

Such word-final cluster reduction is also common in St. Kitts Creole. The reduction of word-initial clusters, common in St. Kitts Creole, is much less in evidence in P-N, though there are some examples:

| | |
|--------|--------------|
| [tʌbɪ] | 'stop a bit' |
| [em] | 'them' |
| [en] | 'than' |

Medial consonant clusters are often reduced when compared to their putative English model:

| | |
|----------|----------------------|
| [wasaid] | 'what side', 'where' |
| [lʌbi] | 'let be' |
| [nɛsɛ] | 'nasty' |
| [uni] | 'only' |
| [jɛna] | 'yonder' |

Word-initial two-consonant clusters identified in transcriptions of P and N include:

- [bj], [br], [bl], as in [bjutefel] ‘beautiful’, [blu] ‘blue’, [brek] ‘break’
- [dr], as in [drai] ‘unpalatable’ (of food)
- [gw], [gl], [gr], as in [gwen] ‘going to’, [gled] ‘glad’, [graun] ‘plot of ground’
- [pr], [pl], as in [praekli] ‘practically’, [plan] ‘plantain’
- [tw], [tr], [tj], [tʃ], as in [twelv] ‘twelve’, [trʌmpeta] ‘trumpeter fish’, [tjusde] ‘Tuesday’, [tʃainɛ] ‘a banana variety’
- [kw], [kl], [kr], [kj], as in [kwin] ‘queen’, [klai] ‘to cry’, [kraenkɪ] ‘datura’ (common weed), [kjut] ‘cute’
- [sw], [sn], [sp], [sm], [st], as in [swit] ‘good tasting’, [spail] ‘spoiled’, [snel] ‘to cater insufficiently’, [smɛgɔs] ‘light-hearted form of address among males’, [stoen] ‘rock’
- [nj], as in [nju sʌlɛn] ‘visitors’ (N)
- [θr], as in [θrɔt] ‘throat’

Initial clusters with more than two consonants are:

[spr], [str], as in [sprinkl] ‘sprinkle’ and [skrepɛ] ‘precocious youth’ (N)

It is not possible to provide firm conclusions about word-final consonant clusters, as the available transcriptions provide conflicting evidence. There is agreement about the following, though:

[mp], [ms], [nt], [ns], [ks], [ps], [ts], [tʃ], [lp], [lv], as in [dʒʌmp] ‘jump’, [demz] ‘theirs’, [ɛnt] ‘is not’, [neks] ‘next’, [slɛps] ‘sorry I farted’, [maets] ‘Matt’s’, [ketʃ] ‘catch’, [haelp] ‘help’, [twelv] ‘twelve’

Harrison (1972) lists a number of other final clusters, including [dl] in [swael-dudl] ‘a kind of fish, conceited person’ and [bm], as in [ɛlɛbm] ‘eleven’.

Whether there are final clusters with more than two consonants depends on transcriptional practice. The cluster [ŋks], as in [thæŋks] ‘thank you’ and [ntʃ] as in [lɔntʃ] ‘launch’ seem uncontroversial. Other examples on record include:

[ndz] in [dipendz] ‘depends’ (anglicised N) recorded by Flint
[kls] in [wɛkls] ‘food’

When syllables are combined, clusters of more consonants may occur depending on how words are syllabified. An example is P *mompʃsha* [mɔmpʃʃʌ] ‘nobody when playing a game’ (> E. *mumchance* ‘one who acts in a dumb show’).

With all the shortcomings of the available transcriptions, it can nevertheless be confirmed that P-N admits numerous consonant clusters in all word and

syllable positions. In this it differs considerably from Tahitian and, to a lesser extent, from St. Kitts Creole.

4.5 Historical phonology

4.5.1 P and N sounds and their relationship to historical sources

The relationship between the sounds of P-N and the languages that were involved in its formation is complex and largely unpredictable. There is no algorithm that could convert Tahitian sounds into those of words inherited from Tahitian, St. Kitts Creole, and English dialects or subsequently borrowed from Standard English. Rather, there is a complex one to many and many to one relationship between these source languages and P and N. Importantly, the absence of regular sound correspondences thus suggests that one is dealing with lexical diffusion combined with selective borrowing. Harrison (1972: 30) also emphasises the multiple origin of sounds resulting from the linguistic encounter of several languages: This principle is widely used in creolistics, though the identification of phonetic units across languages is difficult and the cross-identification of phonemes illegitimate.

Whatever comparisons with putative source languages are made, one cannot ignore the many internal sound changes that have occurred in the 200+ years of language history.

4.5.2 Tahitian

Ross and Moverley's (1964) account of the history of the P devotes many pages (138–158) to the putative influence of Tahitian on P phonetics and phonology. This account is speculative and based on unreliable information about the pronunciation of Tahitian at the time of the Mutiny, and ignores several other processes that might have led to the same outcomes as influence from Tahitian:

- simplification by the first generation of children;
- the St. Kitts model;
- dialect levelling/koinéization.

Ross and Moverley identify a number of instances where influence from Tahitian was either absent or at best minimal. This includes the absence of a tendency towards CVCV word structure. P words such as *taplau* 'absorbent material', 'lint'

from T *tapuru* suggest that even Tahitian loanwords used in the women's domain did not retain T phonotactics.

Tahitian is said to have a phonemic distinction between short and long vowels. In P, by contrast “quantity appears to play no part” (Ross and Moverley 1964: 145) in distinguishing forms, though at the phonetic level long, half-long and short vowels are encountered. These pronunciations do not reflect the length distinctions in Tahitian. Thus T [re:ho] ‘to scrape breadfruit’ is [lehu] in P, T [pu:hi] ‘sea eel’ in P and [buhe] in N, and T [a:na] ‘to grate coconut’ corresponds to [ana] ‘coconut grater’ in P.

The glottal stop in P is said to reflect “a coupling of the abundance of glottal stops in Tahitian with this English dialect feature” (Ross and Moverley 1964: 146). Ross and Moverley do not mention that [ʔ] is common in P consonant clusters and word finally, as in [sefeʔ] ‘pheasant’, but they mention that even in Tahitian loanwords such as P [məʔauwɰu] ‘to fall to pieces’, glottal stops appear where they are absent in their etymon.

Whereas Tahitian has little or no word stress, P behaves very much like English in this regard (Ross and Moverley 1964: 146).

The case for substratum influence is not proven by Ross and Moverley, and Harrison, who again writes at a time when this explanation was fashionable, fails to demonstrate its importance. Harrison (1972: 258–263) provided a detailed analysis of the development of the five Tahitian vowel sounds in P-N. These developments were summarized in the following table:

| | |
|-------|---|
| T [a] | N [ʌ] often; N [ɑ] often; N [æ] rarely; N [ɔ] in fully and partially stressed position often |
| T [u] | N [u] several examples; N and P show a few examples of [ɔ], [o] or [oʊ] |
| T [i] | N [i] few examples; N [ɛ] few examples; N [ɪ] often |
| T [o] | N [ɒ] in fully and partially stressed position often; N [o] several examples; N [ʊ] few examples |
| T [e] | N [ɛ] in partially stressed position often; [e] few examples; N [ɪ] few examples |

A similar table for consonants can be established by gleaning information from Ross and Moverley (1964) and Harrison (1972). I do not wish to repeat the numerous details and discussions in those two sources but simply condense their findings:

| | | | |
|-------|---------|-----------|--|
| T [p] | P-N [p] | T [pareo] | P-N [paeriɔ] ‘wrap around garment’ |
| | P-N [b] | T [puhi] | P-N [bʊhi] ‘eel’ |
| T [m] | P-N [m] | T [maro] | P-N [mʌlʊ] ‘loin cloth’ |
| T [t] | P-N [t] | T [tapa] | P-N [ta:pʌ] ‘cloth made from bark’ |
| | P-N [g] | T [tare] | N [gʌri] ‘phlegm’ |
| T [n] | P-N [n] | T [naue] | P-N [nawɛ] ‘to swim’ |
| T [r] | P-N [r] | T [rama] | P-N [rʌmʌ] ‘go fishing with a torch’ |
| | P-N [w] | T [tara] | P [tʌwʌ] ‘prickles on edge of pandanus leaf’ |
| | P-N [l] | T [huru] | P-N [hʊlʊhʊlʊ] ‘to make untidy’ |
| T [v] | P-N [w] | T [vana] | P-N [wʌnʌ] ‘urchin’ |
| T [h] | P-N [h] | T [hawai] | P-N [hawai] ‘gutter’, ‘water pipes’ |
| | P-N [∅] | T [hutu] | P [ʊtu] ‘giant magnolia’ |
| T [f] | P-N [f] | T [faniu] | P-N [faniʊ] ‘coconut frond’ |

Further details can be found in Ross and Moverley (1964: 154–157) and in the discussion of lexical items of Tahitian origin in vocabulary in this book.

Regarding Tahitian phonotactics, Ross and Moverley (1964: 142) stated: “In Tahitian, consonant groups do not occur, and all words end in a vowel. It might, perhaps, have been expected that Tahitian influence would have been strong enough to modify English words in Pitcairnese to make them conform to these rules. In fact, this has not happened”. Thus, P-N, with very few possible exceptions, does not have word forms such as the following Tahitian ones:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>inita</i> | ‘ink’ |
| <i>perofeta</i> | ‘prophet’ |
| <i>tapitona</i> | ‘captain’ |
| <i>totoni</i> | ‘stocking’ |
| <i>titela</i> | ‘tea kettle’ |
| <i>Pitarnia</i> | ‘Pitcairn’ |

There are, however, some indications that such pronunciations may have been around in the very early days of language development. The Pitcairn place name [mema] refers to a spring named after Fletcher Christians wife, whose nickname was Mainmast, and the pronunciation [sʌlɛn] ‘children’ may also reflect the

pronunciation of the Tahitian women. There are a sizeable number of lexical items of unknown origin in P-N and these are candidates for further inquiry. One such item is N [sepɛlo] ‘syphilis’, which I am informed by Alice Buffett (p. c. 2000) is a taboo pronunciation.

4.5.3 St. Kitts Creole

Most analysts (Ross and Moverley 1964; Gleißner 1997; Laycock and Buffett 1988) and most linguists working with secondary data have not considered St. Kitts influence on the phonology of P and N. The earliest mention of the possibility of such influence is found in Harrison (1972: 228), though she uses Jamaican Creole evidence: “It is interesting and perhaps significant to observe that [e] and [o] seem to be similar to the corresponding sounds in Jamaican Creole The situation with Edward Young as the linking influence may explain the similarity in Norfolk and Jamaican of the two sounds which usually replace Standard English [e] and [o].”

Harrison (1972: 228) notes that these sounds do not have either dialect English or Tahitian equivalents.

An examination of late 18th-century St. Kitts Creole carried out by Smith (1999) suggests that there was a fair amount of variation in the vowel system. He argues that early St. Kitts Creole did not have a length distinction for vowels, though the historical data are ambiguous.

Other properties (established for St. Kitts Creole by Plag 1999) shared between early St. Kitts Creole and P-N are:

- They are both non-rhotic varieties. Postvocalic [r] is lost, typically without compensatory lengthening as in:
 - [tʌn] ‘turn’
 - [bʌn] ‘burn’
 - [dɛ] ‘there’
 - [dətɪ] ‘dirty’
- Word-initial [h] is not lost;
- English [v] in the majority of cases becomes [w] word-initially;
- [v] medially is often realized as [b]. This is less prominent in P-N, though there are examples such as [hɛbmli] ‘heavenly’ and [sɛbm] ‘seven’;
- Interdental [ð] is usually replaced by [d];
- Word-final [nd] becomes [n];
- Final [l] at times is realized as [ʊ] as in P [kekʊhən] ‘cattle horn’ (type of fern).

In P there are two words, documented by Ward (n.d.) where [g] corresponds to SE [d]. Both [nigəl] ‘needle’ and [hængəl] are also documented in St. Kitts. Harrison (1972: 68) comments that this “rare and older pronunciation is also encountered in N”.

Many of the above differences between Standard English, P-N and St. Kitts Creole are also documented for English dialects, and all the above data can tell us is that the evidence does not disconfirm influence from St. Kitts Creole.

4.5.4 English dialect influence

To demonstrate English dialect influence is fraught with difficulties other than the already mentioned general ones of phonetic representation, including:

- The persisting uncertainty about the provenance of the longest surviving mutineer John Adams. If indeed he hails from Scotland, a number of properties of P might become clearer.
- The absence of scholarly descriptions of the phonetic properties of the birthplace of the mutineers, though the *Dialect Atlas of English* (Orton, Anderson and Widdowson 1978) provides some insights.
- Uncertainty as to what precisely the mutineers spoke: an East-Anglian type of levelled maritime English or their own variety, and whether they used more of their dialect features when communicating with the children.

Influence from English dialects in the formative years was examined in some detail by both Ross and Moverley (1964) and Harrison (1972). Neither of them presents firm conclusions nor do they provide criteria for disconfirming claims as to dialect origins. Meanwhile, internet sites and tourism materials promote the view that P and N sound like West Country or Welsh English.

4.6 Simplification and increase in phonological naturalness

Simplification of the input language is characteristic of both child language acquisition and pidginization/creolization and there is a large body of literature dealing with it. Earlier approaches to simplification have been surveyed by Mühlhäusler (1974), more recent approaches are discussed in Kortmann and Szendrői (2012). Simplification in phonology is usually referred to as regularization of paradigms, greater coverage of rules or the replacement of context-dependent by context-free rules.

Simplification of putative input languages needs to be distinguished from the notion of linguistic simplicity. This is concerned with the simplicity of representation and is, for the purposes of the present discussion, of limited usefulness. Harrison's above-mentioned presentation of consonant clusters, driven primarily by the wish to present a symmetrical paradigm, is a case in point. Chomsky and Halle had to admit, after a detailed attempt to produce a maximally simple formalization of English phonology, that "the entire discussion of phonology in this book suffers from a fundamental theoretical inadequacy" (1968: 400). This inadequacy refers to the fact that their formal account ignores the intrinsic content of sound segments and sound features. This inadequacy has been overcome in part by appealing to markedness (which is language-specific and as such of no use when dealing with contact phenomena) and naturalness. Perhaps the most sophisticated account of phonological naturalness can be found in Bailey (1996). In his *quantum linguistics*, naturalness involves a continuum ranging from the most natural to increasingly unnatural phonetic segments, segment sequences and phonological processes. Naturalness can, but does not have to, coincide with those phenomena that are commonly labelled simplification and markedness reduction. Importantly, natural is not an absolute but a relative concept. As Bailey once put it to me (p.c.): "Flying is not natural as such, it is natural for a bird but unnatural for a fish". The naturalness continuum is motivated by observations such as the emergence of phonetic segments and combinations in child language acquisition, pidgin development, de-acquisition in ageing and language loss, as well as frequency (what is more natural in language tends to be more frequent in language development over time), all of which favour development from less to more naturalness. The usefulness of phonological naturalness is constrained, however, by the fact that language is used both for production and for perception. What is phonologically more natural may be morphologically less so. Natural assimilation of sounds counteracts the morphological desideratum of 'one form one meaning'. Thus, the English plural /s/ is manifested as [s], [z] and [əz] depending on the ending of English nouns. The price of phonological naturalness is an increase in allomorphy, i.e. decrease in morphological naturalness.

Nevertheless, it is possible within limits to apply the notion of naturalness to the history of P and N, by focussing on phenomena such as:

- A number of unnatural sounds are absent or rare when compared with the source language, in particular [ð] and [θ];
- Word-final clusters tend to be simpler than the English model;
- Some fricatives have been replaced by homorganic stops and the proportion of stops relative to fricatives has increased;
- [v] has been replaced by [w].

All in all, the naturalness of P-N phonetology is not much greater than that of English, not much less than that of St. Kitts Creole, but considerably less than Tahitian. Over time, probably under the impact of Standard English teaching, abnaturalness has increased.

4.6.1 Differences between P and N

Both islands continued to be bilingual after the 1860s and both islands had contacts with speakers of a number of varieties of English. In the case of Pitcairn, they were American up to about 1900 and subsequently New Zealand varieties. On Norfolk, contacts were predominantly with speakers of British English until that date, and with New Zealand varieties spoken by the cable station families, visitors and during trade ventures. The number of new residents after 1920 were about 50% each Australian and New Zealanders, and during World War II almost exclusively New Zealanders. Australian English during the interwar period was also heard from the school teachers, administrators and visitors. There has been continued contact with New Zealand and Australian English ever since. Such differences in contact patterns may account for some of the phonetic and phonological differences between present day P and N.

Importantly, only four of the original families returned to Pitcairn. On Norfolk, eight families were represented, including all interloper families. Given extensive inter-family variation and changes in linguistic role models, phonological development may have been similar to that observed by for Tzeltal (Stross 1975), where disease and changes in fertility produced constant shift in linguistic role models. A medical factor which may have reinforced some of the differences is the very poor dental health and early loss of teeth among the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island (cf. Shapiro 1968), which may have reinforced the loss of interdentalals.

An attempt to highlight the salient differences between pronunciations in P and N was made by Harrison (1972: 229–230), who compared her own data with Gimson's transcription. She (1972: 229) notes that "because it contains many ideolectal features, the text must be treated cautiously". She established the following differences for vowels. Note that these represent strong tendencies rather than categorical differences.

P [e] usually corresponds to N [ɛ] in unstressed position:

| P | N | English |
|----------|----------|-----------------|
| feʃ | fɛʃ | 'fish' |
| hem | hɛm | 'they' |
| wæ:le | wæɛ | 'valley' |
| ofe | ofɛ | 'kind of fish' |
| gwen | gwɛn | 'will' (future) |
| ʃep | ʃɛp | 'ship' |
| filen | filɛn | '(is) feeling' |
| plɛntɪ | plɛntɪ | 'lots of' |
| gen | gɛn | 'beside' |
| nawe | nawɛ | 'swim' |
| stɔle | stɔɛ | 'to tell a lie' |
| ɔrendʒ | ɔrɛndʒ | 'orange' |

P [ɔ] sometimes P [o], frequently corresponds to N [ʊ]

| | | |
|---------|--------|-----------------|
| o'rendʒ | ɔrɛndʒ | 'orange' |
| gɔʔ | gʊt | 'goat' |
| kɔkɒlʔ | kʊkɒlʔ | 'coconut trees' |
| rɔ:ʔn | rʊʔn | 'rotten' |
| kɔʔ | kʊt | 'coat' |
| wɔsɪŋ | wʊsɪŋ | 'what' |

P [u] sometimes corresponds to N [ʊ]

| | | |
|--------|--------|------------------------|
| musə | mʊsə | 'almost' |
| ɾɒluən | ɾɒlʊən | 'using as ground-bait' |
| buhe | bʊhɪ | 'eel' |
| rəhulu | rəhʊlʊ | 'dry banana leaves' |

P [i] sometimes corresponds to N [ɛ]

| | | |
|----------|--------|----------------------------|
| nɛnwi | naɛnwe | 'dream fish' |
| pɔʔi | pʊʔɛ | 'kind of pudding or jelly' |
| hu'ihu'i | huɛhue | 'to feel disgusted' |

P often has [a] or [a:] where N has [ʌ]

| | | |
|--------|-------|--------------|
| plan | pʌn | ‘banana’ |
| ijala | ijʌlʌ | ‘precocious’ |
| gʊda:n | gʊdʌn | ‘good one’ |
| pɑ:n | pʌn | ‘upon’ |
| malʌn | mʌlʌn | ‘melon’ |
| saf | sʌf | ‘surf’ |

P [e] or [ɛ] corresponds to N [æ]

| | | |
|--------|--------|----------|
| wɛt | wæɫ | ‘well’ |
| fɛns | fæns | ‘garden’ |
| maɪsɛt | maɪsæɫ | ‘myself’ |

But note that Moverley gives [æ] in *fæns* (‘fence’), *sælf* (‘self’) for P.

As regards consonants, the principal difference concerns interdental. The voiced interdental [ð] is frequent in N, though occasionally replaced by [d]. In P, it is rarely found and usually replaced by [d] and occasionally [h], as in [ha goe] ‘there goes’. Consider:

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| P | N | |
| [naeda] | [neða] | ‘another’ |
| [brada] | [braða] | ‘brother’ |

Voiceless interdentals again are common in N but usually manifested as [s] or [t] in P. Consider:

| | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| P | N | |
| [sætsh] | [θætʃ] | ‘thatch’ |
| [sik] | [θik] | ‘thick’ |
| [semising] | [semesaθing] | ‘it looks like’ |
| [sænks] | [θænks] | ‘thank you’ |

Transcriptions of Pitcairnese texts by Gimson and Källgård show a tendency for word-final or syllabic [l] to become [ʊ] in P but not in N. This may have to do with the fact that [l] and [ʊ] are perceptually almost identical and that a greater degree of literacy on Norfolk may have led to greater influence of English etyma. Compare:

| P | N | |
|---------|---------|----------|
| [fɒʊ] | [fɒl] | ‘fall’ |
| [kɒʊ] | [kɒʊl] | ‘cold’ |
| [petrʊ] | [petrɪ] | ‘petrel’ |

A last difference is the variable presence of consonant clusters of the type [p] and [t] alternating with [ʔp] and [ʔt]. In Gimson’s narrow transcription, forms such as [grʔp] ‘influenza’ and [ɔbauʔt] ‘about’ are found in connected speech. Flint’s narrow transcription of N texts does not contain such clusters, but Harrison (1972: 72) notes that it can variably occur in N, particularly before [p]. Gimson also notes word-initial [ʔ] before vowels and word-final [ʔ] after vowels. Again, this is not noted by Flint. This difference may reflect a difference in transcriptional practice as many phoneticians ignore [ʔ] in these positions.

4.7 Phonology

Like phonetics, phonology also originated in a mission problem, i.e. how to represent an unwritten language in written form without the complexities and redundancies of phonetic representation. Its development as a method for reducing spoken languages to writings is closely associated with the *Summer Institute of Linguistics* (Pike 1949), whose practitioners believed that the phonemes of a language could be discovered by means of mechanical discovery procedures such as minimal pair tests (Longacre 1964).

The history of phonemics is full of contradictions, shoddy argumentation and ad hoc solutions. Establishing the phoneme inventory for any language is a dubious enterprise because of:

- The non-uniqueness of phonemic solutions (Chao 1934, Schane 1968) and the absence of non-arbitrary criteria for preferring one solution to another one;
- The problematic phonetic basis used for phonemic analysis;
- The inability to account for variation and the resulting need to postulate abstract idiolects;
- Uncertainty as to what precisely phonemes represent: mental images, bundles of distinctive features, acoustic targets, abstract entities or whatever. No matter what they represent, phonemes cannot be pronounced.
- The number of allophones and symbols to represent them is indeterminate and dependent on transcriptional practice.

Irrespective of their ontological status, phonemes can be established for a single closed system only. Whatever symbol appears between slanted brackets is

an arbitrary symbol chosen for this system only. Phonemes, in principle, can never be compared across systems. Quotations to this effect by the founders of phoneme theory have been compiled by Bailey and Maroldt (1979).

Given the problematic arbitrary nature of phonemes, they are a poor basis for developing writing systems for unwritten languages.

4.7.1 Segmental phonemes of N

In spite of the fact that it is impossible to postulate a falsifiable phoneme inventory, this is what the compilers of APICS, the Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Structures (see *apics-online.info*), asked me to provide for N. With greatest reluctance, I approached this task by employing a standard minimal pair test. I noted that it is not a mechanical discovery procedure and that phonemic solutions thus arrived at are non-unique and inherently non-comparable. As some of my colleagues want to see phoneme inventories, I present my arbitrary account here:

4.7.2 Consonants of N

Minimal and near-minimal pairs:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| mais ‘mouse’, ‘mine’, nais ‘nice’ | /m/ /n/ |
| bʌt ‘but’, pʊt ‘to put’ | /p/ /b/ |
| daʊn ‘down’, taʊn ‘Kingston’ | /d/ /t/ |
| kʌt ‘cut’, gʌt ‘exist’, ‘got’ | /k/ /g/ |
| fain ‘find’, pain ‘pine tree’ | /f/ /p/ |
| lɔks ‘lock’, rɔk ‘rock’ | /l/ /r/ |
| ʃi ‘she’, si ‘see’ | /ʃ/ /s/ |
| faðə ‘father’, fajl ‘further’ | /ð/ /j/ |
| θænk ‘thank’, tænk ‘tank’ | /θ/ /t/ |
| hʊlʊ ‘scratch around’, pʊlʊ ‘husk’ | /h/ /p/ |
| ʔʌnʌ ‘grater’; wʌnʌ ‘urchin’ | /ʔ/ /w/ |
| dʒɛs ‘just’; tʃiəs ‘chase’ | /tʃ/ /dʒ/ |

From the above examples, the following tentative table of consonant phonemes can be established:

| | bilabial | labio-dental | dental | alveolar | palato-alveolar | velar | glottal |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------|--------|----------|-----------------|-------|---------|
| nasal | m | | | n | | ŋ | |
| stop | p-b | | θ-ð | t-d | | k-g | ʔ |
| fricative | | f | | | ʃ | | h |
| lateral | | | | l | | | |
| frictionless continuant | w | | | | j | | |
| flap | | | | r | | | |
| affricate | | | | | tʃ, dʒ | | |

/v/ is not traditionally used. English [v] and [w] are both realized as [w] in N [wʌsʌ] ‘worse’, [wɛkɛls] ‘victuals’. The only minimal pair I have been able to find is [wail] ‘wild’ [vail] ‘vile’, the latter being a marginal word of the language.

[z] is encountered in some words in free variation with [s] (e.g. *sip*, *zip* ‘a zip’) but there is no phonemic contrast. All the words with initial z in Buffett’s *Encyclopaedia* (1999) are peripheral.

Glottal stops occur in only a small number of words of Tahitian origin, and their contrastive load is negligible.

4.7.3 Vowel phonemes

Harrison (1972: 29), using minimal pair tests as well as other unspecified diagnostic procedures, identified the following inventory of fourteen vowel phonemes:

N sounds are grouped as follows:

Group 1. One target sounds: / i ɪ ε æ a ʊ ə u ʊ ɜ ʌ /

These consistently manifest one target.

Group 2. Two target sounds: / ʌʊ aɪ əɪ /

These show a strong tendency towards two targets.

The contrasting phonemic quality of ten N vowels is demonstrated by minimal pairs:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| /ɪ/ /bɪt/ 'bit' | /i/ /bi:t/ 'boat' |
| /ɛ/ /bɛt/ 'bet' | /æ/ /bæt/ 'bat' |
| /ʌ/ /bʌt/ 'but' | /u/ /bu:t/ 'boot' |
| /e/ /bet/ 'bait' | /aɪ/ /baɪt/ 'bite' |
| /o/ /bɒt/ 'boat' | /ʌʊ/ /bʌʊt/ 'whereabouts' |

Length is not a distinctive feature in Harrison's analysis but is distinctive in Buffett and Laycock (1988).

4.8 Phonological processes and rules in P and N

4.8.1 The nature of processes and rules

Given the problems experienced with phonetic representation and the identification of abstract phonemes, it follows that the notions of phonological processes and rules will also experience problems. Consequently, the findings in this section are tentative at best.

A distinction needs to be made between natural phonological processes (see Stampe 1969) and phonological rules. Phonological processes occur in early child language development when phonetic units are combined or in allegro pronunciations. They include numerous deletion, substitution and assimilation processes such as nasalization of vowels adjacent to nasal consonants. Naturalness favours processes promoting open syllables, cluster reduction, vowel harmony or palatalization of consonants followed by [i] or [j]. These are encountered across human languages. Natural processes are reflected, for instance, in some of the nicknames of Norfolk Islanders:

Kissard (Allan Buffett) derived from Clifford as pronounced by his younger siblings;

Aunt Putty (Pat Conolly) one of her young nieces called her *Putty* because she could not pronounce Pat;

Diddles (David Evans) the original nickname was *Pickles* but one of his younger brothers mispronounced it as *Diddles* and the name stuck.

Unlike phonological processes, phonological rules reflect language-specific allophonic variation or historical development. The notion of phonological rule is characteristic of an item and process (IP) rather than an earlier structuralist item and arrangement (IA) approach to linguistic representation (Hockett 1954). IP analysis is based on the assumption that there is a determinate set of abstract segments

(phonemes, systematic phonological units, phonetemes or such like) which can be converted into actual phonetic representations by means of a determinate set of rules. Phonological rules include deletion, insertion, permutation and agreement (assimilation) as well as a few minor ones, which, when combined and ordered, are believed to account for the range of allophonic variation in a language.

In some approaches, pronunciation differences in different styles and dialects are accounted for by the claim that these surface differences reflect the operation of different phonological rules or different rule order applied to shared underlying forms (St. Clair 1974a, 1974b). This offers an interesting take on the notion of ‘dialect’. Dialects of a language share or ‘depend on’ the same underlying form but make different choices from the shared pool of phonological rules. We can use the dependency principle to explore whether P-N can be labelled a dialect of English, keeping in mind some of the difficulties of such an exercise. These include:

- The lack of criteria for identifying underlying forms. There is a huge body of literature debating the degree of abstractness of such forms, whether a simplicity metric applied to phonological representations has anything to do with how speakers process language, the extent of awareness of language history and the possibility that different speakers may have different underlying forms. The last issue is particularly relevant to contact languages such as P-N where the shared surface forms may result from a “convergent generative system” (Silverstein 1971).
- Much has been made about Sapir’s observations that speakers of a language produce psychologically real phonemic representations. I have attempted to debunk this notion with empirical data from Tok Pisin (Mühlhäusler 1983) and have since collected data that confirm that even literate native speakers at times have no reliable intuitions about seemingly straightforward matter such as the number of syllables in a word, or the kind of vowels and consonants it features. An almost absurd example is that of the 383 different ways in which members of the Presbyterian Church spelled their religion in the Australian Census of 1976. They include:

presbeterian, prespertarian, prespreterian, presbiterian, presbyterian, presbyterians, presybyterian, presybeterian, presyterian, presbytrian, prespeterian, prebyterian, presbytarian, presbyterian, presbertarian, presbetrarian, presybartian, presyberian, prysbyterian, presbyterian, presbetarian, presbaterian, prebyrtarian, prebysterian, presbertain, preysbyterian, presbitarin, prsbyterian, perbstern, peresbiterian, preptarian, prepetion, presenibentary, puesbertyn, pysterian, presptain, prisperin, prestrean, prosbytrian and hundreds more.

It would seem impossible to determine an underlying form from which all of these could be generated in a non-arbitrary fashion.

- P and N have been predominantly oral languages and speakers of such languages, when faced with the task to write them down, are often uncertain on how to write them ‘as they sound’ to them. Greg Quintal, born on Norfolk Island in 1918, passed on to me a filing cabinet full of his notes on the language, among them, hundreds of pages of words spelled in his way. There are numerous instances where he provides alternatives which may reflect the varying pronunciations he encountered or uncertainty as to how to represent the language in writing. They include:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| <i>bovn, boovn, bown, boun, boon</i> | ‘constipated’ |
| <i>cooshoo, cootoo, cushooe, cussoo,</i> | ‘well, |
| <i>kussoo</i> | comfortable’ |
| <i>yoo holly, yu hally, yaholli</i> | ‘a small fish’ |

The mixed history of P-N and the presence of English as a contact language throughout its history have made the notion of determinate underlying forms and a determinate set of phonological rules difficult to apply. P-N is not entirely distinct from English, and the English etymon of P-N words is increasingly perceived as the base from which P-N pronunciations are derived. Thus, some N speakers use [fain-fainet] ‘find’, ‘find it’, whilst for others it is [fain-faindet]. The underlying form accordingly is either [fain] or [faind] and only in the latter case is a rule which deletes the stop consonant in [n+C] clusters needed.

Influence of English is also in evidence in forms where the initial etymological consonant is not present among older speakers but has been restored in modified varieties as in:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| [wawaha-w-an] | [red-an] ‘red’ |
| ‘conceited’ | |
| [agli-w-an] ‘ugly’ | [swit-an] |
| | ‘sweet’ |

Much of the variation encountered in the speech community is a result of dramatic changes from older Broad to Modified and highly anglicized varieties. In as much as members of the speech community can understand one another, this history is still synchronically present. An interesting example is that of the

predicative adjective ending. In P, according to Ross and Moverley (1964: 160), the predicative ending is [-ʌŋ] as in [plʌŋ ɛs taitaiʌŋ] ‘the banana is tasteless’ or [ɛs mɛameɛa ʌŋ] ‘it is wilted’. In Gimson’s transcript there are a number of instances where a [j] can be inserted between an adjective ending in a vowel and the ending as in [hɔpʌjʌŋ] ‘is crooked’ or [pʊʔojʌŋ] ‘is unripe’. In modified anglicized N the common adjective ending is [-wan]. The [w] is deleted variably if the adjective stem ends in a consonant. Compare:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Ess warwaha wan</i> | is conceited |
| <i>Ess blaek an</i> | is black |
| <i>Ess sweet an</i> | is sweet |

4.8.2 Types of rules

There is no agreement among linguists as to the number and kinds of allophonic rules of English and the prediction of variable pronunciations is a hazardous business. This is also the case with P-N, and the ‘rules’ listed in the following paragraphs were chosen in a pre-theoretical fashion to highlight salient properties of P-N, particularly those that are distinctly different from Standard English and identified in other English-related contact languages.

4.8.2.1 Insertion

The addition of epenthetic vowels, unlike in most English-derived Pidgins and Creoles, is virtually absent in P and N.

In P, and to a lesser extent N [ʔ] is inserted before word-final [p] and [t]. Gimson’s narrow transcription contains forms such as:

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| [grɪʔp] | influenza |
| [əbauʔt] | about |

Flint’s narrow transcription of N texts does not contain such clusters but Harrison (1972: 72) notes that it can variably occur in N, particularly before [p]: In N a glide [w] is inserted between stop consonants followed by some vowels, particularly [o:], as in [bo:n] becoming [bwo:n] ‘bone’; [sto:ns] becoming [stwo:ns] ‘testicles’; [bo:t] becoming [bwo:t] ‘boat’. A lexicalized example illustrating [w]-insertion after [u] is N [bukwa] ‘white spots on the stomach of dark-skinned pregnant women’ coined on the basis of [a:buka] ‘a dark fish with white spots’.

Norfolk Islanders using the pronunciation [gwen] ‘to(wards)’, ‘near’ are at times told to pronounce it [gen] and not to confuse it with [gwen] ‘going’.

An [r] is inserted between the word stem and the predicative adjective ending or comparative marker [-an] ‘than’ if the stem ends in [a]:

[beta-r-an] ‘sweeter than’
[meamea-r-an] ‘more withered’

An [r] is inserted when the progressive marker [-en] is attached to a verb ending in the vowel [a]:

[a:ta] – [a:ta-r-en] ‘to admire’
[a:nsa] – [a:nsa-r-en] ‘to answer’

4.8.2.2 Deletion

[t] is commonly lost after word final [f]. In some words, this is a historical process which has become lexicalized as in [ʃɛf, ʃɛfɛn] ‘shift, shifting’. In other instances, the etymological [t] is recovered when an adjective or verb ending is added, as in N:

[lɛf] ‘to lift’ [lɛften] ‘to be lifting’
[sɒf] ‘soft’ [sɒften] ‘to soften’

4.8.2.3 Permutation

Permutation, unlike in various English-based Creoles, is very rare historically and has not been noted in records made after 1960.

4.8.2.4 Assimilation

Assimilation during the historical development of P-N has been common. In addition, in contrast with English, P-N has far fewer inflectional affixes such as English plural or third person /-s/ or derivational affixes such as /-ɪən/. This means that there is relatively little scope for further assimilation in present-day varieties, though in fast connected speech, assimilatory processes can be observed. An example is that [t] variably becomes [d] when followed by a vowel in allegro speech: [gɒt] ‘got’ [dem god em tetɪɛ] ‘they got potatoes’.

4.8.2.5 Other

- Lengthening of vowels is used indexically to mark broadness of speech as well as for stylistic purposes such as particular emphasis;
- Single vowels are often substituted for diphthongs;
- Vowel harmony is found in many established older words (Harrison 1972: 28), but it is also in evidence in words more recently borrowed from English such as [stʌbʌn] ‘stubborn’ and [fʌlʌ] ‘fellow’;
- The weak vowels of N in unstressed syllables are usually maintained but can become schwa in allegro pronunciation, particularly in grammatical words, such as [gwɛnɛ] becoming [gwɛnə] ‘future marker’ or [lɒŋɐ] becoming [lɒŋə] ‘along’ (Harrison 1972: 60);
- In P, final [l] is often vocalized and realized as [-u] or [ʊ]. Gimson’s transcript has many examples, including [wɛku] ‘food’ and [tæʊwʊ] ‘towel’;
- The vowels /o/ and /e/, and to a lesser extent, other vowels have a strong tendency towards in-gliding (Harrison 1972).

4.8.3 Rule order

Phonological rules can operate on the output of other rules and thus need to be ordered, as when [maʊnt piʔt] ‘Mount Pitt’ in allegro pronunciation loses the final [-t] becoming [maʊn piʔt]. In even faster pronunciation the final [-n] provided the input for assimilation, resulting in the pronunciation [maʊm piʔt]. Little research on this topic has been carried out to date.

4.9 Non-segmental phonology

No detailed analysis of non-segmental phonology is available for P and only sketchy information exists for N. This is an area that awaits further research. Most speakers of N, other than those with the broadest speech, do not differ much in intonation from Australian English, and even word stress is being replaced by unevenly stressed syllables.

There are many anecdotal comments on the distinct ‘lilting’ intonation of the language and Harrison (1986) provides some examples in her analysis of Broad N texts.

4.9.1 Stress

Most existing representations of P and N ignore stress, the exceptions being Gimson (1964) for P and Flint (n.d. and 1964) for N. The vocabulary in Ross and Moverley (1964) contains both entries with and without stress notation and lists both P and N variants. As Gimson transcribes connected speech, he notes primary and secondary stress intonation units rather than individual words, which makes a comparison with Flint problematic.

In contrast to English, each syllable in bi-syllabic words tends to be evenly stressed in N. Harrison notes (1972: 24): “A weak syllable in N has either an even or strong secondary accent far more frequently than a totally unaccented vowel”.

A number of bi-syllabic words in the Ross and Moverley’s list have two strong stresses, including: [ˈbʊˈhʊ] ‘swelling’ and [ˈhiˈlə] ‘kind of fish’. Note that the N equivalent of the last word only has one main stress [ˈhi:löv].

Words with more than two syllables tend to have the stress on the penultimate syllable, including words that in English are stressed further forward such as [jesˈtɛɪ] ‘yesterday’.

Flint (n.d.: 9) notes a secondary stress on the first syllable of trisyllabic words, particularly those recently borrowed from English, such as [kɔmbineɪʃn] ‘combination’, which is not in evidence in traditional words such as [pɔtəˈgi:] ‘unreliable’ from E ‘Portuguese’.

4.9.2 Intonation

A number of outsiders have made informal observations on intonation of P, but no systematic study is available. Sanders (1953: 51), for example, notes: “The islanders speak with a lilting whine when addressing one another at close quarters and with a forceful head-tone when taking at a distance”.

Traditional N speech is noted for its highly distinctive and engaging intonation, a characteristic that apparently is in danger of being lost. The Flint recordings provide a valuable record of this aspect of Norfolk speech. Our formal description of N intonation is even more partial and preliminary than that of the segmental phonology. However, the basic problem is the same: separating stylistic and idiosyncratic features of individual voices from the systemic aspects of N prosody. In the case of intonation, the task is complicated due to the lack of a widely accepted descriptive framework. Ingram and Mühlhäusler (2004) adopted what might be called a simplified Pierrehumbert-Beckman (1988) set of descriptive rules aiming to annotate the major pitch and temporal features of the intonation contour.

4.10 Summary and conclusions

When embarking on this chapter, I had expected a more positive and definitive account of the phonetic and phonological properties of P-N. There appear to be three reasons why this has not been possible:

- The factors noted by Algeo (1978: 23) in his analysis of phonotactic studies, i.e. differences in the way data are observed and analysed; differences in variety of language accounted for; differences in the range of lexical items considered (e.g. inclusive of proper names and loanwords or not);
- The fact that neither phonetics nor phonology are self-contained levels of analysis but interact with other levels (e.g. morpho-syntax) and an indeterminably large number of external factors;
- Most importantly, and as Algeo (1978: 206) notes, “The history of linguistics is full of pseudo-questions that can be recognized as such only after efforts have been made to answer them”.

Questions about the number of speech sounds, distinctive speech sounds, possible order of speech sounds and phonological rules regrettably do not have determinate answers. I am reminded of an anecdote told to me many years ago by a British colleague. A university had set up a phonetics laboratory and invited the Vice Chancellor, a scientist, to open the facility. He was invited to record his opening sentence on the spectrograph. His words were “phonetics is a pseudo-science”.

To what extent phonetics and phonology, or indeed phonetology, are useful fictions remains to be ascertained. Given the numerous contradictions and problems I have found with existing accounts of the sound system of P-N, I remain unconvinced of their usefulness, especially when it comes to claims about the applicability of such accounts to developing writing systems.

There are areas deserving further inquiry, among them considering the question of the base of articulation for P-N and the development of a phonetics that takes the syllable rather than the segment as the central unit of investigation. There is also room for integrating the numerous so-called external factors that impact on the way sounds are articulated and understood.

There is no need for “autonomous syntax”, “discourse structure”, “rules” or “constraints” once one takes seriously the proposition that language is a device of communication manipulated by human beings.

(Garcia 1979: 47)

5 Inflectional morphology and syntax

5.1 Introduction

Etymologically, grammar means ‘that which has been written’. The first grammars were highly prescriptive works aimed at teaching Greek to the barbarians. To write a grammar of P and N, both predominantly spoken, not written languages is a difficult task:

- My linguistic colleagues and the speakers of P and N have very different expectations. Linguists expect an account that allows them to extract information about grammatical and typological properties. Some community members want me to document how different Islanders communicate; others want to have a simplified and normalized account suitable for language revival.
- It is easy to write good grammars for bad data. Buffett and Laycock’s (1988) account, for instance, is based on constructed sentences deemed grammatical by a single Norfolk Islander. Using such data is common practice for linguists who base their description on an idiolect. I have opted only to use examples that have been actually uttered or written.
- My own theoretical stance is difficult to reconcile with the expectations of linguists who require a description following Meillet’s famous dictum “où tout se tient”.

The notions of inflectional morphology and syntax presuppose that language is compositional, i.e. that larger constructions can be accounted for by identifying units and the rules for arranging them into larger constructions. The fact that reference is made to larger constructions and that linguists can come up with representations that refer to units and rules does not mean that this is what speakers of a language know and do. The notion of autonomous syntax is problematic. There is a fundamental difference between speech behaviour and representations thereof and whilst there is general acceptance of the metaphor that reifies processes of communicating into an object language, disagreement between different analysts are common.

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There is also the problem of knowing which utterances can be legitimately described as being composed of smaller units. Research in the last decades has shown that a significant proportion of utterances are unanalysed speech formulae (Kuiper 2000). In circumstances of language attrition, there are many semi-speakers whose command of syntactic ‘rules’ is attenuated and who increasingly rely on ready-made expressions. This is the case with P and N, though, of course, even fluent speakers have always used such expressions.

Common speech formulae of P-N include:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Hemmy start.</i> | ‘Let’s go!’ |
| <i>Dars ett.</i> | ‘That’s it.’ |
| <i>Dars dar.</i> | ‘That is that.’ |
| <i>Ent me.</i> | ‘It wasn’t me.’ |
| <i>Dars true thing.</i> | ‘This is true.’ |
| <i>No larnen.</i> | ‘I am not going to tell.’ |
| <i>You nor thort.</i> | ‘You would not have thought.’ |
| <i>See dar way we se cum.</i> | ‘Look at what has become of us.’ |
| <i>Een ar breed.</i> | ‘It is in the genes.’ |
| <i>Morla ell do.</i> | ‘Tomorrow is soon enough.’ |
| <i>Car do fer dog eat.</i> | ‘This food is not fit for a dog.’ |

In sum, grammar is concerned with the structure of constructions. Traditionally, the largest construction has been the sentence, a unit that even violently anti-universalist linguists such as Bloomfield (see his review of Ries, 1931) have regarded as universal. My own view is that whilst sentences are near-universal units of linguistic representation, and whilst it is a reasonably well-defined unit in written versions of standardized languages, what this descriptive unit actually represents is a very different matter. It has been shown, for instance, that intonation contours and syntactically characterized sentences frequently do not coincide (Kreckel 1981).

I shall point to a number of areas of syntax that require attention to cultural prerequisites (e.g. spatial orientation, modality and possession) but such requirements apply to pretty well every area of syntax. In principle, there are no known limits to the number, kind and order of magnitude of factors that account for syntactic constructions and their interpretation. My data are biased towards production rather than perception, but this does not mean that I accept the view that production and perception are symmetrical or that the meaning is “in” the verbal message. To develop this argument further would require a dedicated monograph and a great deal more field research than what I have been able to carry out in the last 20 years. I have thus opted for a more modest but intellectually

less satisfying strategy of describing a number of syntactic phenomena that have featured prominently in typological studies of English-derived contact languages plus others that are particularly salient in P-N.

All examples were taken from my corpus and the translations reflect what they mean in context. P and N have remained unfocussed languages, and it is not possible to isolate a common core of the P-N syntax. The only approach that works is an overall pattern one (Hockett 1958: 331–338). In the absence of records dating further back than 1940, the description is largely synchronic.

Contrary to Laycock's estimate (p.c. letter to Shirley Harrison) that 90% of English and N syntax were shared, closer scrutiny reveals that there are many areas of syntax where P-N and English differ. Whilst English and N share some syntactic properties such as basic SVO word order in declarative sentences, there are also numerous differences. Some are suggestive of simplification, others combine simplification with complication, yet others exhibit substratum and adstratum influence.

There are a number of complexities that make its classification as a straightforward Creole difficult. These include the presence of inflections, the large number of markers of negative embedded sentences, a complex pronoun system as well as the complex grammar of prepositions and conjunctions.

5.2 Previous research

Published syntactic studies of P and N are few and their quality is rather uneven. None of them predates 1970 and no account of the historical development of syntax is available.

A sketch of P syntax was given by Källgård (1989). A comprehensive account of N syntax can be found in Harrison's MA thesis (1972), which served as the primary source for Buffett and Laycock (1988). Zettersten (1981) wrote a rudimentary sketch of N inflectional morphology and syntax. He fails to distinguish between traditional N and the highly anglicized version of his texts, and in several places misanalyses his data. Gleißner's MA (1997) contains a section on syntax, which adds some interesting observations on N tense, aspect and modality but otherwise is very similar to Buffett and Laycock. Eira, Magdalena and Mühlhäusler (2003, unpublished) produced a School Grammar of N, based on a large body of data, and Mühlhäusler and Nash (2012) have outlined the salient syntactic properties of the language. Mühlhäusler has provided syntactic information for two typological projects, WAVE (<https://ewave-atlas.org>) and APICS (<https://apics-online.info>) and has published detailed accounts of N pronominal grammar (Mühlhäusler 2012 and 2014). Cumulatively such accounts

confirm that we are dealing with an independent language and not a simplified or slightly modified form of English.

5.3 Notes on historical syntax

The few early documents that contain text passages recorded on Pitcairn suggest that a rather undeveloped contact English was spoken, though the reliability of these records is questionable. The fact that the core grammar of P and N are shared suggests that the syntax of the language was fully developed by 1860.

There has been much speculation regarding the origins of P-N syntax. Ross and Moverley appeal to Tahitian influence to account for the pronoun system (1964: 161), “lack of distinction between normal parts of speech” (1964: 158) and “meaningless prefixes” (1964: 158) and opine that “Tahitian influence has been sufficient to remove English flexion almost in its entirety” (1964: 160). Harrison (1972: 272–279) considered a wider range of factors. She finds little evidence for pidginization, fourteen structures shared between N and West Indian Creole, ten with dialectal English and nine with Tahitian. She notes that there could be multiple origins for several constructions as “characteristics which are shared in donor languages appear to have most chance of survival in a mixed language” (279). For instance, the omission of *it* in subject position, such as *rainen* ‘it is raining’, is found in West Indian Creoles and Tahitian.

Harrison suggests that the signalling of passives could have been a case of Tahitian influence. This, however, is not likely as a passive *-et* is not found in P and appears to be a recent development in N.

Ross and Moverley (1964: 257) argue that the development of *side* from a locative ‘where’ to the meaning of ‘because’ “probably originates from English besides, beside respectively”. However, independent restructuring is also possible. Note the ambiguity of the following sentences:

I se bun f' sun side I bin in ar sun.

‘I got sunburnt where/because I was in the sun.’

Myse le-eg stil sor side I step orn ar wana.

‘My foot is sore where/because I stepped on a sea urchin.’

Side is unambiguously a causal conjunction in:

I se fatu side I bin work too hard.

‘I am tired because I worked too hard.’

Gleißner's (1997) comparison of N and English-based Creoles leads to no firm conclusions, as an insufficient number of variants were available to her for comparison. There are a number of additional reasons:

- the descriptive frameworks used to represent the syntax of English-based Creoles, dialects and contact languages have been diverse and not readily comparable;
- typically, only a small anecdotal selection of examples is used when making comparisons.

Before firmer answers can be given, it is necessary to consider that

- ready-made St. Kitts Creole was taken to Pitcairn and used for informal communication;
- the Tahitian women probably communicated in Maritime Polynesian Pidgin rather than acrolectal Tahitian;
- a methodology of static comparison cannot explain development;
- the notion of “similarity” lacks rigour and, moreover, may reflect similar practices of representation rather than genuine similarities.

How much more can be said about historical syntax in the future will not depend on applying reconstructive methods to a small and unreliable body of data, but on finding a body of more reliable historical texts.

5.4 Differences between P and N

Essentially, P and N share most of their grammar. There are a number of instances where N appears to have innovations such as the passive construction. The differences in the grammar of spatial orientation reflect the different topology of Pitcairn and Norfolk and the greater complexity of first-person non-singular pronoun grammar the more complex social structures on Norfolk. There are no differences in word classes and their membership.

An examination of P texts yielded a few potential differences:

- OVS word order in P as in *utou we call* ‘we call them *utou* (areal roots)’ (Ross and Moverley 1964: 130), *hinanu we call* ‘we call them *hinanu* (top of pandanus flower)’ (129);
- A greater tendency to omit second person pronouns in imperatives in P;
- There appear to be fewer determiners in P than in N.

5.5 Inflectional morphology

5.5.1 Historical traces of inflection

There are traces of inflection in a few P and N lexemes but these no longer fulfil any grammatical role. Thus, several nouns reflect an English plural form, but are used both as singular and plural, including: *geese*, *ashes*, *grapes*, *crumbs*, *ant(s)*, *beans*, *spark(s)*, *fleas*.

It is noted that some of these forms are also encountered in West Indian Creole English and other contact Englishes. Some verb stems are derived from English past tense forms but can be used in all tenses, e.g.:

| | present | past | future | present | past | future |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| P-N | <i>thort</i> | <i>thort</i> | <i>gwen thort</i> | <i>lors</i> | <i>lors</i> | <i>gwen lors</i> |
| English | think | thought | will think | lose | lost | will lose |

5.5.2 Present-day inflections

Nouns can take a possessive suffix *-s* under conditions discussed in the section on possessive grammar. One occasionally encounters an *-s* plural ending in nouns referring to animates, as in *ijalas* ‘overbearing youngsters’, *gehls* ‘women’ and other nouns in anglicized varieties.

Verbs take the ending *-en*, which indicates that an action continues over a period of time:

Le-eta dem two stil sarwen out Kate.

‘Later on, those two were still teasing Kate.’

She steyaren orn me

‘She was staring at me.’

Dar old cow chewen orn her cud.

‘The old cow was chewing on her cud.’

Two kinds of suffixes are found with adjectives, the first one being markers of stages of comparison. English has two ways of expressing these, depending on the number of syllables. P and N only employ suffixation:

wuss – wussa – wusses

bad – worse – worst

meyameya – meyameyara – meyameyares
withered – more withered – most withered

morga – morgara – morgares
lean – leaner – leanest

The link consonant *-r-* is optionally inserted after adjectives ending in a vowel. A small number of comparatives and superlatives, for example *beta* ‘better’, *baes* ‘best’, are lexicalized.

The suffix *-wan* or *-an* is added to adjectives when used predicatively as in:

P *I sooner walk when I es drunk ‘an.*
‘I rather walk when I am drunk.’

N *Some es quite big un en some es quite small un.*
‘Some are quite big, and some are quite small.’

P *Ha surf can be es big an en sometimes es good one.*
‘Sometimes the sea is rough and sometimes it is smooth.’

Note that adjectives derived from people’s names do not take an affix:

P *Ha weather been es hair fer longtime now.*
‘The weather has been no good for a long time.’

N *Em sullen ess snell.*
‘The people are stingy.’

The number of word classes as well as the membership of a word in a particular class is not an observable given, but depends on the theoretical framework adopted by the analyst, the delicacy of analysis, the preparedness to recognize dustbin categories such as “particles” and the amount of squishiness permitted. I have given the criteria for establishing word classes at roughly the same indelicate level of analysis found in many studies of English-related contact languages, keeping in mind that classification is a pre-theoretical stage in scientific investigation.

As for English and St. Kitts Creole, but unlike Tahitian where words are inherently multicategorical, one can set up distinct word classes for P and N on morphological, syntactic and notional grounds.

5.6 Word classes

5.6.1 Nouns

5.6.1.1 Morphological criteria

In P and N, nouns are not inflected for number, case or gender but take the possessive ending *-s*, as in *berd's ieg* 'bird's egg(s)'.

5.6.1.2 Syntactic criteria

Nouns are the heads of noun phrases and can be preceded by determiners and numerals, as in *wan bred* 'a specific bread', *ar woll* 'the wall', *iet salan* 'eight persons'. Nouns can function as subjects and objects. Nouns can be followed by a collective marker *dem* (for people) and *en dem* (for objects):

Alice dem. 'Alice and her friends, family etc.'

Tayty, yarm, tarla en dem. 'Sweet potatoes, yams, taro and such like.'

The former construction is also encountered in St. Kitts Creole. In equative constructions, nouns are introduced by the copula *ess*.

5.6.1.3 Notional criteria

Nouns typically refer to people, locations, objects and ideas. There are a number of noun classes, each with their own set of grammatical properties:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Abstract nouns | <i>epatutus</i> 'initiative', <i>stolley</i> 'lie'/'tall story' |
| Count nouns | <i>gott</i> 'goat', <i>rahoooloo</i> 'banana stalk' |
| Mass nouns | <i>duruch</i> 'grime', <i>lewo</i> 'left-overs' |
| Proper nouns | <i>Tedside</i> (P place name), <i>Boof</i> , <i>Loppy</i> (N nicknames), <i>ar Meddlegate</i> (N place name) |

5.6.2 Pronouns

The term "pronoun" refers to a number of subclasses, including personal, possessive, interrogative, demonstrative and indefinite pronouns, which differ both in form and grammatical behaviour.

5.6.2.1 Morphological properties

Possessive pronouns are derived from personal ones by the addition of *-s*.

5.6.2.2 Syntactic properties

Personal pronouns can be anaphors for nouns and noun phrases. When used anaphorically, formal distinctions can be merged and pronouns are often deleted.

Pronouns embrace a larger set of forms when used for personal deixis. Typically, these forms only occur at the beginning of a text or in prominent passages.

5.6.2.3 Notional properties

Anaphoric pronouns semantically copy the noun or noun phrase they are placeholders for. Deictic pronouns index solidarity and distance as well as a range of other social relationships. P and N pronouns distinguish gender in the third person singular, inclusive vs. exclusive in the first person non-singular and singular, dual and plural for all persons.

5.6.3 Verbs

5.6.3.1 Morphological criteria

Verbs can take the progressive ending *-en*, *shi grieten dem plan* ‘she is grating those bananas’ and (in N only) the passive ending *-et*.

5.6.3.2 Syntactic criteria

Verbs function as the head of verb phrases. They can be preceded and/or followed by a range of adverbial modifiers. Verbs can take TMA markers. The infinitive is either introduced by *fer* or \emptyset , as in:

good thing fer eat ‘something good to eat’
giwe ett fer dem cattle eat ‘give it to the cattle to eat’

The three main classes of verbs are intransitive, transitive and di-transitive, depending on the number of participants in the event signalled:

- One participant:** *Myse father darnce an sing.* ‘My father dances and sings.’
- Two participants:** *Jude yollo dem plun.* ‘Jude grates those bananas.’
- Three participants:** *Dem gael giw ucklun sum ohren.* ‘The women gave us some oranges.’

A minor verb class expresses becoming, resembling and similar concepts. In English they often require a preposition. In P-N, the noun directly follows the verb, as in:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>tun dorg</i> | ‘turn into a dog’; ‘take a turn for the worse’ |
| <i>smael ge-el</i> | ‘smell like a woman’ |

5.6.3.3 Notional criteria

Verbs tend to refer to actions, experiences and states. There are a number of subcategories depending on the case relationships nouns can have with verbs, e.g. benefactive verbs, stative verbs, or causative verbs.

5.6.4 Adjectives

5.6.4.1 Morphological criteria

Adjectives take endings indicating stages of comparison, *iwi*, *iwia*, *iwies* ‘tiny’, ‘tinier’, ‘tiniest’. Predicative adjectives add the suffix *-un/-wun*.

5.6.4.2 Syntactic criteria

Attributive adjectives precede the noun they modify, like in English and St. Kitts Creole. When used predicatively they simply follow the noun, as in *I gude* ‘I am fine’ or are preceded by an aspect marker such as *se* ‘completion or change of state’, as in *I se gude* ‘I am fine again after an illness’.

Adjectives can be preceded or followed by adverbial modifiers, as in *she how ugly*, ‘she is very cross’.

5.6.4.3 Notional criteria

Adjectives describe the appearance, emotional state, and other characteristics of the noun they modify.

5.6.5 Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives or sentences.

5.6.5.1 Morphological criteria

Adverbs do not take any suffix to indicate their categorial status. Most attributive adjectives of P and N can also function as adverbs as in:

Tork out clear 'speak clearly'
Pears grow goode un orn Norfolk 'Pears grow well on Norfolk'

5.6.5.2 Syntactic criteria

Adverbs of time and place often modify the whole sentence, or a major part of it. They can appear in various positions:

Initial:

Later dem fine had some plun growen 'yu in a row, in one walley, car grow daffy dem worn.
 'Later they found some bananas growing here in a row, in a valley; they couldn't have grown that way by themselves.'

Medial:

How much em ole'sullen ell knoaw, frum em stoane, wi-bout em persimmon tree es, en fine, still des daey, 'mongs all em parpaey, yep huttae!
 How many of those old people could know, from the stones, whereabouts that persimmon tree is, and find it, even today, amongst all those red guava trees, yep.'

Final:

Car smoke yah! 'No Smoking Here!'

Adverbs of degree or manner usually precede the adjective they modify.

I caepsize en myse fatha tulla me I how ama'ula.
 'I fell over and my father said to me I was really clumsy.'

Adverbs modifying verbs are typically found after the verb they modify.

I oony ell walk slow.
 'I can only walk slowly.'

5.6.5.3 Notional criteria

The main types are adverbs of:

| | |
|--------|--|
| time | <i>yestddy</i> 'the previous day'; <i>morla</i> 'tomorrow' |
| place | <i>deya</i> 'there'; <i>hoem</i> 'at home' |
| degree | <i>how</i> 'very'; <i>oony</i> 'only' |

5.6.6 Prepositions

P and N, unlike many pidgins and Creoles, have a rich inventory of prepositions. Most are etymologically related to English but, as Harrison (1972: 136) has

observed: “the semantic distribution within the preposition category is often quite different.” Of note is the absence of common English prepositions such as *at*, *with*, *by*, *of*, *to*, though these are at times encountered in acrolectal varieties. They tend to be replaced by more specific prepositions as in *go orn ar bed* ‘go to bed’.

Some prepositions carry a heavy semantic load, notably *fe* ‘to, for, with, of, about’; *gen* ‘to, against, with, near’; *lornga* ‘with, to, by means of’. Not all English prepositions have a P or N equivalent. For instance, ‘with’ and ‘without’ are often expressed by means of a noun phrase or sentence:

Fred comen nor haet
‘Fred arrived without a hat’

Dem use a play gut a big buckle belt orn, gat orn no shoe
‘They usually play with a big buckled belt on and without shoes’

5.6.6.1 Morphological criteria

Prepositions are never inflected and are subject to loss of stress in connected speech.

5.6.6.2 Syntactic criteria

Prepositions are found at the beginning of a phrase with a nominal head. Locative prepositions are omitted when a location or direction adverb precedes the noun as in *goe out Cooks* ‘go to Cook’s monument’. They are also omitted in time expressions such as *we gwen fer whale nex full moon* ‘at the next full moon we are going whaling’.

It is common to use two direction words together to express complex meaning:

We dress up in ouwas Bounty clorth en meet down orn ar pier.
‘We dress up in our Bounty clothes and meet down on the pier.’

5.6.6.3 Notional criteria

Prepositions come in a number of semantic classes:

| | |
|--------|--|
| Place | <i>een</i> ‘in(side)’, <i>orn ar saen</i> ‘on the beach’ |
| Manner | <i>fer one stone</i> ‘with a stone’ |
| Time | <i>een ar day</i> ‘during the day’ |
| Others | <i>udu</i> ‘to (benefactive)’, <i>gen</i> ‘to’, <i>she torken lornga, ucklun</i> ‘she talked to us’ |

5.6.7 Tags

Tags in P and N discourse have a high token frequency. They are used for emphasis or rhetorical functions such as seeking interlocutors' agreement. N has invariable question tags, including P *hanei*, N *unnaye/unnieh/unnu* and *nort*.

5.6.7.1 Morphological criteria

Tags in P and N are never inflected.

5.6.7.2 Syntactic criteria

Tags can occur at the beginning or end of sentences.

Unnaye he how gude fer see et
 'Don't you think he is good-looking?'

Dar dar way, annieh?
 'This is the way, isn't it?'

5.6.7.3 Notional criteria

Harrison (1972: 145–146) distinguishes between interrogative, emphatic and imperative tags.

- P *hanei* [hʌnei], [hæneɛ] N *unnaye*, *anieh* [aneɛ], [ɛne] derived from Tahitian /anei/ 'is that so?', is used emphatically, as in *nnei we how pepper* 'weren't we excited?'
- P *noot* [noəʔ] N *nort* [nɔt], pronounced with rising intonation, is added to declarative sentences and functions like *hanei*;
- N *wha* [wʌ] sentence-initially with rising intonation signals speakers' incredulity, as in *wha ar horse se de-ed?* 'what, is the horse dead?'

5.6.8 Exclamations and interjections

Interjections are words or short phrases that can stand by themselves, rather than being part of a larger sentence. They are not inflected and cover a wide range of meanings. They typically signal the attitude of a speaker towards

an event or interlocutor. While only a small set has been documented for P, a much larger number is found in N. Pitkern interjections include:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>cack, poo</i> | ‘shit!’ |
| <i>come</i> | ‘come on!’ |
| <i>o scrub, go tiitoi, go wipe</i> | abusive exclamation |
| <i>hoorah</i> | ‘goodbye’ |
| <i>mamu</i> | ‘silence!’ |
| <i>oh-yeah</i> | ‘certainly’ |
| <i>paan</i> | ‘expression of surprise’ (>E <i>upon</i>) |
| <i>tabi</i> | ‘wait!’ |

N interjections include:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>aa</i> | ‘yes, certainly!’ |
| <i>bae</i> | ‘I told you so!’ |
| <i>by Sam</i> | mild oath |
| <i>choochoo</i> | expression of admiration |
| <i>enwaa</i> | ‘of course!’ |
| <i>gaddaret</i> | strong oath, ‘fuck it!’ |
| <i>gajan</i> | ‘heavens!’ |
| <i>good-a-ton</i> | ‘as good as a ton of gold’ |
| <i>hepe</i> | ‘heaven help me!’ |
| <i>hoeyaa</i> | expression of surprise or resignation |
| <i>hoochilala</i> | expression of being pleasantly surprised |
| <i>hooroo</i> | ‘goodbye’ |
| <i>inau</i> | ‘yes, really!’ |
| <i>(h)inkubuss</i> | ‘I think not’ |
| <i>Lord Harry</i> | ‘good God’ |
| <i>man-a-bush</i> | expression of surprise |
| <i>oowa</i> | exclamation of pain |
| <i>pouri</i> | ‘bunkum’ |
| <i>pon myse firewood</i> | ‘upon my soul’ |
| <i>sleps</i> | ‘oops; sorry, I just let off’ |

Only a small number of interjections are shared in the two varieties, including:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| <i>domine</i> | ‘it doesn’t matter’ |
| <i>hettae</i> | ‘voilà’ |
| <i>ii-no</i> | ‘oh no!’ |
| <i>ii-yes</i> | ‘definitely’ |
| <i>tabi</i> | ‘wait!’ |

5.6.9 Other word classes

Conjunctions, complementizers and other closed classes of grammatical words will be dealt with under phrases and sentences.

5.7 Phrase level analysis

5.7.1 Noun Phrase (NP)

These have a noun as their head. A basic NP consists of a noun without any modifiers as in *fowl* ‘chicken(s)’.

Prenominal modifiers can be added, usually in the order determiner or possessive pronoun – number adjective – noun, as in:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>myse two black fowl</i> | ‘my two black hens’ |
| <i>em two black fowl</i> | ‘the two black hens’ |

Postmodifiers include the *fer* possessive and adverbials of place and time, as in:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>P Ar benhorn billy fer Floyd</i> | ‘Floyd’s he-goat with the twisted horns’ |
| <i>N Ar Pine fer Robinson’s</i> | ‘Robinson’s pine’ |
| <i>P Small-Harbour-Down-St. Pauls</i> | ‘an inlet on Pitcairn’ |
| <i>N Ar stick lorngfe dark</i> | ‘the forest in the dark’ |

5.7.2 Noun determiners

Both varieties have a sizable number of determiners belong to subclasses such as demonstratives and quantifiers. Harrison adds “specifiers”, though whether there are any determiners that indicate specific vs. non-specific nouns remains a matter of dispute. There are major discrepancies between the accounts given by previous analysts and this, together with the variability of the language, makes definitive statements difficult.

5.7.2.1 Articles

Descriptions of P suggest a relatively small number of articles. Ross and Moverley (1964: 165) comment:

At first sight the Pitcairnese articles appear to be those of English; definite [ha:] = MnE [ðə] with Pitcairnese change [ð] > [h]; indefinite [a:] = MnE [ə]. But since initial [h] can be

lost or added, the two articles can coincide in form and it may be that, just as Pitcairnese may have only one flexional ending, so also it may in fact only have one article.

Källgård (1989: 34) provides a different account: “Pitcairnese, like English, has both a definite and an indefinite article. The definite article is in the singular and *DEM* (= *HEM/EM*) in the plural. The indefinite article is either omitted, or *ONE*, or – more and more often – Standard English *a*”.

N has a larger number of articles, which have been described in a number of ways. Flint’s Form-Meaning Reference List (n.d.) contains numerous observations about individual articles but no comparative chart of the forms and their functions. Note the overlap between the functions of the articles identified by Flint:

[a:] variant [da:] (n.d.: 11)

‘the emphatic form of the definite article. At times almost equivalent to demonstrative article that’;
 ‘indicates a particular place well known to the listener’ as in [a: ben] ‘this bend in the road you know well’;
 ‘refers to a thing, affair or event particularized by having been recently mentioned or by being generally known’;
 ‘indicates a particular possession of the speaker, or an object specially related to the speaker, in the situation under discussion’;
 ‘indicates an object which is at the centre of interest at the time of speaking’;
 ‘the emphatic form of the definite article’

[də] (n.d.: 89)

‘definite article ‘the’: Flint notes that it could be either a weakened version of [da:] or else borrowed from English ‘the’. The latter hypothesis is rendered problematic by the fact that it often appears where English cannot have a definite article.’

[ə] (n.d.: 17)

‘a bound form appearing to represent in some instances a weak form of the article [a:] the, but also used in many other ways, and of much more frequent occurrence. It is sometimes represented in English by the indefinite article *a*, but sometimes not represented by any separate word.’
 ‘with definite bounded noun equivalent to ‘the’;
 ‘in form [ə:] equivalent to [a:] before definite bounded noun [and] before indefinite bounded noun’;
 ‘with indefinite bounded noun’;
 ‘before indefinite unbounded noun’ as in [ə pig] ‘pork’;
 ‘with indefinite abstract noun (as not in English)’;

‘with bounded noun used as a representative of a class, i.e. generically.’
 ‘used expressions such as [ə fju:] ‘a few’; [kɛtʃ ə flɔ:g] ‘get a flogging’;
 [ə] ‘often corresponds to ‘the’ in constructions such as [in ə sʌn] ‘in the sun’, [ɔn ə flɔ:] ‘on the floor’;
 [ə] at times is found in expressions ‘where there is no form in English’, as in [in ə nait] ‘at night’

[dɛm] or [ɛm] (n.d.: 83) is the emphatic definite article plural
 [wʌn] (n.d.: 61) is the indefinite article *a, an*

Zettersten (1981: 47), who worked with Flint’s data and his own acrolectal recordings, distinguishes only three articles:

| | |
|----------|--|
| der [də] | ‘the’ |
| er [ə] | a kind of article marker of a general noun |
| ah [a:] | emphatic article used like a demonstrative |

His analysis is not borne out by the data he used.

Unlike Flint, who claimed that “Norfolk rarely uses nouns unaccompanied by an article” (n.d.: 17), Harrison states that “it is very common for an article to be omitted in Norfolk where English requires one” (1972: 91). She notes that this is particularly common when a noun is found at the beginning of a sentence or has a generic meaning. She suggests that the absence of the article “has resulted from a reduction of grammatical items that accompanied the development of Pitcairnese” (1972: 72). She notes that it is common for articles to be omitted when a noun is introduced by the copula *ess*. Gleissner (1997: 74–75) hypothesised that the absence of an article indicated that the noun was non-specific. However, she found counterexamples in her own data.

Harrison (1972: 89) further distinguishes:

- [a] – definite article with singular nouns
- [ɛm] – definite article with a singular mass noun, definite article with plural nouns
- [wʌn] – indefinite article
- [də] – definite article with singular and plural nouns
- [ə] – indefinite and definite article with singular and plural nouns

A virtually identical account is found in Buffett and Laycock (1988).

Gleissner (1997: 76), having disconfirmed her initial hypothesis of a clear specific / non-specific distinction, went to the trouble of counting all articles in the sample sentences of Buffett and Laycock (1988) to test which articles are

used most frequently and to what extent these articles overlapped. Her findings are summarized (excluding \emptyset) as follows:

| | FREQUENCY | DEF. SG. | DEF. PL. | INDEF. SG. | INDEF. PL. |
|--------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|
| <i>(d)aa</i> | 32.6% | + | - | - | - |
| <i>a'</i> | 27.8% | + | - | + | + |
| <i>(d)em</i> | 15.5% | - | + | - | - |
| <i>wan</i> | 9.1% | - | - | + | - |

There are many things that need to be considered before this table can tell us anything other than that some forms have several functions and others do not. The unspecified number of tokens was taken from decontextualized sentences constructed by Laycock and approved by Buffett in formal elicitation sessions. No distinction is made between different noun classes such as mass, count or proper nouns, all of which behave differently with regard to articles. None of the discursive strategies that influence the choice of articles has been considered.

Flint, Harrison and Gleißner all put forward suggestions as to the provenance of these articles but none of them considered possible influence from St. Kitts Creole. The glossary appended to Baker and Bruyn's (1998) volume on late-18th and early-19th century St. Kitts Creole texts lists the following:

| | |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| a | 'a', 'an' |
| de | 'the' |
| dem | 'these', 'those' |
| daw | demonstrative 'that' and article |

Once more detailed studies of historical and contemporary articles in St. Kitts become available, they may give better insights into its role in the emergence of determiners in early P.

5.7.2.2 Demonstrative determiners

There is some overlap between articles and demonstratives (from which several are historically derived), but I shall follow conventional practice and list demonstratives separately. Demonstratives in P and N signal:

- Distance from speaker
- Singular or plural

For N, the following have been suggested by Harrison (1972: 92–93):

| | |
|------------|---|
| [a] | singular, distant from speaker, ‘that’ |
| [e] | singular near speaker, ‘this’ |
| [ɛm] [dɛm] | non-singular away from speaker, ‘those’ |
| [i] | non-singular near speaker, ‘these’ |
| [dis] | rare variant of [i] |

Buffett and Laycock (1988: 32–33) distinguish:

| | |
|--|---------|
| <i>ieh, dieh, des</i> [iɛ:, diɛ:, dɛs] | ‘this’ |
| <i>ii, dii, diis</i> [i:, di:, diis] | ‘these’ |
| <i>aa, daa</i> [a:, da:] | ‘that’ |
| <i>em, dem</i> [ɛm, dɛm] | ‘those’ |

They note that *des* is restricted to expressions of time such as *des dieh* ‘today’, but given the very small number of forms, this is a matter for the lexicon. They also note that variants with [d] are used when demonstratives stand alone. Compare:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Ieh keht moelten.</i> | ‘This cat is shedding.’ |
| <i>Huu’s fech dii?</i> | ‘Who brought these?’ |

5.7.2.3 Quantifiers

No analysis of P quantifiers is available and the body of data available does not warrant firm conclusions. Information for N is more comprehensive:

- Definite quantifiers (numbers) which are used as in English, except for expressions where English employs ‘pair’. Here N has *one trousers* or employs the indefinite plural article as in *em trousers*.
- Numbers can be followed by a collectivity marker *-dem* or by common nouns and noun phrases as in:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>twelve dem in faemle</i> | ‘there are twelve of them in the family’ |
| <i>three his friend</i> | ‘three of his friends’ |

- Indefinite quantifiers are invariant for singular and plural and positive and negative constructions. They include:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>some</i> | ‘some’, ‘any’ |
| <i>much</i> | ‘much’, ‘many’ |
| <i>plenty</i> | ‘much’, ‘many’ |
| <i>all</i> | ‘all’ |
| <i>a</i> [ə][ɛ] | ‘some’, ‘any’ |

Examples of noun phrases with quantifiers are:

| | |
|---|---|
| P | [plɛnte huʔʌ] ‘a lot of thatching material’, |
| P | [jus ə kük ə pɔtʌ] ‘habitually cook some taro tops’ |
| N | [tɛk ɛ brɛd] ‘have some bread’ |
| N | dar much sullun ‘so many people’ |

5.7.3 Possessives

5.7.3.1 Overview

Both the grammar of pronominal possessives and that of nominal ones feature many complexities:

- the large inventory of forms, distinguishing gender and number;
- distinct forms for attributive (*good person*) and predicative (*the person is good*) possessive pronouns;
- exceptions to the system;
- cultural factors that affect the choice of possessives.

The various ways of expressing nominal possession can best be illustrated with place names from Pitcairn and Norfolk:

- N possessor N possessed juxtaposed as in: *Philip Coco-nuts, Little George Coconut, Little George Road*. This pidgin-type construction is common in early place names;
- The English-type construction (possessor + -s possessed): This is found in the variant *Philip’s Coco-nut, Matt’s Valley, Jim’s Ground, Fat’s House* and numerous other place names on Pitcairn as well as in many Norfolk place names, including *Coyne’s Cove, Puppy’s Point, Fredrick’s Age* and *Jacob’s Rock*;

- N possessed *fer* N possessor

This construction exhibits a St. Kitts type of grammar but in the case of place names, unlike common nouns, combines it with the English -s construction and is found both on Pitcairn (rarely) and on Norfolk (frequently). Examples include *Hole fer Eddies* and *Hole fer Matts* (two fishing places offshore from Pitcairn Island), *Stone fer George and Isaacs*, *Ar Pine fer Robinsons*, *Dar Side fer Beras* and *Dar Stone fer Lindseys*.

5.7.3.2 Possession in Pitkern

Very little has been written about P possessives. Ross and Moverley (1964: 161) comment that “the genitive is normally expressed by ‘for’” and that “this is a Tahitian calque”. Källgård (1981: 22) echoes this: “The -s ending to form the genitive is sometimes used and sometimes not; when used it is almost always preceded by the function word *fer*, which is the most usual means to express the genitive and which has its functional roots in Tahitian”. Neither of them was aware of the common use of a *fer/fi/for* periphrastic possessive in St. Kitts and other West Indian Creole Englishes.

5.7.3.3 Possessives in N

Whereas English signals possession either by means of a possessive -s added to a noun signifying possessor or by means of the preposition ‘of’, N employs the three above mentioned constructions:

- Noun + Noun juxtaposed is an old and rare construction except when it relates to a communal ownership such as *Taro Ground* ‘the swampy area of Kingston’;
- Noun +-s
- Noun *fer* Noun (+-s).

In English possession is signalled by means of -s for human/animate nouns as in *dad’s chair* or *dog’s breakfast* and by means of ‘of’ for most other nouns: *a sign of the times*, *a branch of a tree*. In N, all classes of nouns can have the possessive marker -s, as in *pine’s lem* ‘branch of a pine tree’, *chair’s lege* ‘leg of a chair’, *dad’s shimmy* ‘dad’s vest’.

5.7.3.4 Previous studies

For N, there are three detailed accounts of nominal possession. The first one is that by Harrison (1972), who labels this construction as “genitive”. Unlike Ross and Moverley and Källgård, she does not consider the *fer* construction to be a

Tahitian calque but lists it under the label structurally similar with Jamaican Creole and Hawaiian English (Harrison 1972: 273). As she dismisses “interlingual influence between Norfolk and other pidginized languages”, she regards the communalities as a sign of prior pidginization. In her synchronic description, Harrison (1972: 79) notes that “prepositions placed before the noun or pronoun are the usual method of expressing a genitive relationship”. She also notes that a double genitive combining *fer* and *s* is more common than a single *fer* genitive construction (1972: 79, 200). Buffett and Laycock (1988: 48) assert that *-s* is the usual way of signalling possession with nouns but that a construction employing the preposition *f* ‘of’ is possible and add, ignoring examples of constructions without it in Harrison: “Note that in such constructions the possessive marker *-s* still appears on the noun” (1988: 48). Gleißner’s account (1997) is based on Buffett and Laycock (1988). The examples therein are largely constructed and, according to Harrison (in letters to Alice Buffett) are not always acceptable in N.

The fact that 21 out of 26 examples illustrating possession use the *-s* genitive leads Gleißner to conclude that this is the most frequently employed construction. She notes that there is also a partitive construction as in *piece a cake* paralleling the Standard English construction. She does not mention a more common partitive construction:

I gut noen em memories. ‘I have none of these memories.’

As regards the provenance of the *fer* construction, Gleißner dismisses calquing of Tahitian. As her sources for West Indian Creole do not list an earlier and now rare *fer* genitive, she suggests English dialect influence. Like all other analysts, she does not address the question of structural or semantic factors involved in choosing one or the other construction.

5.7.3.5 Cultural and semantic aspects of possessives

Grammatical choice is usually a reflection of semantic differences. The choice between *-s* and *fer* in N is a matter of considerable complexity but, generally speaking, has to do with the Norfolk Islanders’ concepts of ownership and control. It is reminiscent of the Polynesian choice between ‘a’ and ‘o’ possession (Clark 2000) but not identical. The most general statement that can be made is that it is sensitive to the perceived or real control the possessor has over the relationship with what he or she possesses. There is little one can do about the relationship with one’s parents/ancestors, but one can control the relationship with one’s material possessions, dispose of them or bequeath them.

Generally speaking, the *-s* is chosen when the relationship is beyond the owner’s control, the *fer* construction, where there is control. The semantics of

possession (particularly, but not exclusively, in traditional Broad N) are closely linked to cultural concepts of ownership, mutual obligations and custodianship. The grammar is highly complex, but some examples will help bring out how relationship between possessor and possessed is expressed. Thus, one can contrast:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>daa side fe ucklun</i> | our place, name of the Youth Centre |
| <i>thaenks fer ucklun</i> | our thanks |
| <i>Pine fer Robinsons</i> | a landmark tree associated with the Robinson family |

with:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Ouwas side</i> | ‘Our family home’ |
| <i>Don’s tintoela</i> | ‘Don’s darling’ |
| <i>Gregs side</i> | ‘Greg’s home’ |
| <i>Uckluns Norf’k</i> | ‘Our Norf’k language’ |

Rachel Nebauer (p. c., October 2014) adds that:

I think there are differences in degree of ownership and also a higher degree of spatial delineation. *Stegside* is much more prolific than *daa side f’ Stegs*. There is an absoluteness about the use of *side* and knowledge of ownership is widely known and incontestable. The use of *side* generally comes with a very long period of ownership, and behind are mostly generations of ownership. These places are often owned by very proud island families of Pitcairn descent where family, family land, history and heritage are very important aspects of identity. These places are more likely to be passed on in the typical island tradition than they are to be sold.

The *fer* possession marker is also used as a distancing device in both time and topological and personal space. The appropriate choice presupposes knowledge of genealogy, history and people’s personalities.

- When owners have passed on, the property is most likely to be referred to with *side fer*. Thus, the house called ‘Orsom’ is *dar side fer Nellie and Chuck’s* and *Pully’s side*, after his death, is called *side fer Pully’s*;
- Intimate knowledge about ownership of land is found mainly among members of particular residential areas such as *Rocky Point Sullun* ‘those who live at Rocky Point’, *Anson Bay Sullen* ‘people from Anson Bay’ and *Cascade Sullen* ‘those who live at Cascade’. They are more likely to refer to a property in their area with the *-s* construction, whereas Islanders from more distant areas prefer the *fer* construction;
- Property belonging to a related Islander is generally referred to with the *-s* construction, property belonging to a distant relative or a non-Pitcairner’s wife is usually referred to with the *fer* construction.

5.7.4 Expressing relationship between family members

Formally, the relationship between some family members can be expressed by juxtaposing two proper nouns or by means of an apposition *dar fer* ‘the one belonging to’. The earliest example from Pitcairn Island is *Jane Tunoo*, Jane Agnes Nobbs (b. 1836), wife of John *Tunoo* Quintal (b. 1841).

There are a number of subclasses for juxtaposition:

- A woman’s Christian name is followed by her husband’s Christian name or nickname as in:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Suse Dave</i> | Susan, Dave’s wife |
| <i>Eda Beva</i> | Eda, Beva’s (nickname) wife |

- Less frequently, men are named after the women:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Charlie Con</i> | Charlie, Con’s husband |
| <i>Eddy Eda</i> | Eddy, Eda’s husband |

- Unmarried women and men have their father’s Christian name or nickname attached to theirs. Marrington (1981: 30) refers to the ‘Scottish custom of a son taking his father’s Christian name after his own.’ Examples are:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Girlie Reuben</i> | Girlie, Reuben’s daughter |
| <i>Helen Lindsay</i> | Helen, Lindsay’s daughter |
| <i>Edith Gus</i> | Edith, the daughter of Gustave |
| <i>Doc Johnson</i> | Johnson Nobbs’ son Doc |
| <i>Harry Cornish</i> | Cornish Quintal’s son Harry |

To understand the full cultural significance of the name of one of Norfolk Island’s best-known writers, *Ena Ette Christian*, one needs to know that:

- girls can add their father’s name or nickname;
- *Ette* was Ena’s father’s nickname;
- the nickname *Ette*¹ is only found in the Christian family.

¹ The fact that *Ette* is homophonous with the unmarked object anaphoric pronoun *-et* (‘me, you, her, him, it, us, you, the’) has given rise to new nicknames for members of the Christian family: *Wantet*, *Gutet*, *Sellet*.

The *dar fer N's* construction is used to refer to either a less lasting relationship or when distinguishing persons with the same name as in:

Jean dar fer Tom's Tom's girlfriend Jean
Jean dar fer Nashs Nash Mitchell's wife Jean (as distinct from other women called Jean)

5.7.5 Verb phrase

5.7.5.1 General remarks

A verb phrase is a construction with one or more main verbs as its head. Genuine examples of verb serialization are very rare. The main verb can be expanded by a number of optional pre- and post-modifiers, signalling, among other things, tense, mood and aspect. These are typically omitted when adverbials of time or manner are present. Compare:

Some a dem eyullah screppers bin go down Barney Duffy's rummah
 'Some of those overbearing youngsters go/went to Barney Duffy's place to look for periwinkles'

Some a dem eyullah screppers go down Barney Duffy's rummah dar tether night
 'some of those overbearing youngsters go/went to Barney Duffy's place to look for periwinkles the other night'

5.7.5.2 Historical notes

Tense, modality and aspect (TMA) markers have been a diagnostic feature of Creole languages ever since Bickerton (1981: 58) postulated his hypothesis of a biological blueprint for human language. Formally, prototypical Creoles express TMA by preverbal free morphemes. The semantic properties of TMA marking in P and N are complex and in many ways, very different from English. The problem is: What accounts for these differences?

Unexpectedly, there have been a range of different views, including that of a carry-over of St. Kitts grammar, substratum influence, English dialects and spontaneous creolization. To deal with all of these in a satisfactory manner would require a book in itself and I cannot offer more than a number of observations:

- We lack historical texts.
- The descriptions for contemporary P (Källgård 1991) suggest a very impoverished TMA grammar. This either reflects language attrition or that no complex system was in place before the 1860s.

- The accounts for N suggest a highly developed but quite variable use of TMA markers.
- A number of observations of St. Kitts Creole TMA can be found in Baker and Bruyn (1998), in particular a chapter by Bickerton (1998) on past versus anterior, which exhibits considerable ingenuity in getting rid of problematic counterevidence against his bioprogram hypothesis.
- Gleißner (1997: 66) has compared the TMA grammar of N with a number of English-related Pidgins and Creoles and concluded: “as regards, for instance, a distinction between progressive and habitual aspects, their position in the sentence as well as their lexical form NOR does not seem to show a striking resemblance to any particular language that it is compared to, either of the Atlantic nor the Pacific area.”
- Ross and Moverley (1964: 161–162) suggest English dialect origin for *yuus* ‘habitual’, *bin* ‘past’, and *gwen* ‘future’. They provide English dialect origin for [dʌnə] ‘don’t’ but make no mention that this form can also signal completion. Källgård (1991: 78) also has an entry *dane* ‘don’t’ and again no mention that it could be a TMA marker in P. This suggests that the N completion marker *dunna* is a development that occurred after the split of the two varieties. Ross and Moverley (1964: 62) suggest that the completion/change of state marker *se* derived from English dialects but is also influenced by Tahitian.
- Flint’s (n.d.) glosses for TMA markers are very rudimentary and give no information about their grammatical properties.
- Harrison (1972: 261) suggests that *se* is calqued on a Tahitian particle, and provided some plausible arguments for this. She further argues (1972: 282) that *dunna* “in spite of English and English dialect connections” is calqued on a Tahitian construction, a suggestion that a time-less comparison does not exclude but which historical evidence does not support.

Let us now consider TMA in contemporary P and N.

5.7.5.3 Tense

In P-N tense is optional and often implied by context:

Dem ell come ‘they are, were, will be able to come’

Tense can be expressed optionally by means of *bin* ‘past’ or *gwen, gwenna* ‘future’, as in:

Dem bin put et inna box.

‘They put it in a box.’

Dem gwenna climb dem tree

‘They are going to climb the trees.’

Tense is usually marked for the first verb of a discourse and subsequent verbs only receive a marker when the time frame changes, as in:

We go down Henny’s Lake, bin use a gut one tin canoe down der we get in dar canoe and Douglas Edward tip ucklun up and dem dress shrink way up past our thigh, we ketch ett when we go home.

‘We went down to Henny’s Lake, down where we used to have a tin canoe, and we got in that canoe and Douglas Edward tipped us up and those dresses shrank way up past our thighs, we were scolded when we got home.’

Tense in many contact varieties of English is usually not highly developed and instead, a distinction between punctual and non-punctual and anterior and non-anterior is encountered. The conventional grammars of N postulate a tense system, but on closer inspection, there may be grounds for postulating a Creole system instead. Gleißner (n.d.: 61–62) notes that:

Tense in Norfolk is apparently not seen with respect to the moment of utterance, but in relation to the time of the main event that is talked about. In order to express that an event took place prior or later with respect to the time frame – or will take place in the future, if the time frame refers to the moment of speaking, particles are made use of. Like all verbal markers of Norfolk tense markers precede the verb.

In any event, the indication of tense in N is optional. Past tense is indicated either by a particle *se* (from English ‘has’), as in *hi se kam* ‘he has come’. A second marker of past tense is *bin*, which typically refers to past continuous (non-punctual) actions, as in *hi bin aut iin a boet* ‘he has been out in a boat’.

5.7.5.4 Modality

Modality refers to a speaker’s attitude towards the world. A range of devices can be used to express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability.

P modality remains poorly documented. Modality in N is expressed in various parts of grammar and the choice of the language itself can indicate modality. Traditionally, modality is described as being expressed “by preverbal modal

auxiliaries *orta*, *mas* ‘must’ or adverbials *baeta* ‘obligation’ or *soona* ‘rather’” (Buffett and Laycock 1988: 51).

Degrees of certainty or possibility are expressed by *ell* ‘can, may, likely’, *muss* ‘must’, *car* ‘unlikely, cannot’, *might be* ‘may’ and *have’a* ‘must, has to’. Examples are:

Possibility

De oonie kin’a plun ell yolla real gude fe mek a mudda.

‘The only kind of banana that you can grate really well to make banana dumplings.’

Ell pay fer plant a beans.

‘It pays to plant beans’

Ell is also used in counterfactual constructions such as:

Pors tal hi el law wan big ai f’ iit.

‘Pors said he would love a big-eye to eat.’

A lesser degree of certainty is expressed by *might be* or *muss be* as in:

Dem might be se gone feshen.

‘They may have gone fishing.’

Mus be he se hutt.

‘He must have hurt himself.’

Impossibility

Car shows that what you are talking about *cannot* happen, because someone is unable to do it, or because it is forbidden:

Car do batter den yorlye!

‘I can’t do better than you all!’

Car smoke yah!

‘No smoking here!’

Obligation/necessity

Muss and *orta* shows that something has to happen:

You orta goo-a down-ar-Town

‘You have to go to Kingston’

5.7.5.5 Aspect

The suffix *-en* or *-in*, signalling continuous action, is by far the most common device.

All dem Real Estate maeken dem's pretty penny.
 'The real estate businesses are making a lot of money'

Yu tuhituhien.
 'You are swearing.'

A second way of marking continuous action is the auxiliary *yuus* (*a*), *use-er*. The auxiliaries signal habitual actions in past or present.

I use a' tek a' dena d'werk.
 'I (usually) take my lunch to work.'

What-time em pear use-er ripe?
 'When do those pears usually ripen?'

Ell 'able, can' is also used in this function.

Dem sullun ell doo daa goode fe sullun
 'they all are continually doing good things for people.'

Completed actions are expressed by a preverbal marker *dunna*, *se*, or *se dunna*.

when I (se) dunna werk I hurry home
 'when I had finished work I hurried home'

When plun se ripe.
 'When the bananas are ripe.'

TMA markers can be combined in the same verb phrase to express more complex concepts, usually in the order tense, modality and aspect. Examples of such sentences are:

Dars side Bob en dem bin use a have a go drive ar cow frum.
 'This is the place from where Bob and his lot used to have to drive the cows.'

I orter be bin go down earlier.
 'I should have gone down earlier.'

5.7.6 Phrasal Verbs

P and N like English have a large number of distinctive phrasal verbs. The two varieties often employ phrasal verbs such as *serve out* ‘to serve’, *fry up* ‘to fry’, a phenomenon also encountered in St. Kitts Creole (see appendix). Källgård (1991: 37) has noted this similarity and, in particular, that the separation of verb and particle is optional in P, as in:

He take away it all
‘He took it all away’

In N, with pronoun subjects, the particle typically follows the pronoun:

Ai gwen teck yu out.
‘I’m going to take you out.’

With short noun phrases, it can occur directly after the verb, or after the object NP (Buffett and Laycock 1988: 68), as in:

Putt orn one cardigan.
‘Put on a cardigan.’

I moosa buss up.
‘I nearly got smashed up.’

So Mummy tell well eat away, I gwen a mama up some o’ this for myse little baby.
‘So Mummy said, ‘Well eat up, I’m going to chew up some of this for my little baby.’

Dem gwenner bang out sure as gun.
‘they will fall out (of the tree) sure as a gun.’

With longer NP objects, the particle directly follows the verb:

Tek aut orl dem puu plan.
‘Take out all the green bananas.’

5.7.7 The passive

Both P and N, unlike most English-based Creoles, have a passive construction. Källgård (1991: 40) notes that ‘passive constructions are not common, but they

do exist in Pitcairnese'. He provides just one example and I have not found others in the texts available to me:

He se get kill 'he was killed'

Passive in N is expressed either by using the unmarked verb form, or by adding *-et* to the verb stem. Unlike in English, the agent cannot be expressed by means of a prepositional phrase.

Dem hymns bin usa sing.
'The hymns used to be sung.'

Semes a foul bin chop off ar head.
'Like a hen whose head has been chopped off.'

Norf 'k se tork-et orn Norf'k Ailen.
'N is spoken on Norfolk Island.'

You gut one em oel photos teket orl ucklun een?
'Have you got one of those old photos that was taken with all of us in it?'

A rare variant of the *-et* ending is *-em*:

Dieh lolly get em frum Sydney
'The lollies that can be got from Sydney.'

5.8 Grammar of space

5.8.1 General remarks

A comparison between P, N and English shows major differences in the way that people talk about and conceptualise topographical space. This can be illustrated with the responses to questions about location.

E Where are you (pl.) going? We are going to Kingston, to Anson Bay, to the Airport, to Pitcairn Island, to Aunt Em's place.
N *Bout yorlye gwen? Hemi gwen doun ar Toun, out Anson, roun ar droem, up Pitcairn, up Aunt Em.*

E Where do you live? In Middlegate, in Duncombe Bay.
N *Bout you lew? Up ar Meddlegate, out Duncombe.*

E What do you call this place: Kingston, Cook's Monument?
N *What name des side? Doun ar Toun, Out Cooks.*

Where English employs generic locational and directional prepositions or markers such as *in* and *to*, with an option for further specification such as ‘I am going up (or: down to) Middlegate’. The choice of these specifiers is determined by the relative location of the speaker vis-à-vis the location talked about. P and N, by contrast, employ obligatory prepositions or markers that specify the location vis-à-vis fixed reference points.

5.8.2 Origins

The spatial orientation grammar of P and N combines an absolute and relative orientation system, which appears to have stabilized within a relatively short time, as P place-names such as *Up-the-Image* ‘place where Fletcher Christian’s scarecrow stood’ or *Down-Dorcas-coco-nut* ‘Dorcas Young’s (b. 1832) coconut grove’ suggest. The principal languages involved in the formation of P were English, St Kitts Creole, and Tahitian. An absolute system of spatial deixis has only been documented for Tahitian. However, it seems plausible that the sailors of the *Bounty*, in order to find their way across the oceans, also had to talk in terms of absolute (celestial) orientation points. I have not been able to obtain reliable information about the grammar of spatial orientation in maritime English.

Little is known about the grammar of spatial deixis in St. Kitts Creole. Spatial deixis has not been a topic in Creole studies and typological information is unavailable. An examination of texts of early St. Kitts Creole (Baker and Bruyn 1998) suggests that its orientation system is very much like that of English.

For Tahitian we find two axes connecting four reference points:

inia ‘up’
iraro ‘down’
raro ‘west’
ni’a ‘east’

Both P and N share the up-down axis but there are a number of differences, suggesting adaptation to local conditions rather than substratum influences.

5.8.3 The Pitkern system

Pitcairn Island rises 330 metres above sea level. The only settlement is Adamstown, located at 200 metres on the central north coast. The Pitcairn topography was unfamiliar to the mutineers and their entourage and one of the requirements P had to

meet was that of enabling orientation in the new topographical space. Unlike in Polynesian languages, the principal reference point of the absolute spatial orientation system is an inland location Adamstown (*in taun*). Movement towards Adamstown is expressed by means of the preposition *in* as in *we gwen back in taun* ‘we’re going back into town’ (e.g. from *Timiti’s Crack* on the coast). Going from Adamstown to places higher up requires the preposition *up*:

Up a Goat House

Up a Hollow

Places on the coast require *down*:

Down the God

Down Freddie Fall

Out is less frequently used, probably because of the small size of the island. An example is *Out Glenny*, ‘Glenny’s Harbour’, which is further away from Adamstown than the landing in Bounty Bay. The use of prepositions is compulsory in talking about movement and location and lexicalized as part of some place names:

Down Jack Cack on ha Rock

Down Side Lin-Fall

Up Side Nunk Fall

Up the Pit

Out Where Maria Fall

P spatial grammar also extends to fishing grounds such as *Out Bear* and *Out-the-smell-fafaia*. Travel between Pitcairn and Norfolk is talked about in terms of *Up Dubbon* ‘to Pitcairn Island’ and *Down Norfolk* ‘to Norfolk Island’.

5.8.4 The N system

P together with its spatial reference system was transplanted to Norfolk Island in 1856. While Pitcairn social structures remained largely unchanged on Norfolk, space was significantly different and the grammar of spatial orientation had to be adapted to the new circumstances, which precluded the direct carryover of the P system. Norfolk Island had at least two major settlements from the first two convict periods, Kingston and Cascade, and the subsequent emergence of two other more recent settlements in Middlegate and Burnt Pine

has meant that N has had to develop a much broader range of uses of spatial description. It manifests itself at three levels:

- Discourses about locations and directions on Norfolk Island;
- Discourses about the nearby islets and fishing grounds;
- Discourses about the relationship of Norfolk Island to the rest of the world.

For the first phase of their settlement, the Pitcairn Islanders congregated in the area that became known to them as *Doun-ar-Town*, i.e. Kingston, and rarely ventured outside. They eventually ventured either towards the mountainous interior (*up*), more distant coastal locations (*out*), or across water courses (*cross*).

Location and movement are talked about in terms of two axes, ‘down/up’ and ‘out/away from the absolute reference point’. This principal reference point is the administrative capital, Kingston: *Doun ar Toun*. The end point of the ‘down/up’ axis is *up Mt. Bates*. The other axis, *out*, denotes remoteness from Kingston (*out yenna* ‘out yonder’, *out Duncombe Bay* ‘to or at Duncombe Bay’, *out Anson* ‘to or at Anson Bay’, *out ar windmill* ‘to or at the windmill just outside Kingston’). The use of *up down* and *out* is compulsory. The preposition *te* ‘to’ is only found when there is no reference to a specific location, such as when enquiring *Youse little sullun gwen te school?* ‘Are your children going to school?’

The principal markers of location are *doun*, *out*, *up*, *cross* and *roun*. Many place names virtually never appear without a spatial determiner:

| N | English |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Out ar Station</i> | The Cable Station |
| <i>Out ar Mission</i> | The Melanesian Mission |
| <i>Out ar Windmill</i> | The Windmill |
| <i>Down a Town</i> | Kingston |
| <i>Round Country</i> | The area around the airport |
| <i>Up in ar stick</i> | The mountainous wooded area |
| <i>Cross ar Water</i> | Across the water (place near Cascade) |
| <i>Up BPs</i> | Middlegate where the old Burns Philps store was located |

Location of houses and their subsequent names are often introduced by the use of a topographical descriptor, e.g. *up Chats*, *down Hookys*.

Although there seems to be a great deal of agreement among speakers of N regarding the use of fixed lexicalized prepositions, some variation does occur

in preposition usage depending on speakers' age and which part of the island they grew up in. The table below outlines location descriptors not lexicalized into place names per se.

| N | English |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Out Steels Point</i> | Out at Steels Point |
| <i>Out Bucks Point</i> | Out at Bucks Point |
| <i>Out Duncombe</i> | Out at Duncombe Bay |
| <i>Out Headstone</i> | Out at Headstone |
| <i>Out Hundred Acres</i> | Out at the Old Hundred Acres reserve |
| <i>Out Dixies</i> | Out at Dixie Paddock |
| <i>Down Bumboras</i> | Down at Bumboras |
| <i>Up Town</i> | In Burnt Pine |
| <i>Out Cooks</i> | At Captain Cook's Monument |
| <i>Roun(d) ar airport</i> | Around the airport |
| <i>Down Cascade</i> | At Cascade |

The general preference when talking about movement is to employ the same prepositions as for location. The questions 'where are you' and 'where are you going' are both answered alike, for instance *up ar school* 'to the school' or 'at the school', *up ar stick* 'to the mountain forest' or 'in the mountain forest', *up (or een) Bun Pine* 'to Burnt Pine' or 'in Burnt Pine', and so on. More details can be found in Nash (2011).

The spatial grammar of N serves as a memory of the past as well. An event that interfered with the direction of established routes was the building of a military airport during World War II (1942), which led to the development of the toponym *Round Country* 'agricultural area around the airport' and the expressions *round ar plane* and *roun ar droem* 'to the airport', 'aerodrome'.

The internalized map that Norfolk Islanders use when talking about location and direction on Norfolk Island extends to the surrounding Ocean where Norfolk Islanders traditionally fish. Thus, commenting on the two Norfolk Island fishing ground names *Up the Northwest* and *Down to the East*.

Travel from the main island to nearby islets and fishing spots is usually signalled by means of the preposition *kros*. This is also used for travel on Norfolk, which involves crossing a water course. Names of fishing spots, qua location, on

both Pitcairn and Norfolk, do not appear with a lexicalized preposition, with the exception of three N *Up the Northwest*, *Down to the East* and *Out on ar Milky Tree*.

There is some variation in this system:

Glen en dem gwen out Philip Islan'

'Glen and his mates are going (out) to Phillip Island'

I tek you two roun Philip Islan'

'I'll take you two round (to) Phillip Island'

I goe cross Philip Islan'

'I'm going to Phillip Island'

When Norfolk Islanders talk about their island in relation to the rest of the world, they use a compulsory but at times variable system. They use *down* or *down Norfolk* to refer to being on or travelling to their island:

Fech em jet down ya. Mor comfetable fer touris comen down, anei.

'Get jet planes (down) to Norfolk Island. That's more comfortable for the tourists that come to Norfolk Island, isn't it?'

You down Norfolk dar time dar big flood come?

'Were you (down) on Norfolk when the big flood came?'

Pitcairn Island is always *up*, both literally and metaphorically. Travel from Norfolk Island to destinations overseas also employs *up* for travel to New Zealand and *kros* (cross) for travel to Australia. *Down* can be used for travel to New Caledonia.

5.9 Pronouns and pronoun grammar

5.9.1 General remarks

Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) have advanced a number of arguments in favour of the view that pronouns are primarily instruments for managing a social ecology and only secondarily for signalling grammatical relations. Thus:

- Pronouns are used primarily as social indices, i.e. devices for carving up people space.
- Indexically used pronouns are not only situation-dependent but also situation-creating, as when they are used to create social distance.

P and N differ from Standard European languages in a number of significant ways:

- They are used by a very small speech community. Everybody knows everybody else on Pitcairn and, until World War 2, on Norfolk Island.
- Identity is defined by bloodlines rather than residence or place of birth.
- P and N are esoteric languages.

The large number of pronouns reflect the complexity of both intra-group and inter-group relations, in particular the tension between individual group members and the need to be united as a group to assert one's identity vis-à-vis non-Islanders.

5.9.2 History and previous research

The earliest description of P pronouns is found in Ross and Moverley (1964: 163). Here it is suggested that the P system of personal pronouns is calqued from Tahitian. Ross and Moverley (1964: 163–164) did not propose a complete paradigm of pronoun forms and their account mixes speculation about etymology, comments on form and observations about pronominal use. What can be reconstructed from this information is the following summary of Ross and Moverley's (1964) account of P “subject” and “object” personal pronouns:

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|----------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|
| singular | <i>l – me</i> | <i>you – you</i> | <i>it – it</i> |
| dual | <i>hami:</i> | | |
| plural | <i>aklan</i> | <i>yolye-yolye</i> | <i>them-them</i> |

The only other description for P was made by Källgård (1989). He does not summarize his account, but the following table for personal subject pronouns can be constructed from his observations:

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|----------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| singular | <i>l</i> | <i>you</i> | <i>it</i> |
| dual | <i>hami</i> | | |
| plural | <i>aklen</i> | <i>yoli</i> | <i>dem</i> |

Källgård (1989: 38) suggests that *hami* is a calque from Tahitian and that *dem* is of West-Indian origin. What distinguishes both descriptions for P from those of N is their much smaller inventory of forms.

Harrison (1972: 280) suggests that the pronoun system of N is essentially Tahitian. This, with some reservations, is also suggested by Gleißner (1997: 71–72). The reasons given are that P distinguishes singular, dual and plural pronouns as well as inclusive and exclusive first person non-singular. The putative absence of a neuter subject singular pronoun is seen by her as further evidence of calquing. She does not consider that the presence of number distinctions in non-singular second person pronouns is widely found in English dialects and St. Kitts Creole.

There have been a number of statements about the likely origin of individual P and N pronouns. With regard to *himii*, *hummy*, *hemi*, the dual pronoun inclusive, there is agreement that its form is derived from the English ‘thou’ and ‘me’ (P/N h < E) and that its function is shared with Tahitian.

Ross and Moverley (1964: 164) call *ucklen*, *aklan* ‘quite the most mysterious word in Pitcairnesse’. They suggest (165) that it derives from ‘little ones’ and that, like Tahitian *ta’ata ri’a* ‘little people’, *aklan* can be used to mean ‘the general run of people’, which, over time, came to mean ‘we in general’. I would like to note that P *orkel* as in *orkel sullen* ‘little people’ is phonetically more similar to *ucklan* than N *lekel* ‘little’. I also note that the Tahitian phrase refers to ‘people from a lower class’ rather than to ‘children’.

A very different etymology, the word ‘island’, is suggested in Holland’s brief wordlist of 1954, where he contrasts *uckland* ‘people island’ and *sullen* ‘people English’. Harrison (1972: 87) favours ‘little ones’ as the origin but suggests another possible source – *orlar salan* ‘all people, everybody’ – and she notes “both developments come from phrases meaning literally all the children, presumably to be connected with the time when children made up most of the population”.

Yet another suggestion was first made by Flint in his transcript of dialogue 2 (around 1960):

an’ hotyey dem dere te greet uchlen

‘there they were to greet us’ (is this a development of ‘our clan’?)

This suggestion was also made by Klingel (1999), apparently independently. He is of the view that this word was invented by and referred to children, and he hypothesizes that it was spread by McCoy’s adoptive daughter Sally/Sully, the first-born child on Pitcairn, whose role as a linguistic socializer may have been important.

Whatever is the true origin of *uکلun*, it is interesting to note that the meaning of ‘children’ is preserved in several of its uses. Thus, in Ena Ette’s collection of poems (1986: 2) we find the passage:

*She nawa maeke wi do no chore en let wi slide ‘roun en huge floor,
She nawa maeke wi wash a’ feet, en feed uklun more ‘un can eat,
Wi roar around ‘tul se de-ed beat; shi cuddle uklun ‘tul we sleep,
I nawa did count all em room ‘cos houm-time alwis come too soon.*

‘She never made us do the chores and let us slide round those huge floors,
She never made us wash our feet, and fed us more than we could eat,
We’d roar around until dead beat, and then she’d cuddle us to sleep,
I never counted all the rooms because home time always came too soon.’

5.9.3 Paradigm of pronoun forms

Harrison (1972: 80) notes that “because Norfolk does not consistently use particular pronouns for subject and object functions it is not helpful to speak of subject and object forms, as is usually done for Standard English”. For instance, Form 1 pronouns do not just appear in subject position but also in a number of other environments, including:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| causative sentences | <i>She make I come.</i> |
| Benefactives | <i>Giwe one I cup a tea.</i> |
| after complementizers | <i>Dars good-un fer we drink ett.</i> |

Harrison (1986) proposed a modified chart that distinguishes the three persons and for each person a subject, object, possessive and predicate form (forms 1–4):

| DUAL | 1st person | 2nd person | 3rd person |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------------|
| Form 1 | <i>ai</i> | <i>jʊ</i> | <i>hɪ fɪ</i> |
| Form 2 | <i>mi</i> | <i>jʊ</i> | <i>hɛm hɜ et</i> |
| Form 3 | <i>mais</i> | <i>jʊs</i> | <i>hɪs hɜ də</i> |
| Form 4 | <i>main</i> | <i>jon</i> | <i>hɪs hɜs</i> |
| DUAL | | | |
| Forms 1&2 | <i>mi ən hɛm</i> <i>mi ən hɜ</i> <i>hɛmi</i> | <i>jʊ tu</i> | <i>dɛm tu</i> |

(continued)

| DUAL | 1st person | 2nd person | 3rd person |
|----------|---|---------------|----------------|
| Form 3 | <i>ΛΩWƏS</i> <i>hɛmɪs</i> | <i>jʊ tus</i> | <i>dɛm tus</i> |
| Form 4 | <i>mi ən hɛms mi ən hɜs</i> <i>hɛmɪs</i> | | |
| PLURAL | | | |
| Form 1 | <i>wɪ</i> | <i>jɔljɛ</i> | <i>dɛm</i> |
| Form 2 | <i>Λkɫən</i> | <i>jɔljɛ</i> | <i>dɛm</i> |
| Form 3&4 | <i>ΛΩWΛS</i> | <i>jɔljɛs</i> | <i>dɛms</i> |

Checking Harrison's inventory of pronouns against actual data raises a number of problems. Most of these relate to the fact that in connected speech and larger texts, additional forms can be observed. They include:

- (i) Variant pronunciations: the above account is highly normalized; many pronunciation variants are not considered. Thus, no mention is made of *ju-ju:* or *hi-hi:*. Harrison represents second person plural with a glide *jɔljɛ*. This is extremely rare; in Flint's phonetic texts: *jo:le* is preferred instead. *Hem* alternates with *em* in these texts;
- (ii) Occasional neutralization of number occurs in the third person pronoun. *Hem* or *em* at times is used instead of plural *dem*. Impressionistically, this is most likely with object pronouns referring to non-humans but the conditions under which this occurs need to be confirmed.
- (iii) Subject pronouns, once introduced, are frequently realized as zero, as in:

I hou glaed fe ouwas sullen nor tekan et layen down. Ø Oonie hoep we gwen ell tek dea saem passin.

'I'm glad our people don't take it lying down. I only hope we are going to be able to take the same passion'

- (iv) Object pronouns are also often realized as Ø;
- (v) Possessive *auwas* at times becomes *auwa*, possibly under influence from English as in:

Foot ar Government nor give et to auwa sullen?

'Why does the Government not give it to our people?'

- (vi) The forms *orl ucklun* and *orl yorle* are frequently documented. It does not signal a distinction between paucal or plural;
- (vii) *Dem* is reduced to *de* or *em* in connected speech;
- (viii) Contraction of pronoun and following possessive marker or auxiliary is found, in:

[del/des] for *dem ell* ‘they will, can’ and
 [dez/dels] *dem es* ‘they are, were’
 [orlem] *orl dem* ‘all of them’

- (ix) *Her*, *hem* can be used as subject pronouns in conjuncts additional to nominal conjuncts, i.e. not just *miienher* but also:

Her en Tutta goe fu guava one days down Archies.
 ‘She and Tutta went for guava one day down at Archie’s place.’

- (x) There are additional dual pronoun forms such as *she en me*.

The paradigm given in Buffett and Laycock (1988: 8) in essence recapitulates that given by Harrison, but employs the problematic labels subject and object. It also introduces a distinction between *yu* (subject) and *yuu* (object). The length distinction is not found in the narrowly transcribed texts of Flint and Harrison.

| Subject | Object | Possessive | Predicate Possessive |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>ai</i> | <i>mii</i> | <i>mais</i> | <i>main</i> |
| <i>yu</i> | <i>yuu</i> | <i>yus</i> | <i>yoen</i> |
| <i>hi</i> | <i>hem</i> | <i>his</i> | <i>his</i> |
| <i>shi</i> | <i>her</i> | <i>her</i> | <i>hers</i> |
| – | <i>et</i> | – | – |
| <i>himii</i> | <i>himii</i> | <i>himiis</i> | <i>himiis</i> |
| <i>miienhem</i> | <i>miienhem</i> | <i>auwas</i> | <i>miienhems</i> |
| <i>miienher</i> | <i>miienher</i> | <i>auwas</i> | <i>miienhers</i> |
| <i>yutuu</i> | <i>yutuu</i> | <i>yutuus</i> | <i>yutuus</i> |
| <i>demptuu</i> | <i>demptuu</i> | <i>demptuus</i> | <i>demptuus</i> |
| <i>wi</i> | <i>aklan</i> | <i>auwas</i> | <i>auwas</i> |
| <i>yorlyi</i> | <i>yorlyi</i> | <i>yorlyis</i> | <i>yorlyis</i> |
| <i>dem</i> | <i>dem</i> | <i>dems</i> | <i>dems</i> |

There are a number of problems with this presentation. It is not clear that forms such as *miienher* are proper dual pronouns rather than phrases such as English

‘me and her’, nor is it the case that *aklan* is the accusative of *wi*. No mention is made of the *fer* possessive pronouns and how they differ semantically from -s forms.

5.9.4 Anaphoric pronouns

Both Harrison and Buffett and Laycock ignore that one must distinguish between a relatively simple set of anaphoric, and a more complex set of deictic pronouns which are used for social deixis, in particular to include and exclude interlocutors or persons present at a speech act from the community of true Pitcairn descendants. Anaphoric pronouns of Harrison’s form-class 1 and 2 are:

| Class 1 | Class 2 |
|--------------|------------------|
| <i>ai</i> | <i>me, et</i> |
| <i>you</i> | <i>you, et</i> |
| <i>he</i> | <i>(h)em, et</i> |
| <i>her</i> | <i>her, et</i> |
| <i>et</i> | <i>et</i> |
| <i>we</i> | <i>us, et</i> |
| <i>yorle</i> | <i>yorle, et</i> |
| <i>dem</i> | <i>dem, et</i> |

The dropping of anaphoric pronouns is common after their first use, or when the contextual information is clear, as in

Whattime Ø have to putt ett in

‘When do you have to put them (bean seeds) in?’

Ø naewa bin see et fer dar long.

‘I have not seen them for a long time.’

Ø no larnen Ø

‘I am not going to tell you.’

Of particular note is the substitution of class 2 (referred to as object pronouns by most analysts) pronoun forms by *et(t)*. Note that the translations are derived from contextual cues:

I korl et.

‘I called him.’

I can't, myse mother nor gwenna let et.
 'I can't, my mother won't let me.'

I nor see et dar long.
 'I have not seen her (mother) for so long.'

This raises an interesting issue. Bresnan (1998: 78) claimed that:

Pronominals are inherently specified for person/number/gender contrasts if and only if they are overt. Pronominals are reduced if and only if they are specialized for topic anaphoricity, [and that] it follows that no language has an overt definite personal pronoun devoid of any distinctions of any person, number or gender, while many languages have zero pronouns with this property.

It would seem that *N et(t)*, an overt personal pronoun devoid of person, number, or gender distinction, violates this putative language universal.

5.9.5 Deictic pronouns

Deictic pronouns include dual pronouns, distinctive inclusive and exclusive pronouns for first person non-singular as well as *ucllun* and *ouwa*.

The conditions for the reduction of the full deictic paradigm to the reduced anaphoric one are straightforward. Once introduced, and thus becoming anaphoric, the deictic pronoun forms rarely reoccur in the same sentence, paragraph or discourse, unless for special emphasis.

Heme drink some we tea.
 'Let the two of us drink some tea' (for us), (Harrison notes).

Papa larna auwa baut et. We wandren wats et en wi larna arsa Papa en hi tull es dar raitwiel
 'Father told us about them (= whales). We were then wondering what they were and we told and asked Father and he said they were right whales.'

In subject position *we* is the preferred anaphoric first person plural, being the placeholder for *ucllun*, *me-en-hem*, *hemmy*, *ouwas* and *we*.

Let auwa know wathing happen daun Kingston wi anxiously wait the out-come. Got plenti uwa runnen about with new cars. Dar problem is wi gut some sullen se spend too much in en good times.

‘Let us know what is happening in Kingston – we are waiting anxiously for the outcome. Many of us drive around in new cars. The problem is that we have some people who have spent too much in the good times.’

Ucklan Norfolk Islander we try anything.

‘We Norfolk Islanders, we try anything.’

Me en hem goe aut een our yacht wi kam back spit bridge.

‘He and I went out in our yacht and we returned to spit bridge.’

Foot himi gua doun Amy’s fe some hihī? Foot we want e hihī?

‘Why did the two of us go to Amy’s place for periwinkles? Why did we want periwinkles?’

The distinction between dual and plural is neutralized in both third person subject and object position, as in:

I can see demtwo doun Kingston. At least dem gut dar get up an go about dem.

‘I can see the two of them in Kingston. At least they have the get-up-and-go spirit about them.’

Demtuu ess bared news enn dems parents should shame furret.

‘Those two are bad news and their parents should be ashamed of them.’

5.9.6 Semantics and pragmatics of *N ouwa* and *ucklun*

The conditions that determine which deictic pronouns are used are socio-pragmatic and reflective of the social ecology of the island. They are used to create solidarity and distance, and at times can also signal power and identity. This can be illustrated with the ‘charismatic’ pronoun *aklan*, *ucklun*. This non-singular first-person pronoun is used in a wide range of contexts:

- 1) It is emphatic contrastive – inside participants vs outsiders of various types including Norfolk Islander families:

En Ø ell giwe Steele’s Point time fer catch up gen ucklun.

‘This will give the Steel’s Point people time to catch up with us.’

- 2) It is used to signal solidarity and defiance, e.g. naughty child vs parents:

Aen lisen t' me, when we haed noe green vegetebels in ar faens myse matha use a pik dem tayty top down deya en boilet simis spinach en me-ek ucklun eatet en I yus' a hatet.

‘And listen to me, when we had no green veggies in the garden, mother used to pick potato tops down there and boiled it like spinach and made us eat it, and I used to hate it.’

- 3) It is used specifically as a demarcation marker and to exclude outsiders

Dars fer ouwa/ucklun

‘This is not something that outsiders should concern themselves with.’

- 4) It is a marker of identity, common purpose and pride.

Ucklan and *auwa* are used by Pitcairn descendants with very little knowledge of N in a number of speech formulae such as *thank's fer ucklan* ‘thanks on our behalf’.

- 5) Finally, *ucklun* (and *ouwa*) is used in reference to situations where Norfolk islanders are in danger of losing their traditional values:

Noe usea bleme dem fe wey we se cum. Es ucklan se let dem een and es ucklan (en dem ole sullen se gorn too) too lomg bin tull 'goe dem, goe dem do de wae dem like'. Dem bin use 'divide and conquer' tactics orn ucklan for too lomg. Es time fe ucklan fe dunna fight wun enutha.

(Norfolk Forum chatroom August 6, 2002)

‘It is no use blaming them (=outsiders) for what we have become. It is us who let them in and it is us (including the old folk who have passed on) who have said for much too long: “Let them go, let them go, do what they like”. They have used ‘divide and conquer’ tactics on us for too long. It is time for us to stop fighting one another.’

Ouwa is thought to be a recent form by some speakers, but users are often corrected, as is evident in the following passages from Harrison’s texts.

CM *Thrii o ouwa.*

‘Three of us’.

Jean *Thrii o huu, yu tal 'uclkun', 'ouwa' es English. 'Thrii 'uclkun', daas baeta.*
 'Three of us who? Say 'aklan', 'auwa' is English. 'Three aklan' that is better.

TM *Daas nathing, ai jes tiichen Dean Fitzpatrick en Mista Slater sielen paas ouwa.*

'That is nothing, I just taught Dean Fitzpatrick and Mr. Slater to sail past us.'

Jean *'Uclkun.'*
 'Uclkun'!

TM *Uclkun? en ai tal' hem pat aa rada daa wieh soe hi nor praenj ap iin Mista Slater, soe wathing, hi duu hi tan et d' rorong wieh ai tal en hi beng ap iin d' said' Mista Slater, maen hi giw auwa jip.*

'Uclkun?' and I told him to put the rudder in such a way that he does not collide with Mr. Slater so anyway he does it, turns it the wrong way, I say, and he went bang into Mr. Slater's side. Ma, he really annoyed ouwa.'

Jean *Aklan, dunt yu tal 'ouwa'.*

Aklan, don't you say 'ouwa'.

(Harrison N Language Transcripts, Tape 13 *Jean Mitchell and grandchildren*)

Like *uclkun*, *ouwa* is used only in reference to Pitcairn descendants. The existence of both *orl ouwa* and *orl ucklan* suggests that the size of the group can be signalled by means of a preposed plural marker.

5.9.7 Generic subject (indefinite) pronouns

Indefinite pronouns forms listed in Buffett and Laycock (1988) include:

Sambohdi 'somebody' *enibohdi* 'anybody' *noebohdi* 'nobody'

Samthing 'something' *nothing* 'nothing' *enithing* 'anything'

It is noted that the *eni* forms are probably recent loans. The more common form is:

Somebody in ar house?

'Is anybody at home?'

Gut something fer eat ett?

'Is there anything to eat.'

Dem 'third person plural' can also function as an indefinite pronoun as in:

Bifor d'fas moeta boet dem bin yuus 'haewa roe orlem boet.

'Before the first motorboat one had to row all the boats.'

P and N

Dem tull.

'It is said.'

Sullen ‘people’ and *fulla* ‘a fellow’ are used in a similar way:

Sullen tull is d’waye Norfolk se come.

‘They say look at what has become of Norfolk.’

Fulla shouldn’t hat fer goe.

‘One shouldn’t have to go.’

5.9.8 Possessive pronouns

Attributive possessive forms are created by adding the ending in -s to form 1 pronouns. There is also another way of signifying pronominal possession, which appears to be the basis for Heine and Kuteva’s (2001: 5) unwarranted typological classification of ‘Pitcairnese’ as “possessee – invariable possessive marker – possessor Creole.” This construction is indeed found, sometimes optionally as in:

Said fer dems. ‘Their home.’ varying with: *Dems said.* ‘Their home.’

There are two kinds of possessive pronoun, i.e. the attributive ones (form 3) and the predicative (form 4) ones. Examples of the former are:

I se moosa dun myse hoemwork.

‘I’ve almost finished my homework.’

What yous ne-em?

‘What’s your name?’

Myse olest brother grabb his bike en tek orf through dar gate.

‘My oldest brother grabbed his bike and took off through the gate.’

Plenti dem two’s desendent stil lew orn N des dieh.

‘Many of their (dual) s descendants still live on Norfolk today.’

Examples of predicative possessive pronouns are:

Dieh behg es yoen?

‘Is this bag yours?’

Orlem laen krors uyena es auwas.

‘All that land across over there is ours.’

5.9.9 Reflexive and emphatic pronouns

Reflexive pronouns, with the exception of first person dual and plural are formed by the addition of *saelf* or *sael* to the form 2 class of the personal pronoun. Buffett and Laycock (1988: 69) distinguish:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>ai: misaelf</i> | <i>yutuu: yutuusaelf</i> |
| <i>yu: yusaelf</i> | <i>demtuu: demtuusaelf</i> |
| <i>hi: hemsael</i> | <i>yorlyi: yorlyisaelf</i> |
| <i>shi: hersael</i> | <i>dem: demsael</i> |
| <i>et: etsael</i> | |

This account fails to note that distinctions made with deictic pronouns are neutralized in anaphoric use. For instance, *etsael* can be a placeholder for human and animate referents, as in:

Whay's he in Sydney, etself or?
 'Where is he staying in Sydney, by himself or what?'

I have no data which confirm the use of *demtusaelf* and *yutuusaelf*. Note that *saelf* is the acrolectal form and that *sael* is more widely used.

Buffett and Laycock (1988: 69) note that whenever the pronoun is any first-person non-singular pronoun, it is more usual to use *aklan* or *aklansaelf* than to use the pronouns formed with *-saelf*:

himii: aklan instead of *himiisaelf*
miihem: aklan instead of *miihemsael*
miiher: aklan instead of *miihersael*
wi: aklan instead of *auwasael*

This suggests that *aklan* is the least marked of the various first-person non-singular pronouns.

Buffett and Laycock's account does not refer to three other ways of signaling reflexives, \emptyset , *et* or *worn*, as in:

Side ai cut fer ar axe
 'Where I cut myself with an axe.'

Side I cut et
 'Where I cut myself'

Ai se kat mi worn.
‘I cut myself.’

Buffett and Laycock’s statement (1988: 69) that “*worn* is used in place of *saelf*” in emphatic constructions is not accurate as both *worn* and *-sael*, attached to form 2 pronouns, can be used as in:

Ai se meket mi worn.
‘I made it myself.’

Hem in Sydney etsael, or?
‘Was he in Sydney by himself, or what?’

5.9.10 Partitive genitive pronouns

Partitive genitive pronoun constructions indicate a part or quantity of something as distinct from the whole. N expresses this either as in English, by means of a preposition, by *a* or by juxtaposing a yet to be fully documented range of pronouns with preceding adjectives. Examples include:

Dar much ucklun.
‘So many of us.’

None ucklan bin doubt.
‘None of us has doubted it.’

Plenty ouwa runnen about.
‘Lots of us are/were running about.’

5.10 Simple sentences

5.10.1 Simple declarative sentences

The unmarked word order in P-N is SVO. The three main classes are intransitive, transitive and ditransitive sentences.

Intr.: P *one ship come*
‘a ship came’

N tern se tau
 ‘the terns have settled to breed’

Tr.: *Paul like em green plun*
 Paul likes green bananas

Ditransitive: The beneficiary or person affected is signalled by the prepositions *gen*, *udu*, *fer* and *lorng* (*fer*) ‘to’, as in:

Teck ar photo show et gen John.
 ‘Show John the photo.’

He sell et gen B.
 ‘He sold it to B.’

Yous father ell growl lornga sullun.
 ‘Your father can growl at people.’

Hi maken ar boat lorngfe you.
 ‘He made you a boat’.

Wathing you gwen giwe udu Mack?
 ‘What are you going to give Mack?’

She giw one naenwe fer Ma.
 ‘She gave Mother a dreamfish.’

A common construction, not found in any of the source languages positions the beneficiary between the article and the direct object:

I gwen spill one you cuppa tea
 ‘I will pour you a cup of tea’

Mary like wun she bucket?
 ‘Does Mary want a bucket for herself’

Haes some you ohren
 ‘Here are some oranges for you.’

The construction where the indefinite determiner and the recipient pronoun are inverted is also documented for P. This unusual word order may have originated with a single speaker and at times is used consciously to indicate that the speaker uses a language other than English.

5.10.2 Existential sentences

Existential constructions have no dummy subject. They are formed by means of sentence-initial *gut* (untensed), *haed* (past), *gwen gut* (future) and *yusa haew* (past habitual). P also has *es* for untensed existential sentences:

P Round har island es reef
‘There is a reef around the island’

P Gut plenty fish round Oeno
‘There are lots of fish around Oeno Island’

Down Norfolk oony gut bare bords.
‘There are/were only bare floor boards on Norfolk Island.’

Haed two oel gehl.
‘There were two old women.’

Gwen gut plenty weckles morla.
‘There will be lots of food tomorrow.’

Yusa haew one pig down ar back yard eaten up dem thing.
‘There used to be a pig in the back yard that ate the leftovers.’

5.10.3 Equative sentences

The uninflected forms *se*, *ess* are used as equivalents to English forms of ‘to be’, with *se* also overlapping with English past ‘has’. In addition, \emptyset is found frequently where a copula is obligatory in English. No comprehensive account of the provenance of this construction is available. It would require a detailed analysis of Tahitian, St. Kitts Creole, Melanesian Pidgin English and English dialectology to provide explanations for its complexities.

Källgård (1989: 36) has provided a rather rudimentary account of this construction in P. He comments that “the form of the verb be is often omitted” and that this may be a creole feature. He comments that *es* and *se* are more or less interchangeable.

In N there are a number of forms that are equivalent to English ‘to be’, including \emptyset , *ess*, *se* as well as some less common forms. Present-day users find it often difficult to emulate the separate functions that these forms had in traditional N.

Ø is favoured when introducing uninflected, non-completive, predicative adjectives, as in:

I gude.
'I am fine.'

Her heart big and strong.
'Her heart was big and strong.'

Letel sullun desdays dar semisway.
'Children these days are peculiar.'

Ess is used when the predicative adjective is inflected with *-wun*, *-un*, which typically occurs with adjectives that are non-completive and do not involve change of state, as in:

Dem ess sweetwun.
'This is tasty.'

Dar ess oel un.
'This is old.'

Ess is also used in equative constructions when the copula is followed by a noun:

She ess quiet cow.
'She is a quiet cow.'

Norfolk rain ess thing you car buy.
'Norfolk rain is something you can not buy.'

Dem ess gude tatey.
'These are good potatoes.'

Se introduces predicative adjectives (as well as some nouns) that refer to a change of state or a completed action.

Mais Harry se big sullen now.
'My Harry is a big person now.'

I se fatu.
'I am exhausted.'

She se gorn.
‘She is absent.’

Suff se gude.
‘The sea is calm, has become calm.’

Some adjectives are never used without *se*, including:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| <i>Se rus/rusty</i> | ‘rusty’ |
| <i>Se de-edē</i> | ‘dead’ |
| <i>Se fatu</i> | ‘exhausted’ |

The following sentences illustrate the difference between copula forms:

Dem high plahn ess good’un when ser ripe.
‘The Hai bananas are delicious when they are ripe.’

You wael ‘
‘You are well’

You se wael ‘
‘You are well’ (after a prolonged illness)

5.10.4 Locational sentences

In constructions where the predicate is a locative phrase, no copula is used. Examples are:

Dem sullun in ar house
‘The people are in the house’

P ha ship up-ha-hammer
‘The ship was close to land’

TMA markers can be added directly preceding the locative phrase.

5.10.5 Interrogative sentences

Wh-interrogatives in content questions are typically bimorphemic, as they are in prototypical creoles, though their origin is probably not independent creolization but inherited from St. Kitts Creole or English dialects.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| <i>Foot?</i> (< for what) | Why? |
| <i>Whattime?</i> | When? |
| <i>Whathing? What?</i> | What? |
| <i>Whebout?</i> | Where? |
| <i>Bout, whieh?</i> | Where? |
| <i>Wuttawun?</i> | Which? |
| <i>Whutta-waye?</i> | How? |
| <i>Wha far?</i> | How far? |

Question words, unless emphasized, appear sentence-initially, as in:

P *Foot you nor larme aklen?*

‘Why didn’t you teach us?’

Whutta one fe yorlye shoot ar hane?

‘Which one of you shot the chicken?’

Whataway you se land orn top youse cousin, ‘stead fe catchen dar horse?

‘How did you come to land on top of your cousin, instead of catching that horse?’

P *Wasing you bin do down yonder?*

‘What did you do down there?’

What-time em pear use-er ripe?

‘When do those pears usually ripen?’

Yes/no interrogative sentences in P and N are distinguished (with few exceptions such as *ell I* ‘may I’) from declarative ones by their rising intonation only. Unlike in English there is no *do*-support or inverted word order:

Yu cumen?

‘Are you coming? Did you come?’

P *Surf es big one?*

‘Was the sea rough?’

Yus daed ell grab-et wellout?
 ‘Does your father get easily angered?’

5.10.6 Imperative sentences

Imperative sentences are distinguished from declarative ones by intonation only. Unlike in English, the subject pronoun is rarely deleted:

Yorlye kam look orn. (you pl.)
 ‘Come and look!’

You say fer hemmy
 ‘You say Grace for both of us’

Negative imperatives are expressed by *du/do* or *dunna*

Do me-ek ugly.
 ‘Don’t pull a face’

Jussive constructions consist of first-person pronoun followed by a verb:

I haelp you
 ‘Let me help you’

Hemi goe
 ‘Let the two of us go, let’s go!’

5.10.7 Focus

The scope of focus constructions can be whole sentences or parts of sentences, primarily the subject. The subject nominal is preceded by *es(s)* in positive and *ent* and *wasn’* in negative sentences:

Ess gut evrey kine Buffett’
 ‘There are all kinds of Buffetts’

Ess dar sullun tull things miek I se gurrett.
 ‘The fact that people say things makes me angry.’

Ess you too welcum

‘You are really very welcome’

Ent me lors ar haema.

‘It was not me who lost the hammer.’

Was’n ucklun lors ar hammer

‘It wasn’t us who lost the hammer’

5.10.8 Negative sentences

Negation in P and N is rather complex and quite unlike what is expected of a Creole. Negation illustrates the cumulative grammar of the language, in the sense that constructions of different provenance are used side-by-side in seemingly free variation. There are various ways in which negative sentences are formed:

- *nor* is inserted before the predicate as is common in most English-related Pidgins and Creoles: There is no *do*-support:

Dem nor tullen

‘They are/were not telling’

Dem nor hoem

‘They are/were not at home’

- *Car, kaa* ‘not, cannot, know not’ at times behaves like a negator, at other times like an independent verb. *Car* variably precedes or follows TMA markers:

He kar dunna laugh.

‘He couldn’t help but laugh.’

You gwenna car get up dem tree.

‘You cannot get up the trees.’

Car wherebout.

‘I don’t know where it is.’

- Negation of sentences in past tense can be optionally signalled by means of *naewa, never*, as is also the case in St. Kitts Creole:

She never larn me

‘She did not tell me’

- *Nort* is the emphatic variant of *nor*, but usually restricted to a small number of verbs such as *nort noe* ‘to not know’. It also serves as a negative answer to questions:

You se fatu? Nort.

‘Are you tired? No, I am not’

- Whereas *do*-support is not employed in negating statements (*I nort noe* ‘I don’t know’), *do*, *dunna* (P *dane*) and *doont*, derived from English ‘don’t’, are used in negative imperatives:

Do make ugly

‘Do not pull a face’

Doont stay up liet

‘Don’t stay up late’

P Dane mard

‘Don’t be angry’

- *ent*, from English ‘ain’t’, is the negator in equative constructions in all tenses as in:

Ent me

‘It wasn’t me’

He ent ar good sullun

‘He is not a nice person’

- Double negation is not common, unlike in St. Kitts Creole, but is found occasionally:

None a ucklan nor bin orf Norfolk.

‘None of us have been away from Norfolk.’

She nawa maeke wi do no chore.

‘She did not make us do chores.’

Different speakers or families favour different modes of negation. At this stage there is no fully fixed grammar, and a number of anglicized constructions such as *wosn’t* ‘was not’, *couldn’t* are in use alongside solutions that date back to the formative years of the language.

5.11 Complex sentences

Complex sentences contain more than one proposition. How multiple propositions are expressed formally varies both across languages and within languages. Only the briefest of accounts of complex sentences is available for P (Källgård 1989: 49). For N, Harrison (1972: 184–190) provides a sketch grammar for coordinated and dependent clauses and Buffet and Laycock (1988: 60–67) briefly deal with this topic.

One can distinguish several types: coordinated, causative, relative and complement sentences. Both the terminology used and the types distinguished by previous analysts vary greatly. I do not propose to develop a comprehensive theory of complex sentences nor do I wish to comment on terminological issues.

Lack of embedding and lack of formal introducers of embedded constructions have often been used as an indicator of Creoleness. There is no shortage of such constructions in P and N. The P and N conventions for constructing complex sentences differ markedly from English.

5.11.1 Coordination

The conventions for coordinated sentences include:

- Co-referential nouns can be replaced by a pronoun or be deleted in the second sentence; a co-referential object noun is usually realized as *et(te)*.
- Non-human subject nouns are not replaced by a pronoun, as the subject neuter pronoun *et(te)* is extremely rare:

P *Ha ship up-ha-hammer but not stop.*

‘The ship appeared on the horizon but did not stop.’

- No dummy verb ‘do’ is required in coordinated sentences:

Sometime she do sometime she not.

‘Sometimes she does it, sometimes she doesn’t’

Common coordinators/conjunctions are *en(a)*, *an*, *aen* ‘and’; *uller*, *ala*, or ‘or’; and *but*, *bat* ‘but’ and *den* ‘then’. *En(a)* is often omitted and this, together with the frequent deletion of implied subject nouns results in constructions that are difficult to distinguish from serial verbs.

P So I take 'em basket come down through 'em pile of cane and come over in 'em pile of stick, come up here, and I work too hard fer 'em no use bread
 'So I took the baskets and come down through a pile of cane and came over through a pile of sticks, and I came up here, and I worked too hard considering they do not use breadfruit'

Orl ucklun goe out trai ouwas luck

'All of us Norfolk Islanders went out to try our luck.'

You jus' put some milk on er fire, let it come to the boil, then you peel 'em poo-oo plahn, drop in er col' wader, den you wee-hee et on er yooloh.

'You just put some milk on the fire, let it come to the boil, then you peel the bananas, drop them into some cold water, then you grate and wrap them on the yolo.'

Simple concatenation is common, as in:

Wall, I car darnce ulla sing, ent Grace Kelly, I know.

'Well, I can't dance or sing; I'm not Grace Kelly, I know.'

En, an, aen 'and'

. . . we bin a Sunday school, den we go down Henny's Lake, bin use a gut one tin canoe down der an we get in dar canoe and Douglas Edward tip ucklun up . . .

' . . . we went to Sunday school, and then we went down to Henny's Lake, down where we used to have a tin canoe, and we got in that canoe and Douglas Edward tipped us up . . . '

Dah's poy – an whataway you cook it is good one.

'That's pudding, and whichever way you cook it, it's delicious.'

But, bat

'Ent me' dar youngest boy cried out, but I was jess too late.

'Wasn't me!, the youngest boy cried out, but I was just too late.'

Like *aen*, *but* can also be optionally deleted:

I followen ar man down een em stik thort es Mack, es Gilbert

'I followed the man into the scrub and thought it was Mack, but it was Gilbert.'

Uller, ala ‘or’

Well, you, you would advocate for more an’ more tourists uller for set a limit?
 ‘Well would you advocate for more and more tourists, or for setting a limit?’

5.11.2 Causative sentences

Causative voice is signalled by means of *mek/make/miek*. The causee appears in class 1 (subject) pronoun form as in:

Father make I goe inna fence.
 ‘Father made me go into the garden.’

Miek hii klai isse es said dem yus’ roht’n-et.
 ‘What causes him to cry easily is that they used to spoil him.’

Ai gat a lef miek ai erli es dieh.
 ‘I got a lift that’s why I am early today.’

P daas make we use to try to go
 ‘This made us try and go’

5.11.3 Relativization

P and N do not employ relative pronouns. Relative clauses are simply inserted after the noun they modify, as in:

De es thing in everebhdi lew iin Australia, kam fram Norfolk Island.
 ‘This is something with everybody who lives in Australia and who comes from Norfolk Island’

I see wan maen nor gut trousers.
 ‘I saw a man who did not wear trousers.’

Wi eat ett lorngfe little bit a sugar se sprinkle on
 ‘We eat them with a little bit of sugar that has been sprinkled on’

Resumptive pronouns can occur after relative clauses as in:

How big ar fesh you catch (ett)
 ‘How big was the fish you caught?’

In acrolectal varieties, English relative pronouns are sometimes used, as in:

To all yorlye who have been so kind.

‘To all of you who have been so kind.’

Orlem salan huu bin werken haad.

‘All the people who have worked hard.’

Colin ess d’ bass fulla who bin roen mine enn myse letle sulluns teeth

‘Colleen is the best person who ruined mine and my little children’s teeth’

Relative clauses dealing with time or location are typically introduced by *when*, *where* or *side*, as in:

Dem use a go over Rawson Hall side Brooky use a play da piano ‘

‘They are used to going over to Rawson Hall to where Brooky used to play the piano’

Dae es jess something me and Willie like a larn when wi grow up in Cascade.

‘That is just something Willie and I liked to learn when we grew up in Cascade.’

Gut one gaet where track leaden into et.

‘There is a gate where a path leads into it.’

5.11.4 *Fer-* object complement sentences

English has a large number of verbs that can take either a nominal object or a complement sentence introduced by ‘to’. There are three main types:

- Constructions where the subject of the embedded sentences is co-referential with the subject of the main sentence, as in ‘I forgot to come’, ‘I like to swim’, ‘he agreed to leave’, etc.
- Constructions where the subject of the embedded sentences is different from the subject of the main sentence, as in ‘I expect him to do his duty’, ‘She wanted her friends to come’.
- Constructions where the verb is followed by a passive infinitive (*to be* + past participle), as in ‘They want to be told’, ‘I prefer to be driven’.

The equivalent of the English complementizer ‘to’ is *fe(r)*. The grammatical properties of subject complements exhibit a number of properties, which may have originated in St. Kitts Creole or in English dialects.

- The subject of the main clause may be optionally repeated in the subordinate clause:

Dem mean fer (dem) come
‘They meant to come’

- Where the subject of the main sentence is co-referential with the object of the embedded sentence this is expressed by means of the resumptive pronoun *et(t)*:

Plun se ripe fer cook ett
‘The bananas are ready to cook’

Myse horse dar gude fer see et
‘My horse is really good to see’

- The passive complement constructions of the type ‘it is good to be seen’ are occasionally found in N. The passive ending – *et* is optional.

Seed se ready jes fe pick(et)
‘The seeds were ready to be picked’

- With verbs of motion the complementizer is typically omitted, as in:

We go fer Booboo’s eat
‘We are going to Booboo’s place to eat’

5.11.5 Embedded adverbial clauses

The majority of introducers of adverbial clauses (complementizers) in N are inherited or borrowed from English, as can be seen from the following table:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| time | <i>arfta</i> ‘after’, <i>wail</i> ‘while’, <i>when</i> ‘when’, <i>whenaewa</i> ‘whenever’, <i>befor</i> ‘before’, <i>tull</i> ‘until’, <i>soones</i> ‘as soon as’, <i>lornges</i> ‘as long as’, <i>farstaim</i> ‘when first’, <i>sametime</i> ‘at the time when’ |
| cause and effect | <i>ko(s)</i> ‘because’, <i>side</i> ‘because’, <i>make</i> ‘because’, <i>foot</i> ‘why’ |
| opposition | <i>orlthough</i> ‘although’, <i>domain</i> ‘although’ |
| conditional | <i>(s)ef</i> ‘if’, <i>wetha</i> ‘whether’, <i>swaetha</i> ‘whether’, <i>spoesen</i> ‘if’, ‘suppose’, <i>dumain</i> ‘even if’ |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| manner | <i>semes(way)</i> 'just like', <i>sef</i> 'like if' |
| place | <i>side</i> 'where' |
| purpose and result | <i>soe</i> 'so that', <i>bembeya</i> 'lest', <i>side</i> 'in order to' |

A smaller number of introducers has been documented for P. Importantly, some of the innovations are shared: *bembeya* (P *bembe*) 'lest' and *side* 'because' and possibly others. Unfortunately, there is little diachronic evidence, but it is noted that the conditional *suppose* is documented in 1821 by Captain Raine in the sentence '*suppose he bad man strike me, I no strike him*'.

This is certainly the case for the two possible local innovations *bembeya* 'lest' and *said* 'because'. In adversative clauses, *bembaya* (from 'by and by') is similar in form to Melanesian Pidgin English *baimbai* but different in function and meaning. Ross and Moverley (1964: 221) suggest that a meaning documented in the OED (1631) 'therefore, as a consequence' is the likely source. 'By-and-by' is also found in an adversative sense in some English dialects.

Examples of how some introducers of subordinate sentences are used include:

5.11.6 Adverbial sentences of time

Note that the embedded sentence can precede or follow the main clause.

Now dem high plahn is good 'un, when ser ripe, fer boil in der skin
 'Now the Hai Banana is excellent, when it's ripe, for boiling in its skin'

When yorlye write e Santa Claus, arsa hem fe put one in yorlye's stocken.
 'When you write to Santa Claus, ask him to put one in your stocking.'

How long ago since them tourists begin a come to Norfolk, could you remember when 'em start to come?
 'How long ago was it since those tourists began to come to Norfolk; can you remember when they started to come?'

You jus' drop er big spoonful of dem yollohed plahn in em hot milk, an' lebbe it dere till ser cook.
 'You just drop a big spoonful of the grated banana into the hot milk, and leave it there until it's cooked.'

Faastaim ai sii yu ai se fried.

‘When first I saw you I was afraid.’

As in English, adverbial clauses of time occasionally are not signalled by any overt markers as in:

Bussen hihi f pulloo, one day orf ar Cord, he usen his shet-knife, d pride of his life.

‘Whilst crushing periwinkles for berley one day off the Cord, he was using his sheath-knife, the pride of his life.’

Cause and effect constructions

He chase et, but kar ketch et cos he trip right crors ar dog.

‘He chased them, but couldn’t catch them, because he tripped over the dog.’

Hi had six months supply, but fine hi hawt t wait’n, cos car fine a side f bring stock ashore h’yu.

‘He had six months supplies, but found he had to wait, because [he] couldn’t find a place to bring livestock ashore here.’

Come see foot our island kina close gen ours heart.

‘See why our island is kind of close to our hearts.’

Opposition

I nawa tiy-ed fer si ett, doo mine how lorng I watch et.

‘I never get tired of seeing them, no matter how long I watch them.’

Conditional

Ef somebody gut something, es somebody als dream, dem reckon with envy, dar sullun tun green.

‘If somebody has something that is somebody else’s dream, they reckon that with envy, a person turns green.’

Ef dem stop dare too lorng, dem go red when dem bun.

‘If they stay there too long, they go red when they burn.’

S’poesen wi leaw Gunnoo’s fance out ar D.F. tul larse, den can steal some his mulluns as wi goo parse.

‘If we leave Gunnoo’s garden, at D.F., for last, then we can steal some of his melons as we go past.’

I nawa tiy-ed fe see et, doo mine how lomng I watch et.

‘I never get tired of seeing them, no matter how long I watch them.’

Duumain dem nor kam daun wi gwena haew auas paati.

‘Even if they don’t come down to us, we shall have our party.’

Manner

Se taengle in our’s hist’ry, waey dar oak bin, in her iwiy.

‘It is entangled in our history as the oak was in her ivy.’

I el do ett semisway she use

‘I can do it as she used to do it’

Place

P He tie up his plun said he ell hang it up

‘He tied up his bananas in order to hang them up’

Myse le-ge stil sor side I step orn a wana

‘My foot still hurts where I stepped on a sea urchin’

Purpose and result

P We gwen have ‘em wekl same as yesterday, bembe spoil

‘We are going to have the same food as yesterday, so it doesn’t spoil’

P He tie up his plun said he ell hang it up

‘He tied up his bananas in order to hang them up’

A number of adverbial clauses can be combined into longer ones. At this point it is not known what the constraints on multiple embedding might be. The following more complex sentence is not atypical in the utterances of fluent speakers:

Sullen hawe make sure dem tie dem’s horse good, bemby loose; ‘cause if it off up dere, might los’easy, an’ dah the time sullen have to hoof it home.

‘People have to make sure they tie up their horses well, so they don’t get lost, because if [the horse] gets away up there, it can easily get lost, and that’s when people have to walk home.’

5.12 Conclusion

As one says in P and N *Dars ett! Ell do*. ‘That is it. It will have to do.’ What I have been trying to demonstrate is:

- That far from being an impoverished Pidgin or Broken English, P and N are complex languages with their own distinct grammar.
- As most of the grammar of P and N are shared, one can assume that the language was fully developed by the 1860s.

The differences between English and P-N are far-reaching both with regard to what does or does not have to be signalled overtly and how things are expressed. Thus, number, tense and relative pronouns are compulsory in English but not in P-N. Change of state or completion, relationship between possessor and possessed, and categorial status of predicate in equative sentences have to be overtly signalled in P-N, but not in English. Dummy subject pronouns and *do*-support for interrogatives are not required in P-N. The grammatical resources to signal passives, benefactives, habitual and some complementation, amongst others, differ.

- The language exhibits a number of Creole features such as invariable word order, bimorphemic question words, reduced inflectional morphology and absence of compulsory tense and number distinctions. However, the data do not support the view that there is anything like a canonical TMA system or clear-cut specific-non-specific nominal determiners. Such Creole properties as are in evidence are most likely result from St. Kitts Creole having been transplanted rather than independent creolization.
- Unequivocal examples of substratum influence from Tahitian are few, possibly because the first-generation women were discouraged from speaking Tahitian, or possibly because they employed a version of Maritime Polynesian Pidgin rather than a high variety of the language. Tahitian influence is in evidence mostly in individual forms rather than in wholesale grammatical patterns. Thus, some pronoun forms may have been calqued but their functioning in pronoun grammar is unlike Tahitian.
- P and N exhibit grammatical complexity where neither English, St. Kitts Creole nor Tahitian feature it: in the deictic pronoun system, in spatial grammar, and in possessives. These complexities would seem to have developed in response to the special conditions of the social and natural ecologies of the two islands.

There are many areas of grammar that require further investigation, for instance, the verb-particle constructions, counterfactuals and the behaviour of some small particles. There is also an urgent need to further explore the cultural and pragmatic prerequisites to understanding the grammar of the language.

It does appear that large numbers of words and usages must have been coined on the Island, since they cannot be paralleled elsewhere.
(Ross and Moverley 1964: 169)

6 Lexicon

6.1 Introduction

Studies in the lexicology of endangered languages emphasize that:

- Lexical documentation typically has insufficient coverage and much lexical knowledge therefore is in danger of becoming lost (Evans 2009: xviii).
- Many issues encountered in lexical field work remain unsolved, partly because the metalanguage employed by professional linguists fails to do justice to the knowledge of real speakers (Haviland 2006: 129).
- Speakers of many languages are not aware of certain properties of lexical items such as hypocoristic and augmentative affixes (Silverstein 1981, Mühlhäusler 1983).

I have tried to address these issues in my ongoing work on a lexical database for P and N. To date, there are about 4,500 entries which draw on the lexicographical work by Ross and Moverley (1964), Källgård, Flint, Shirley Harrison, Moresby Buffett, Beryl Nobbs-Palmer, Greg Quintal, Alice Buffett and Rachel Nebauer.

It has to be kept in mind that in oral languages such as P and N, there is no fixed set of definitions of what words mean outside their context of use, and that there are significant variations in word form and word class as well as disagreements about the sensitivity of certain words. This point was made to me by several of my informants and is one of the reasons why I have opted to compile a lexical data base rather than develop a standard lexicon.

In what follows I shall develop some of the questions raised by previous researchers, in particular the origin of the words of the language, lexical adequacy and lexical attrition.

6.2 Contested words

Being both oral languages and lacking agreed standards means that there is ample opportunity for disagreements about which words belong to the language, how they should be pronounced and what they mean. Contested words include

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words related to social boundary marking, the repolynization of the culture, swear words and sensitive expressions of various types.

Opinions about social boundaries differ with regard to whether *uclun* ‘we’ refers to Islanders with mutineers’ blood or Islanders that can trace back their ancestry to Pitcairn; whether *ouwa* means the same as *uclun*, refers only to those who have never left Norfolk and subscribe to a traditional value system; and finally, whether *ouwa* is a word of the language at all. Related to the debate about first person non-singular pronouns is that about the correct name for the day when the Pitcairners first arrived on Norfolk Island. I have collected readers’ letters to local newspapers dating to the 1930s in which it is argued that it should be referred to as *Anniversary Day* not *Bounty Day* as not all the arrivals had in fact descended from the Bounty Mutineers. This debate is still going on.

Some Islanders welcome the increased recognition of their Polynesian ancestors and words such as *foremothers* ‘female Polynesian ancestors’ and advocate the revival of forgotten words of Tahitian or the addition of new ones such as *wa’a* ‘outrigger’.

Swearwords are frequently used in P but many of my informants deny their existence in N. Swearing, if done at all, employs English. Whilst I have observed *gadaret* ‘fuck it’ (*gada* ‘to have sexual intercourse’), I have been told that this word does not exist.

The Norfolk Islanders are aware of the large number of socially sensitive expressions, which can only be handled by someone who knows genealogy, history and the personality of their interlocutors. Eponyms such as *locket* ‘to be a busybody’ or words of the language that have become nicknames such as *cooshoo* ‘comfortable’ which was the nickname of a constantly inebriated person as well as that of a woman of loose morals, can be used as insults when they refer to an interlocutor’s family member. Many older speakers avoid *cooshoo*, though it seems to have lost its sensitivity among younger speakers. The name of a golf-ball swallowing tree *grabarball* is avoided by some, as it is also the nickname of a person who always has his hands in his pockets.

Words that would be censored on the Australian mainland such as *niggers hoof* ‘a variety of sweet potato and a place name’ are not regarded as inappropriate by most speakers. Some informants objected to expressions suggestive of the inferiority of the Melanesian mission scholars such as *blaecksmell* ‘someone who lingers around like a persistent bad smell’, *eat-ar-man* ‘cannibal’ and *man-a bush* ‘bush dweller’.

Some words on record have also been contested by linguists. Wiltshire (1938) features a mysterious entry *supa fai* ‘all broken up’. As Ross and Moverley (1964: 253) have pointed out, this is not a word at all, but the word *pufoi* ‘broken’ preceded by the completion marker *se*.

6.3 When is a word a P-N word?

Low (2012: 199) noted that “it is difficult to say which aspects of the vocabulary are N and not N and this seems to be a site of disagreement and contention among Islanders”.

The question of how many different word types there are in a contact language spoken side by side with its lexifier has been discussed by creolists from time to time (Healey 1975: 36–42). For N, Harrison (1972: 285) gave the following criteria: “Words and phrases gain entry in the Glossary if they have a meaning or function different from Standard English”. By ‘different’ she means (1972: 285):

- Words or meanings not used in present Standard English but which exist (or existed) in Dialect English, or colonial forms used in other parts of the world, or obsolete Standard English.
- Words that are more commonly used in Norfolk than in Standard English. This group includes words that have a meaning as in Standard English but have been extended to other applications.

Her glossary embraces only 260 head entries. Källgård (1981: 8) similarly states that “Pitcairnese words are words that are used by Pitcairners and differ considerably from their modern English equivalents”. Applying his criteria, he arrived at a total of 741 lexical items for P. However, these include entries such as *carving-knife* ‘carving knife’ and *hard-up* ‘poor’, whose pronunciation and meaning does not differ from Standard English. Gleißner (1997: 48), basing her information on Laycock and Buffett (1988), lists 852 “different lexical items for N”. Flint (n.d.), using different and not explicitly stated criteria, arrives at a total of 2,098 for N. Let us consider the consequences of such varying criteria.

Harrison (1972) includes eight entries beginning with [i] in her glossary. Flint (n.d.) includes 38 entries, but does not list three of Harrison’s entries. The native speaker, Beryl Nobbs-Palmer (1986), includes ten words beginning with [j] in her dictionary, whilst another native speaker, Alice Buffett, (1999) includes 23 entries for N. For P, Ross and Moverley (1964) list 9 entries, whilst Källgård (1998) cites 11, excluding two of Ross and Moverley’s (1964) entries despite the fact that he uses their list as the principal source for his dictionary. The N database compiled at the University of Adelaide will eventually list about 5,000 entries for P and N. At present there are about 75 entries beginning with [i].

The cumulative number of recorded words of course does not reflect the actual competence of P and N speakers any more than the OED reflects the lexical knowledge of any speakers of English.

As all texts collected by previous researchers and myself contain numerous examples of language blending and switching, it is often difficult to say what

constitutes English and what constitutes P-N. Thus, Harrison's transcripts of her recordings differ significantly in this regard from the unpublished transcriptions made by Nebauer-Borg in 2011 of some of the same texts. Norfolk Islanders are often uncertain whether an expression is N or not: Thus, *jumpin ar faens* 'to have illicit sexual relations with neighbours', is said by some to be Australian English though in this variety it refers to 'having sexual relations with someone of the same sex'. Other examples are words for typical Norfolk dishes such as *Tahitian fish* 'marinated fish salad' or *Norfolk gravy* 'cream'.

As N is used in new functions many words from English are borrowed. There is disagreement on whether such new loans should be spelt in English or adapted to N spellings. Most older speakers are not in favour of accepting large numbers of new words whose pronunciation and meaning does not differ from English. By contrast, Buffett's (1999) 'Encyclopedia' contains numerous examples such as *malt'chuud* 'multitude', *zenafoebia* 'xenophobia', *vaempaiya* 'vampire' and *vaekjuum kliina* 'vacuum cleaner'. An even greater proportion of English borrowings is encountered in the '*Norfolk & Pitkern Wikkapedyā, T' frii Ensiklopedya*' at https://pih.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mien_Paij:

Aart a' Kulchur

Aarkitekchur, Aart, Dans, Film, Kulchur, Foeklor, Fotograafii, Litritchar, Myuusik, Skulpchar, Fiin Aart, Theete

Applied Saiens a' industrii

Aerospace, Aagrikultur, Arkitektur, Comuunikaashuns, Desin, Electricitii, Elektroniks, Intaneit, Manajemnt, Informatiks, Enjiniiring, farmakolojii, Robotiks, Telecomuunikashuns, Industrii, Teknolojii, Transport

It is doubtful that adding such words does anything for communication among Norfolk Islanders or the revival of their language.

6.4 Lexical adequacy

In her unpublished fieldnotes, Harrison wrote that "Norfolk is lacking in adjectives, so if I wanted to make a good description of a place or thing I may not be able to do justice to whatever I was describing due to this lack." Laycock (1990: 617) identifies another area of inadequacy:

there is no word for 'fart' at all (apart from the adult-euphemistic *miek a ruud nois* 'make a rude noise', and the somewhat doubtful *pup* offered, after much thought, by one older informant): A form of speech that has been creolised by children has at least the lexicon

of interest to children – and one would expect this to include the full range of scatological terms. It is also not likely that a word such as ‘fart’ could have been completely eradicated from the language by adult censorship.

Both views are contradicted by the data. P-N eponyms cover a large number of descriptive meanings usually expressed by adjectives in English such as N *Big Jack* ‘teary’; *emans* ‘withdrawn’, P *fanny* ‘not very smart’; *same as William* ‘angry without reason’. Laycock had very few informants and did not appear to have consulted Harrison’s or Flint’s texts. Alice Buffett once informed me that N had no rude expressions. She would in all likelihood not have provided them to Laycock. My own records list two words for fart: *furus* and *busswunna* ‘stepping on a sea urchin’. A full range of scatological terms also exists in N *caek* ‘shit’, *smedg, parloo* ‘masturbate’, *fly hihhi* ‘ejaculate’, *podu, poonsy, skinny, pala* ‘vagina’, *cork, hua* ‘penis’, *gada* ‘to have sex’, among many others.

A distinction has to be drawn between referential and social adequacy. The designers of auxiliary languages such as BASIC (Odgen and Richards 1923) argue that for everyday conversation, about 800 lexical types are required plus about 50 for each specialist domain (for instance whaling terms in N). Roughly the same figures apply to pidgin languages. Thus, the Tok Pisin Bible translation uses about 900 word types. Artificial languages and pidgins used as inter-linguistic media serve primarily a referential function. Languages used as primary or native languages, to cater for the expressive, interpersonal, poetic, politeness and other functions, require further lexical resources, such as exclamations and interjections (see appendix 6.3), taboo expressions, polite words, insults and more. In all, I estimate a need for another 500 expressions.

All speakers of P and N are bilinguals and over time the functions and domains of the two languages has changed. The importance of the referential function has declined as has that of a number of domains related to a traditional life-style. A number of new domains have been added, such as that of government and public signing. There has been a great deal of language attrition and knowledge of words in common use only a generation ago has become rare. On both islands, lexical loss has been slowed down through formal teaching and the availability of printed resources. This has resulted mainly in better receptive competence in the language, not in the active use of more lexical items. The principal function of P and N these days is that of indexing identity. An examination of a large number of contemporary written and printed sources in N has confirmed that the majority of speakers employ a modified and anglicized N, in which 80–100 words (see appendix chapter 2.6) are used to signal their identity, with a smaller number used for social control. To satisfy these functional requirements, it is sufficient to speak English interspersed with emblematic words such as *sullen ucklun, yorli, hilli, dem tull* and *car do*.

6.5 Origin and later development

The fact that P and N split in the 1860s offers an opportunity to answer the question which words existed in the language prior to this time. I have tried to compile a diagnostic Swadesh list in order to compare the core lexicon but there are too many methodological issues to determining which words should be selected. Impressionistically, most of the core lexicon is shared. Somewhat surprisingly, less than 50% of the non-core lexicon is shared. One of the main factors in lexical change is adaptation to an unfamiliar natural environment on both islands.

As I have argued (Mühlhäusler 1996), language is a management tool for the natural and social ecology of its speakers. When transplanted to a new environment, it can take several generations to attain referential adequacy. Many terms for lifeforms and social practices appear to have developed after the split of the community. Post-1860s development also reflects changes in the religion and material culture of the two islands as well as changes in education and administration.

6.6 Etymology

Expert opinions on the provenance of P-N words widely diverge. Gleißner (1997: 49) gives the following statistics for the 852 different lexical items culled from Laycock and Buffett (1988):

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| English-derived vocabulary | 803 words | 94.2% |
| Polynesian-derived words | 34 words | 4% |
| Lexical items from other sources | 4 words | 0.5% |
| Words of unknown/doubtful origin | 11 words | 1.3% |

Mautz (2008: 33) examined a randomly chosen 136 entry subset of Ross and Moverley's (1964) P wordlist and concludes:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Words of English origin | 61% |
| Words of Polynesian origin | 38% |
| Words of unknown origin | 1% |

Such percentages refer to recordings made in the 1950s and 1980s, respectively, and the percentages may have been very different in its formative years or today. Neither Gleißner nor Mautz refer to the large number of P and N words created from internal resources. Thus, ‘words of English origin’ include metaphors and extension of meaning. Ross and Moverley (1964: 166) include bird names of Pitcairn such as *sparrow*, *wood-pigeon*, *snipe*, *sparrow-hawk* and *hawk*, whose appearance or behaviour is vaguely similar to the British birds thus named. Extension of meaning is found in words such as *dena* ‘lunch and dinner’, *faens* ‘fence, garden, farm’, *side* ‘side, place, house, where, because’ and numerous others.

A frequently mentioned example is N *agle* ‘ugly’. Harrison (1972) listed expressions such as *agle leg* ‘sore leg’ and *agle suf* ‘rough sea’, as well as the meanings ‘nasty’, ‘unpleasant’ and ‘ugly’. She translated *mek agle* as ‘being nasty’, whereas Buffett (1999) translated *miek agli* as ‘appear to be about to cry’. Nobbs-Palmer (1986) translated *agli* as ‘angry’ and ‘to lose one’s temper’. There are a number of additional meanings in N expressions such as:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>yu agle</i> | ‘you nasty thing’ (said to an annoying person) |
| <i>aglien</i> | ‘angry’, ‘sulking’ or ‘crying’ |
| <i>hi duu agle f’aklan</i> | ‘he didn’t treat us well’ |
| <i>ai sii wan agli thing</i> | ‘seeing a ghost’ or ‘malicious activity’ |

It is not clear what extension of meaning actually refers to. First of all, I am uncertain of how one can establish the historical core meaning of ‘ugly’, as one can hardly assume that in the different dialects spoken by the British mutineers this was the same and that it was also the same in St. Kitts Creole. Further, were some or all of the ‘extended’ meanings inherited from English dialects or were they added to P and N at a later stage?

Neither Ross and Moverley’s (1964) wordlist nor the lexical items in Laycock and Buffett (1988) are necessarily representative. Källgård’s (1998) lists more than 200 P words additional to those listed by Ross. They rarely reflect a more recent stage of the language (as Mautz 2008: 23 suspects), but simply the fact that

Källgård was a better fieldworker. Källgård (1998: 85) has addressed the question of etymology in considerable detail and arrives at a percentage of 23.2% of Polynesian origin. Harrison's (1972) or Nobbs-Palmer's (1986) vocabularies would have been a better basis for N. My analysis of Harrison's N glossary suggests that 52% of her entries are of English origin, 28% Tahitian and 20% of other or unknown origin.

The discrepancies in such statistical exercises have a number of causes:

- Eponyms and internally generated words are underrepresented in the data.
- Words of St. Kitts provenance are classified as English or unknown.
- Words of Tahitian origin have been underrepresented.

Gleißner does not consider the very substantial number of words of Polynesian origin. She gives a figure of 34 or 4% of the lexicon (1997: 49) as Polynesian derived. Harrison lists 80 such words in her 270-entry glossary. Mühlhäusler (2011) has identified 200+ words of Tahitian provenance, more than half of which are still used by some N speakers.

There are a number of P and N words whose origin has fascinated linguists and whose etymology remains contested. For *sullen*, *sullun*, *salan* 'people', Harrison (1972: 329) suggests that this word derives from English *children* 'through the effects of Tahitian pronunciation on dialect English'. It is noted that *sullun* often collocates with P *orkl* or N *lekkle* 'little' and that by 1800, children formed the vast majority of Pitcairn's population. A second explanation suggested by Forbis (1973: 156) is 'soul': 'a person is a *sull*' (soul) . . . but the locals assure me that the word is still *sullen*. A third explanation is given by Mautz (2008: 52):

Little Sullen 'child' refers to the very first child on Pitcairn. Sully, whose nickname was Sullen, was born on the HMS Bounty on its ride through the Pacific Ocean on the search for a new land (the only child of the first generation without an English father).

Given the importance of eponyms in P and N, this explanation may well be the correct one.

6.7 Eponyms

6.7.1 Previous studies

The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines *eponym* as 'the name of an object or activity that is also the name of the person who first produced the object or did the activity'. Whilst in English lexicography, eponyms such as *to boycott* or *to lynch* are treated as fairly marginal, eponyms are central to

understanding the nature of P and N. They not only constitute a major process of expanding the lexicon, but illustrate the interdependency of history, language, nature and speakers and how language is used for social control. For linguists to understand P-N eponyms, means having to consider numerous cultural prerequisites. The existence of eponyms in N was first commented on by Bishop Montgomery, who remarked (1896: 25–26):

But the words which I specially wish to fix as curiosities are of another sort. There is one serious danger in paying a visit to these people, especially if there is anything peculiar in your habits or appearance. It is more than likely that your surname may be permanently incorporated into the language as an adjective denoting that peculiarity. This is at least alarming. The course alluded to has been adopted sufficiently often to warrant incurring a serious risk in the case of any future visitor. For instance, it is now a common phrase among this community to say, *I shall big Jack*, meaning ‘I shall cry’. This phrase is derived from an actual person, Mr. John Evans, who is a stout man and addicted to tears. His softness of disposition had added a word to the language. Another phrase is a *corey sullun*, meaning ‘a busybody’. A Mr. Corey, a visitor here, was reputed to be a busybody, and he has in consequence enriched this curious language with a new adjective. Still more strange is it when such epithets are added to the names of four-footed animals, that is a *bremán* cow, you may hear a man say. Now, poor Mr. Breman was also a casual visitor, and was remarkably thin. The fact that he was a stranger called attention to his personal appearance, and *bremán* now stands for ‘thin’ and probably will continue to do so for ever, or until some thinner person attracts their notice. From the action of the same law, a *snell sullun* is a niggardly man. I have said enough to call attention to a most curious evolution of language arising from the extreme rarity of communication between the outer world and their harbourless island. A new face excites general astonishment, and close observation leads to the enrichment of the language at the expense of the individual.

Two of Montgomery’s expressions are no longer in use; I have not met anyone who remembers who Messrs. Corey and Breman were. Some Norfolk Islanders use the other expressions and know who they refer to. The meaning of *snell* has changed. It does not refer to a person but is used as a verb ‘to cater insufficiently’ or ‘not to have enough to eat’.

Montgomery fails to mention that the tradition of creating eponyms can be traced back to Pitcairn Island. Ross and Moverley (1964: 169) comment that ‘frequent use of proper names to designate an object is a feature of Pitcairnese.’ Their vocabulary identifies only sixteen examples, mainly fish and plant names. Källgård (1993: 84) identified 59 eponyms in P and comments that ‘not in many languages would the percentage be as high as 8% in Pitcairnese’.

New eponyms continue to be added to P. Birkett (1997: 289) mentions an example: “If somebody disappears on Pitcairn he or she *do Shelley* – a few years ago a teenager hid in a cave when she was supposed to be brought to New Zealand”.

6.7.2 Formal properties of eponyms

Eponymic lexical items exhibit a variety of formal properties. At first sight, these are shared with other lexemes of the language. Closer examination reveals that the eponymic origin of a word can have consequences, such as restrictions on their susceptibility to grammatical rules.

Single lexemes are P *eddie* ‘a dish consisting of green China bananas boiled in coconut milk’. It is named after Edward Christian (b. 1870) whose first utterance on his return from Tahiti was: *bail china in har melk* ‘boil china bananas in coconut milk’. Another P example is *jamu* ‘tasting bad’ (synonym of ‘*taste dorg*’) after Oliver Clark’s habit of calling his dogs *Jamu*. N examples include *luusi* ‘to be tearful, to cry’ after Lucy Downs who often cried in public such as when an airplane departed; *mudda (mada)* ‘grated bananas rolled as dumplings and boiled in milk’, usually called *china dumpling* in P. This dish was named after Esther Maria Quintal (Nobbs), whose nickname was *Mudda* (b. 1832 on Pitcairn).

Similes with ‘as’ or ‘semes/semis’ are common. They include P *deaf as Albert*, ‘hard of hearing’ after Albert Young (1889–1894) *same as cock fer Archie*’s having ‘a bad cold’ (after Archibald Warren, b. 1887, whose rooster once caught a cold) and *you same as Tingi*, said to someone who begs. *Tingi* was the nickname of an Islander who is said to have often asked for things.

Examples for N are *semis eyes fer Bubbys* ‘to be able to look around corners, to know everything that goes on’, after David Leon Evans, whose nickname is *Bubby* and *semis ar behg f’ Kitty Otts* ‘a bag like Kitty Ott’s very voluminous bottomless carry-all’ (described by Rachel Borg, *Norfolk Online* 22nd June 2012).

Compounds and short lexical phrases comprise expressions in P such as *Edmund plun*: ‘a banana’, said to have been brought from Tahiti or Mangareva by Edmond McCoy (b. 1868); *Elwyn grass*: high, rank grass introduced from Mangareva by Elwyn Christian, b. 1909; and *Christie drink*: ‘hot drink which has been preserved in a thermos flask for a long time’ after Christie Warren’s (b. 1898) habit to pour hot chocolate in a thermos and drink it the following morning.

Examples for N are *busswargas* ‘exceedingly ugly, uglier than the person whose nickname was *Warga*’; *Evansville* ‘area where members of the Evans family resided’; and *Big Jack* ‘a weed named after Mr. Jack Evans who recommended it as feed for goats and pigs’, a smallish plant. Another much larger weed is called *Little Jack*.

Many P placenames are **longer phrases** such as *Down-under-Johnnie-fall* ‘the place where John Mill (1793–1814) fell from a cliff whilst gathering sea bird

eggs'; or *Where-Reynolds-cut-har-firewood* 'the place where the Captain of the Sultan who visited Pitcairn in 1817 cut firewood'.

Similar names are also found in N, including *Down-Monty-drown* 'a place associated with a forgotten incident' and *Johnnie Nigger bun ett* 'the place where the African-American whaler Johnnie Jackson burnt bracken to aid a pig hunt and let the fire go out of hand.'¹

Other longer phrases include *ar presen fer Lass* 'the gift of erotic love in exchange for carpentry and wood chopping tasks', after the New Zealander David Thomas Edward (1919–1984), who moved to Norfolk in 1927 and whose nickname was Lass. The expression originated when Lass overheard two Islanders discussing what to give their wives for their birthday and said 'I know what I would give her.' Finally, *ar fortune fer bieby's* 'chronic back ache' derives from John Buffett the First's nickname.

6.7.3 Semantic properties

Eponymic **names of natural kinds** are numerous in both varieties. They reflect the interaction of the Islanders with their new places of abode, in particular their role in identifying culturally useful species and the ongoing role individuals had in introducing new ones. P fish names reflect a social practice on Pitcairn Island, the fish share out. The haul of fish caught by the community's fishing vessel was distributed into piles for each family. A family member who spotted an unnamed fish in their pile had the right to name the fish. Usually, the name of the fish was the person's name or nickname. Examples include: *Archie* 'a small light greyish fish named after Archibald Warren (b. 1887)'; *Hanna* 'a small fish of the *Letas* family named after Hanna Adams (b. 1799), a daughter of the mutineer John Adams'; *Mummy* 'the damselfish (*Abudefduf sordidus*), named after Caroline P. Johnson, who came from Mangareva in 1893 and was nicknamed *Mummy*'; and *Sandford* 'a long, thin fish named after Sandford Warren (b. 1864), who was the first islander to get it in his share'.

As the practice of fish share out was discontinued on Norfolk Island, there are no N fish names of this type.

P plant names often contain a reference to who introduced a plant. Examples for P are: *flat russel* 'a sweet potato introduced by Russel McCoy (b. 1845)'; *herbert* 'a sweet potato introduced by Herbert Young (b. 1873)'; *nunk* 'a sweet potato introduced by Alphonso Christian (b. 1846) whose nickname was *Nunk*' and more

1 <http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-a-pitkern-norfolk-perspective/page/21/>

recently *Von bean* ‘brown bean introduced by Yvonne Simpson, medical officer (1980–1982).’

N examples of plant names include the noxious weed *William Taylor*, named after the Melanesian Mission mason who came to Norfolk Island in the 1880s, and the banana variety *Dr Codrington* named after Robert Henry Codrington (1830–1922), the mission linguist and headmaster of the Melanesian Mission school on *Norfolk Island* from 1867 to 1887.

A list of about 100 eponymous Pitcairn Island **placenames** is found in Ross and Moverley (1964: 173–181). Examples include *Allen* ‘a rock submerged at high tide where Allen Christian (b. 1855) nearly came to grief’, *Nedjun* ‘the place where the mutineer Edward Young (d. 1800) had his house or garden’, *Ed’s Fence* ‘Edward Young’s (b. 1797) enclosure’.

Eponymous placenames abound in N:

Perhaps by far the most common cultural placenames on Norfolk refer to people. Understandably the list is almost endless. Some are now considered standard and so entrenched in popular folklore and tradition that they have not changed over many generations – these include *Hennie’s Lake*, *Freddicks Age* (Frederick’s Edge), *Simon’s Water*, and *Matt’s Ground*. Others change from one generation to the next, particularly depending on who owns or occupies the land. This is a characteristic part of the naming and claiming tradition or continuum *Alec’s Paddock* one day became *Boo-Boo* and *Doodsie’s Paddock*, which in turn became *Joy ‘Boo-Boo’s’* paddock, and so on. (Nebauer-Borg, <http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-a-pitkern-norfk-perspective/page/21/>)

A comprehensive list of N placenames can be found in Nash (2013). Among them are more than 100 eponymic ones. They exhibit a number of interesting features:

- As in P, N placenames are often derived from people’s nicknames rather than given names, such as *Tinkers* ‘name of the house and property once belonging to George ‘Tinker’ Evans (1835–1910)’; *Powders* ‘a shoreline fishing location on Philip Island named after Nathaniel Evans (b. 1837) whose nickname was Powder’; *Salty Theatre* ‘an open air theatre named after Ken ‘Salty’ Salt, who constructed it’.
- The etymology of several placenames is in dispute: *Puppy’s Point* in Anson Bay is possibly named after Les Quintal’s grandfather ‘Pappy’ Quintal. Some Islanders derive the name from the rock that bears similarity to a puppy, and yet other inform me that a puppy once drowned there. *J.E. Road* is said by some to be named after one Jeff Edwards, an early resident of Norfolk Island. Others believe that it is short for ‘Journey’s End.’

- A number of placenames are sensitive as they recall the frailties or peccadillos of the persons mentioned. *Ar bank fer Menzies* ‘Kingston pier’, is where Menzies used to catch his fish rather than going on a boat; or *Buffettville* Kingston, seat of the administration where many members of the Buffett family were employed.

Eponyms for **human actions** in P include: *russell* ‘to hide something away, to cheat’ after Russell McCoy 1845–1924; *wait same as Edna* ‘to eat last, take food after everyone else’ as Edna Christian (b. Warren, 1898) who was once very late for a public dinner; *deaf as Albert* ‘hard of hearing’ as Albert Young (b. 1899) who was almost deaf since he suffered badly from the measles as a young boy; *you same as Bose*, said to someone who does something differently from others, after *Bose*, the nickname of Melville Christian (b. 1897), who lived more or less like a hermit and was sometimes called *Melville Bose Sose consumption Christian*; and *you same as Dorcas*, said to someone who stumbles or falls, because Dorcas Christian (b. Christian, 1873), Allen Christian’s wife, once stumbled, stepped on a plate and smashed it.

In N, we find older words such as *toebi* ‘to help oneself to others’ produce’, *artaren* ‘to admire’ and *emuns* ‘to remain detached’, where present day speakers no longer remember who Toby, Arthur and Edmond were. More recent examples are *turkey* ‘to wander away from home’ after Janine Brown’s nickname *Turkey* (family word supplied by Janine 2018); *blucheren* ‘bout to have indiscriminate sex’ as some members of this family were said to (Janelle Blucher 2018) and *doin’ a Bortie* ‘having tears in your eyes for any small reason’ after Estelle Evans/Buffett, Rhonda Griffiths’ grandmother.

Human qualities are expressed by P eponyms such as *fanny* ‘not very smart’ (origin unknown), *same as William* ‘angry or complaining without reason’ after William Christian (b. 1860). Källgård (1989: 122) refers to the statement of a Pitcairn Islander: “I hate that word: People have died because they didn’t go to see a doctor, since they did not want to risk to be called WILLIAM”.

In N, we find *suta/suter* ‘homosexual, effeminate’ after Nigel Suter, who attended Norfolk Island Central School in the 1970s; *gut ar McCoy* ‘be unreasonable’, and *dowley, downly daule* ‘depressed’; *Dowley* was the nickname of Arthur Quintal, born on Pitcairn in 1816 and who died on Norfolk in 1902. The origin of this name is an English dialect word meaning ‘lonely, solitary, poorly, sick, sad, dull’. When he left Pitcairn, he left his land in trust for the landless of the future, and the name of this land is *Dowly*. The meaning of the word has changed little from its English origin, but it appears that as the memory of Arthur Quintal faded, the word was reinterpreted as being derived from English ‘down’. Similar

is the term *Buffetten* ‘to sit on the fence, be undecided’. Several of the above words refer to living or recently deceased persons and are highly sensitive.

6.7.4 Origins of Pitkern and Norf’k eponyms

P and N eponyms can be traced back to the formative years of the language. Possible sources are either the languages known to the Bounty mutineers and their entourage or the special social ecology that came into being on Pitcairn.

Unfortunately, I do not know whether eponymic expressions were common in any of the dialects of the British sailors and the only study I have found on 18th century nautical English suggests that it was not very common.² There is no solid evidence in publications about the Tahitian language that eponyms existed and, if they did, they would probably not have been used in the communication with the British mutineers.

Evidence for eponyms in St. Kitts Creole is available, though the lexical documentation of this language is not extensive. A few names for natural kinds appear to be eponyms. They include *Tania plant*, *Tom Tigway grass* ‘a weed’, *Mary bud* ‘unspecified bird’ (note the pronunciation [bʌd], which is also found in P and N, e.g. *goesbud*), as well as two words that are also found in P and N, *shaddock* ‘Australian English usually pomelo’, named after Captain Shaddock, who introduced it to the West Indies in the 17th century and *porter bush* ‘bush with edible leaves’ (Norf’k *potter bush* ‘edible green leaves’). The name of this plant may also be derived from its use as a substitute for hop in brewing, and Tahitian *pota* ‘taro leaves’ may have been involved.

A large number of St. Kitts placenames are eponyms. There are three constructions as in Pitkern placenames, i.e. name + s; name + type of place; or name + s + type of location, as in *Philips* ‘name of an inland estate and village’; *Paxton ghutt* ‘Paxton’s creek’ and *Pinney’s estate*. Analogous forms in Pitkern are *Big George Stone*; *Driver’s hole* and *Vieder’s* ‘a banana grove belonging to Vieder Young’.

The data from the West Indies suggest that at least some types of eponyms found in P and N may have originated from the speech of Ned Young. This does not include eponyms expressing human actions and human qualities, which are so prominent in the language. These may be an independent development and as Källgård (1981: 16) comments, ‘this, of course is due to the fact that

2 [https://www.researchgate.net/ ... / 259575262_Translating_Shipbuilding_and_Maritime_Eponyms](https://www.researchgate.net/.../259575262_Translating_Shipbuilding_and_Maritime_Eponyms)

Pitcairnese is spoken by very few people, so that individuals have been able to influence the vocabulary to a much greater extent than in most other languages'. In a dense multiplex communication network where everyone knows almost everything about everyone else, eponyms reminding speakers and hearers of the vulnerabilities of their interlocutors are a handy way of maintaining a social equilibrium.

6.7.5 Identifying eponyms

Unfortunately, there is nothing in the synchronic form of an eponym that tells us that we are dealing with one. There is no mechanical identification procedure and appearances can be deceptive. The P name *snip fern* 'garden asparagus' suggests that this vegetable is harvested by snipping it off. In fact, it derives from Louisa Young (b. 1879), nicknamed *Snip*, who introduced this plant. Identification of eponyms is not a straightforward matter and previous researchers have missed or mis-analysed a large number of eponymic lexemes.

Let me briefly illustrate the difficulties. Ross and Moverley's (1964: 230) word-list contains an entry *hair* glossed as 'not fit to eat, not good enough' and they suggest 'local usage, originally of goat's meat'. Källgård's P vocabulary (1998) also has an entry *hair* 'bad, useless', again suggesting English 'hair' as its etymology. A more plausible account was given to me by Meralda Warren. Arnold Hare who visited Pitcairn with his family in 1928, introduced the first outboard motor, fitting it the wrong way around, thus making it 'useless'.

Ross and Moverley (1964: 243) gloss *miti* as 'a kind of big blue fish', but do not provide an etymology. In the 1960s, Flint made extensive inquiries about this word, which he suspected was of Tahitian origin. In reply to Flint's question Gardner White (in a letter dated 30th June 1961) wrote:

Know of no fish of this name. The word has quite a bit to do with fish, however. First, it means sea/salt water. Secondly, saline sauces used along with food and fish as seasoning. e i'a miti /eí a mitti/ would be 'sea fish'.

Källgård (1981: 31) correctly explains *miti* [mite] 'wrasse *Coris aygula*', as follows "the first fish of this kind which was caught by the islanders fell on the share of Harriet Melissa McCoy (b. 1847), who was nicknamed "Miti". Miti returned from Norfolk Island in 1858 at the age of 11 and in 1871 married Daniel Christian.

Alice Buffett (1999) has an entry *aali* 'slender' and suggests that it is of Tahitian origin, presumably *aari* meaning 'irregular', 'anything that is narrow and thin in the middle', or 'slender in one place and thick in another'. A more likely source, however, is a nickname. Alice Bertha Schmitz (1891–1984), known as *Arlee*, is remembered as having been small and narrow-waisted.

Buffett's encyclopedia (1999) features an entry *luusa* 'menstruation', a word not documented in P. I hypothesized that as a women's word it might have originated in Tahitian, but this could not be confirmed. In early 2018, I talked about my eponyms research with my Norfolk Island travel agent Joe Adams and asked him if he knew any examples. He volunteered *aunty* and *loosa* both meaning 'to menstruate, menstruation'. He told me that these terms refer to a female member of his family. Her nickname was *Auntie Loosa* and she was disliked by her nieces and nephews.

In a number of instances, words that were classified as eponyms turn out to be something else. Thus, though some Pitcairn Islanders claim that the word *duncan* 'lavatory' is named after a sea-captain called Duncan who relieved himself in public or had a lavatory built for his private use, a much more likely derivation is English *dunnekin*.

In another instance, a word taken as an eponym turns out to be a non-eponymic Tahitian word. Buffett (1999: 98) explains the origins of *tampali* 'a light hearted and friendly greeting used to welcome friends who casually visit on an unexpected though welcome basis' as follows: "from a person who was nicknamed *Tampali*, a person who mostly called upon people unarranged but always made welcome and invited to stay, sometimes for long periods of time". There is no record of a person with this nickname. A more likely origin is the Tahitian expression *tapare* 'signal by a motion of hand or head: to invite a person to approach.'

Whilst there is no mechanical discovery procedure for eponyms, there are ways of finding them:

- It is necessary not only to know the name of people but also their nicknames. I have compiled a substantial, but by no means exhaustive list of nicknames of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders based on Lareau (1995) (see appendix 6.1).
- Unusual grammatical behaviour at times indicates that a word is an eponym. Thus, adjectives that were derived from proper nouns such as *N snell* 'niggardly' take the copula *ess* and do not undergo stages of comparison.
- Words for which previous researchers have been unable to provide an etymology are candidates for eponyms. Källgård (1998) provides a figure of 9% of the P lexicon. Examples are:

| | | |
|----|----------------|---------------------|
| P: | <i>pitt</i> | 'a small fish' |
| | <i>kutshe</i> | 'kind of fish' |
| | <i>bishe</i> | 'billy goat' |
| | <i>trailib</i> | 'freezing' |
| | <i>moofla</i> | 'barren (of goats)' |

| | | |
|----|---------------|----------------------|
| N: | <i>smedge</i> | ‘masturbate’ |
| | <i>gada</i> | ‘sexual intercourse’ |
| | <i>duruch</i> | ‘grime’ |
| | <i>bolos</i> | ‘cold and clammy’ |
| | <i>nini</i> | ‘to tipple’ |

6.8 Mixed etymology and calquing

Creolists have known for some time (see Mühlhäusler 1983) that in contact languages there is a significant tendency for lexical items to combine two or more sources, a phenomenon called ‘multiple etymology’ or ‘lexical mergers’. This reflects the tendency of speakers in a contact situation to prefer words that are similar in form and meaning across language boundaries. P and N have a number of examples including:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>tabi</i> , | ‘stop, wait a while’ according to Harrison (1972: 336), Tahitian <i>tape’a</i> |
| <i>stabi</i> | ‘to stop’ encouraged the transition of English <i>stop a bit</i> to N <i>tabi</i> |
| <i>iwi</i> | ‘small, thin’ combines Tahitian <i>ive</i> ‘boney, thin’ with Scots <i>wee</i> |
| <i>it-et</i> | ‘to stare, to eat’ combines Tahitian <i>ite</i> ‘see, look’ with English <i>eat</i> . This unlikely semantic pairing is illustrated in expressions such as <i>eat ar hoem naenwe orn ar sullun</i> ‘eat a dreamfish on these people’ = ‘look at these people’ |
| <i>tarplou</i> | ‘something absorbent used on a baby’s bed’ combines Tahitian <i>tapuru</i> ‘blanket’ and English <i>tarpaulin</i> |
| <i>tocha</i> | ‘fail to ripen and turn black (of banana)’, ‘burnt food’ combines Tahitian <i>toita</i> ‘unripe’ and English <i>tortured</i> |

A small number of words combine Tahitian and English forms. In some instances, the English form adds specificity to a Tahitian word:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>bulb-tale</i> | ‘the most common type of taro on Pitcairn’ |
| <i>red fatau</i> | ‘a kind of hibiscus on Pitcairn’ |
| <i>fish-tullla</i> | ‘tail fin’ |

In other examples, the Tahitian form makes the English descriptor more specific:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>niau broom</i> | ‘broom made from the ribs of palm leaves’ |
| <i>api plant</i> | ‘giant taro’ |
| <i>hue fish</i> | ‘poisonous sea-fish’ |
| <i>totwe crab</i> | ‘hard shelled crab found among seaweed’ |

Both dual etymology and compounding English and Tahitian words may have been involved in P *olwe-boat* ‘canoe-shaped case of a coconut blossom’: Tahitian *oro* ‘case of coconut blossom’ and ‘small canoe’. Both English *boat* and Tahitian *pota’a* ‘circular, curved’ might have been involved in the second part of this compound. *Oony* ‘only’, according to Harrison (1972: 327) may be a conflation of an English dialect form and Tahitian *anae* ‘only’.

Calquing is found when the meaning of an English form reflects Tahitian semantic and/or formal properties. The vocabulary of Ross and Moverley (1964) contains very few P examples and Ross (1964: 167), in his account of the history of P, states that ‘no doubt many calques have escaped my notice.’ For obvious reasons, words that developed in N do not include calques of Tahitian:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>han</i> | ‘hand and (lower) arm’ as in St. Kitts Creole and Tahitian |
| <i>le-eg, laig</i> | ‘the leg including the foot’ |
| <i>tree kokonut</i> | ‘coconut tree’ |

6.9 Words that can be traced back to English dialects

In spite of frequent references to Pitcairn Island as a linguistic laboratory and in spite of expectations that it would be relatively straightforward to trace the words of the language to the specific dialects spoken by the mutineers, in actual fact this has turned out a relatively unproductive exercise.

According to Ross and Moverley (1964: 168), Matthew Quintal from Padstow (Cornwall) contributed the word *granny-bonnet* ‘kind of flower’, possibly also *doo* ‘don’t’ and *tede* ‘other’. *Granny-bonnet*, according to Göthesson (1997: 286, 288), refers to the flower of the passionfruit, a South American plant, which was documented on Pitcairn first in the 1930s and is unlikely to have been around in Matthew Quintal’s time. He may, however, have been the originator of a few other items listed in Phillips’ (1993) glossary, including:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>alau</i> | ‘white water lily’ (<i>alihau</i> is a kind of taro plant that grows in ditches) |
| <i>apen, apon</i> | ‘apron’ |
| <i>anau</i> | ‘what do he say’ (<i>anai, anieh</i> is a question tag in P and N) |

He also refers to the frequent use of *up* as an ‘adverb’ in expressions such as answering up ‘to answer’.

Scots influence, by contrast, seems more secure, as several mutineers came from Scotland. Examples include:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>blood</i> | 'to bleed' |
| <i>bole</i> | 'to make a small hole' |
| <i>dark</i> | 'to become dark' |
| <i>devil's needle</i> | 'dragon fly' |
| <i>gaggle</i> | 'to throw', 'to heave' |
| <i>wuttu-waye</i> | 'how' |

The following words may also been inherited via St. Kitts Creole

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>yella</i> | 'yellow' |
| <i>drehg</i> | 'to drag' |
| <i>bally</i> | 'belly, stomach' |
| <i>make-make</i> | 'to be fussy or capricious' |

The British mutineers were the source of a significant number of nautical words, whose percentage Källgård (1993) puts at 2.6%, including:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>all-hands</i> | 'everybody' |
| <i>chest</i> | 'sea-chest' |
| <i>deck</i> | 'floor' |
| <i>grain</i> | 'a four-pronged fish spear'. |

None of the above are found in N. However, the following ones are shared by the two varieties:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| <i>heave way</i> | 'throw away' |
| <i>sing out</i> | 'shout' |
| <i>flog</i> | 'spank' |

Gleißner (1997: 53) writes that only 0.3% of all N words are of nautical origin, but qualifies this statement by pointing out the indeterminacy of this term. Words such as *lighter-man* or *well* 'tank in a fishing boat' are without doubt of nautical origin but not likely to reflect the heritage of the *Bounty*.

6.10 Tahitian words

6.10.1 Identifying words of Tahitian origin

Establishing Tahitian etymons in P-N has been attempted by a number of writers, beginning with Ross and Moverley (1964: 166–167), and a detailed account is given by Harrison (1972: 268–358). Flint's uncatalogued letters contain extensive correspondence with Mr. Gardner-White, resident of Tahiti in the early 1960s. There is a tendency in published work on the language to label any Polynesian-looking word Tahitian and fanciful etymologies are often given. There are a number of tasks:

- to establish which words are of Tahitian origin;
- to distinguish those words from words with dual or multiple etymologies and from calques;
- to establish at which point Tahitian words entered P-N.

As regards the first task, Ross and Moverley (1964: 117) distinguished words that are clearly of Tahitian origin from others that appear to be Polynesian and whose phonology is compatible with Tahitian. These words may actually exist in Tahitian but not be recorded, or another Polynesian language, particularly Austral (Tubuaian), may have been the source.

Ross and Moverley excluded words that are phonologically not compatible with Tahitian, such as *unga* 'crab', but this constraint may be irrelevant for the contact situation in which Tahitian was used: form, meaning, grammatical category and other lexical information is likely to have been restructured during language contact.

Conforming to Tahitian phonotactics is not necessary nor is it sufficient. P *fahilu* 'toilet paper' suggests a Polynesian origin but it is derived from 'from Hilo' the place from where the first toilet paper was introduced. P *tunina* 'a tree whose fruit has a hole at the top and a note can be produced by blowing across it' derives from *tuny-nut*. Identifying the etymology of suspected Tahitian words also remains a difficult task because the Tahitian language has changed greatly since 1789 and because both the form and meaning of Tahitian words was not fully present in the mixed language that developed on Pitcairn Island.

The question at which point words of Tahitian origin entered P-N has not been considered thus far, but it is an important one. Let me elaborate this with some examples.

The P fish name *taitai* is not attested for Norfolk Island, though the adjective *taitai* 'tasteless, insipid' is still widely used there. On Pitcairn, *taitai* can also refer to the *Austin-Bird* 'red footed booby'. It is unlikely that it was named

after the third-generation islander Thomas Austin Buffett (b. 1851), who was taken to Norfolk Island in 1856 where he died in 1874, but likely to have been named after Austin Young, born on Pitcairn Island in 1878 (Källgård 1989: 69). He may have been the first one to taste the bird and give it its name *taitai*. Who gave the name *taitai* to the fish is not known, but we are certainly not dealing with a directly borrowed Tahitian fish name.

The Tahitian word *uru* ‘bread fruit’ does not appear in early documents such as Buffett (1846) and Young (1894). Källgård (1981) lists the common name *bread*³ as well as *uru* and comments ‘the Polynesian *uru* became popular on the island after the film *The Mutiny on the Bounty* with Trevor Howard and Marlon Brando was shown (again) in 1980 because it is frequently used there’.

A kind of banana, *puri’ini*, is listed by Ross and Moverley (1964) as being of Tahitian origin and they provide the Tahitian etymology *puro ini*. What they fail to mention is that this plant was brought from Tahiti by Edmond McCoy (b. 1868), presumably together with its name.

When examining plant names, we need to consider that the flora of Pitcairn was not identical with that of Tahiti or Tubuai and that there were a significant number of endemic plants on Pitcairn Island. Ross and Moverley (1964: 166):

Since the flora and fauna of Pitcairn are so very different from those of England, there must, in almost all these cases, have been transfer; presumably the English Settlers applied such names as best they could, guided by real or fancied similarities and, sometimes, no doubt, merely by hazy recollection of the English object. The Tahitians may have indulged in the same sort of linguistic practice, but they perhaps did so to a lesser extent by reason of the similarities between their own flora and fauna and those of the Island. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to discuss these transfers in general. In the case of Pitcairn, an adequate flora and fauna does not yet exist.

With the publication of Göthesson’s (1997) detailed description of Pitcairn flora, it is now possible to begin to fill this gap.

6.10.2 Semantic domains of Tahitian words

Whereas in Creole languages ‘the broad semantic domain of European-derived words [. . .] may be termed public’ (Holm 1988: 82), the domains of non-European derived words are typically private and include sexuality, food preparation and child rearing. P-N is no exception to this general principle, though.

³ There is a placename *Jenny’s Bread* on Pitcairn Island. Jenny was the Tahitian woman who left Pitcairn in 1816.

Tahitian-derived words are more strongly in evidence in the domain of taboo, marked and undesirable phenomena than in other Creole languages known to me. The strong link between undesirable objects and practices and the Tahitian culture can be interpreted as a sign of the racism that was very much in evidence in the early history of Pitcairn. It is noted that many of the taboo expressions in P-N (e.g. sexual terms) would not have been taboo in Tahitian, but in the perception of the fundamentalist Christian community that emerged after 1800 had certainly become dangerous words. Of the approximately 200+ words of Tahitian origin, about 75 words belong to this category, contrasting with 38 names for plants, 15 for parts of plants, 30 fish names, 21 words referring to food preparation, 16 to domestic implements and 33 to a range of other domains (Källgård 1989: 30). Particularly interesting is that there are 75 semantically negatively marked words of Tahitian origin and only 11 positively marked ones. Examples of the former category include:

| Tahitian-derived word | Tahitian | Meaning in P-N |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <i>ama'ula, uma-oola</i> | T. <i>amaura</i> 'ignoramus' | awkward, ungainly or clumsy |
| <i>buhu</i> | T. <i>puu</i> 'ball, protuberance' | contusion, swelling from a bump |
| <i>eeyulla</i> | T. <i>aruaru</i> 'infantile, childish' | adolescent, immature, not dry behind the ears |
| <i>gari/gara</i> | T. <i>tare</i> 'phlegm' | accumulation of dirt, dust, grime, grease etc. |
| <i>halu</i> | T. <i>haru</i> 'rob, seize by violence', 'robber' | person suffering abject poverty, person of no consequence |
| <i>hapa</i> | T. <i>hapa</i> 'deviation, error, sin, irregular, crooked' | crippled, ill, crooked due to one leg being shorter |
| <i>hawa</i> | T. <i>hava</i> 'dirty, befouled' | excrement, faeces |
| <i>hoopaye</i> | T. <i>hupe</i> 'mucous of the nose' | mucous secreted in the nose |
| <i>howa-howa</i> | T. <i>havahava</i> 'dirty, filthy, befouled' | to soil one's pants from a bowel movement |
| <i>iti</i> | T. <i>iti</i> 'twitchings before labour pains' | any of the wasting diseases but mainly referring to tuberculosis |
| <i>laha, lu-hu</i> | T. <i>raha</i> 'downy, hairy' | dandruff |

(continued)

| Tahitian-derived word | Tahitian | Meaning in P-N |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>loofee, lufi</i> | T. <i>ruhi</i> 'drowsy' | out of sorts, not well |
| <i>maioe</i> | T. <i>ma</i> (augmentative) + <i>ioio</i> 'make a noise as little children' | given to whimpering or crying a lot, like a child but not necessarily a child |
| <i>mahoen, mahone</i> | T. <i>mahoahoa</i> 'sluggish, loitering, idle' | malingering |
| <i>mehoe</i> | T. <i>meho</i> 'to be hiding or seeking refuge among the bushes' | insecure, timid |
| <i>mutty-mutty, muti</i> | T. <i>mate</i> 'death, illness' | dead, died |
| <i>nanu, nannoo</i> | T. <i>nanu</i> 'envy, jealousy' | jealous |
| <i>ootatow</i> | T. <i>utatau</i> 'little yams that grow on the vine' | youth who has reached maturity but is still very small in stature |
| <i>ponapona</i> | T. <i>ponapona</i> 'having joints' | hard and knobbly |
| <i>po-o</i> | T. <i>paa paa</i> 'dried up' | barren or infertile soil, dried out (of skin), affected with dry rot |
| <i>puu, poo-oo</i> | T. <i>puu</i> 'unripe' | unripe |
| <i>tarpou</i> | T. <i>tapao</i> 'sign, mark' | stains on the hands caused from peeling some fruit or vegetables |
| <i>toohi, tuuhi</i> | T. <i>tuhi</i> 'to curse' | to curse, blaspheme or swear |
| <i>tye-tye</i> | T. <i>taitai</i> 'bitter, insipid' | tasteless food |
| <i>oo-ar</i> | T. <i>uua</i> 'to open and distend, as a flower' | sitting ungraciously, opening of a flower |
| <i>wa-haloo</i> | T. <i>ahuru</i> 'rotten or decayed state' | dilapidated, ramshackle |

Tahitian words are also in evidence in the domain of women's affairs and the nursery, though some of the following ones are not exclusive to this context.

The kitchen and food preparation again were the domain of the women who brought with them detailed knowledge about food found on Pitcairn and

| Tahitian-derived word | Tahitian | Meaning in P-N |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>habuu</i> | T. <i>hapu</i> 'pregnant' | pregnant |
| <i>ipi</i> | T. <i>ipo</i> 'darling' | little darling, little fool |
| <i>maia</i> | T. <i>maia</i> 'midwife' | midwife |
| <i>maio</i> | T. <i>mimio</i> 'wrinkled face' | cry, whimper, snivel |
| <i>mimi</i> | T. <i>mimi</i> 'urinate' | to urinate |
| <i>puu puu</i> | T. <i>pupu</i> 'huddle together' | to huddle close together |

food preparation. Their input is still reflected in the P and N languages. However, with changed dietary habits, many of these terms have become obsolete, particularly on Norfolk Island. Once the name for food in general was *mat-ai-o*, a word still in use on Pitcairn. Some traditional dishes were:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>orlye, olee</i> | 'Pitcairn banana dish' |
| <i>paaa</i> | 'roasted fish' |
| <i>pilhai</i> | 'boiled pudding' |
| <i>poi</i> | 'pudding sweet' |
| <i>popoi</i> | 'dish made with mashed ingredients' |
| <i>pote</i> | 'cooked taro leaves' |
| <i>tairo</i> | 'sauce made with rotten coconut' |

Food preparation utensils and equipment words include:

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| <i>ana</i> | 'seat grater' |
| <i>tui</i> | 'stone pounder' |
| <i>yollo</i> | 'stone grater' |

Words describing the qualities of the dishes prepared were:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>mono-mono</i> | 'very tasty' |
| <i>nami</i> | 'bad, gone rotten' |
| <i>taitai</i> | 'insipid' |

Preparation of food involved activities such as:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>papahaia</i> | ‘to pound food on a wooden block’ |
| <i>pehe</i> | ‘to strip banana leaves for making <i>pilhai</i> ’ |
| <i>udi</i> | ‘to wash, to rinse, especially root vegetables’ |
| <i>wihi</i> | ‘wrap in a banana leaf to cook’ |

A final domain is made up of emotion words. Tahitian emotions (Heelas 1986) differ considerably from those of the British sailors and there are continuing differences between present-day Pitcairners and Norfolk Islanders and outsiders. Some of these are evidenced in language, though this is a very complex topic and cannot be dealt with here in detail. There are a number of expressions of Tahitian origin such as:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>hili</i> | ‘feeling of being pleasantly unemployed, lethargic’ |
| <i>a’u</i> | ‘bowels, intestines, seat of emotion’ |
| <i>eeyalla</i> | ‘precocious, acting older than one really is’ |
| <i>hui-hui</i> | ‘disgusted, unnerved, feeling impending death’ |
| <i>wawaha</i> | ‘haughty, self-important’ |
| <i>nanu</i> | ‘jealous, envious, grudging’ |

The bulk of emotion words, however, are forms of English origin or eponyms. The former do not necessarily have English meanings, for instance:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>pepper</i> | ‘to be wound up, to be excited by a compliment’ |
| <i>semes-waye</i> | ‘independent, aloof, unpredictable, shy’ |
| <i>emans</i> | ‘shy, to remain detached’ |

6.11 Words of St. Kitts origin

The first reported indication of a contribution to the language of Pitcairn that can only be attributed to Young is found in Ross and Moverley’s entry for [mɔːgə] *morga* ‘thin’ (1964: 244). After considering some English dialectal forms, they quote Cassidy (p.c.) to the effect that Jamaica has both ‘lower-class’ [maːgə] and ‘middle-class’ [mɔːgə]. Finally, they mentioned that an education officer in St. Kitts had informed them that [mɔːgə] was in use on that island. They thus concluded that Pitcairnese [mɔːgə] was ‘due to Edward Young, the midshipman from St Kitts’.

The question of Ned Young's contribution to P was revisited by Baker and Mühlhäusler (2013). Their findings were:

- 50+ words of late 18th century St. Kitts origin (listed in Baker & Bruyn 1998) can be documented in present day P-N.
- Several lexical words are high frequency words, including *baeng* 'to hit'; *gael/gehl* 'woman'; *nasey* 'nasty'; *fowl* 'chicken'; *moosa* 'almost'; *full up* 'to fill'; *dead* 'to die'; *sweet* 'delicious'.
- A large proportion of grammatical words are of St. Kitts origin, including *bin* 'past marker'; *long* 'with', *never* 'past completive', *no* 'negator'.
- The frequent use of phrasal verbs such as *cook up* 'to cook', *fry up* 'to fry', or *full up* 'to fill' is shared by St. Kitts Creole and P-N.
- A number of pronouns are shared, including *me one* 'by myself', the use of subject pronouns in oblique case, and possibly *yorlye* 'second person plural', older varieties of which closely resemble St. Kitts *aw(l)yu*.

Words of St. Kitts origin are prominent in a number of domains, including child rearing, confirming Ned Young's important role in socializing the first generation born on Pitcairn. They include *booloolus* 'my little darling', *hide-hoo-up* 'hide-and-peek' and *shimmy* 'child's singlet'. Young appears to have been the only mutineer with knowledge of tropical fish and a number of P fishnames are shared with St. Kitts, including *big eye*; *goatfish*; *kingfish*; *parrot fish*; *sea hedgehog*; *snapper*; *thick lip* and *yellowtail*.

Identifying words of St. Kitts Creole origin runs into the problem that most of them are ultimately of English provenance. The difficulties are compounded by the fact that Young was bilingual/bidialectal and after 1793, the only educated mutineer who was proficient in acrolectal English. As the main linguistic socializer of the children, he was probably responsible for many of the inherited English words in P-N.

6.12 Lexical differences between P and N

Speakers of P and N hold a range of opinions regarding the differences between the two languages. They usually emphasize mutual intelligibility but point out a few lexical differences. Pitcairn Islanders are aware that *cushoo* 'comfortable' is a N word. Norfolk Islanders know that a 'toilet' is called *duncan* in P rather than N *klohset* and that an 'avocado' is referred to as *alligator*. Norfolk Islanders also comment that P contains more crude expressions.

A first detailed account of lexical differences about 100 years after the split of the community is given by Flint (n.d.). He handed the Moverley word list to

four Norfolk Islanders, asking them to identify words they either did not know or which significantly differed in pronunciation or meaning. Surprisingly, the Norfolk informants recognized only 150 out of 450 words. In many instances meaning had changed, in a rather smaller number pronunciation. Meaning differences noted include:

| Pitcairn | | Norfolk |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>bablehulu</i> | fallen to pieces | to flog, beat |
| <i>big-suff</i> | person in authority | s.o. who talks too much |
| <i>cute</i> | shy | cunning |
| <i>m'ulu</i> | fall to pieces | go out of shape |

Moverley's list is very light on P words for life-forms. Only about one third of the 250+ plant names listed in Göthesson (1997) feature in his list and very few of them are found in N. Flint (1964: 207–211) also produced a list of about 100 lexical items of N with no equivalents in P. This list, of course, is far from complete; for instance, it does not feature the above-mentioned *klohset*. Källgård (1981) notes that his own list of 741 P entries contains three types of lexical items not recorded in previous studies, i.e. words based on proper names (50 items). These are not shared with N. Again, abusive and obscene language (11 items documented for P) is not shared, nor are comparative expressions. Källgård's 1998 word list incorporates the adapted Moverley list in Ross and Moverley (1964). About 50% of his 800+ entries are not documented in N. Most of the non-shared items are low frequency words, but the differences also include a number of everyday ones such as:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>miller</i> | beetle, flying insect |
| <i>tom</i> | male, of dogs |
| <i>upside</i> | above |
| <i>bed-tick</i> | mattress |
| <i>blunt</i> | blame |
| <i>bout</i> | to be about some task |

Words referring to objects and customs of Pitcairn Island not known on Norfolk, include:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>baaba</i> | a children's game |
| <i>momptsha's</i> | nobody's (reply to 'what team am I in') |
| <i>baby-basket</i> | smallest souvenir basket |
| <i>bible-box</i> | a special souvenir box |
| <i>preparation</i> | day before Sabbath |
| <i>nothing happen</i> | farewell! |

Because the Pitcairners moved to Norfolk Island after the demise of the last Tahitians, and as Tahitian was not used or known by the vast majority of them by then, unsurprisingly many of the Tahitian words documented for P are no longer known in N, e.g.:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>aitemai tai</i> | no good |
| <i>a: ?u</i> | to peel away bark from trees |
| <i>ha: we</i> | stone artefact |
| <i>jano</i> | make designs in weaving |
| <i>lapu</i> | to mix foods together |
| <i>maitai</i> | good |
| <i>pale</i> | starting to ripen |
| <i>petu</i> | to cover with green leaves |
| <i>pufoi</i> | broken |

There are some differences in derivational morphology as well. For instance, multifunctionality in words of Tahitian origin found in P has disappeared in some N words, e.g.:

| | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| P | <i>buhu</i> | lump or swelling, to cause to swell |
| N | <i>buhu</i> | lump or swelling |
| P | <i>rama</i> | candle made from coconut fronds/to go fishing |
| N | <i>rama</i> | to gather shellfish |

On the other hand, N has multifunctionality where P doesn't:

| | | |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| P | <i>lemu</i> | sea slime |
| N | <i>lemu</i> | sea slime/to be dirty |

The surprisingly large number of non-shared lexical items of P and N would seem to be due to historical contingencies, such as:

- Only four families back-migrated from Norfolk to P. Words and meanings specific to other families were only used on Norfolk.
- The fauna and flora of the two islands is significantly different.
- Whilst Pitcairn became 100% Seventh Day Adventist in the 1890s, only a limited number of Pitcairners on Norfolk converted. SDA terms never became part of everyday N.
- Animal breeding and meat eating was not practiced on Pitcairn and the names of dishes differ.
- Pitcairn remained heavily dependent on trade with outside visitors, which is reflected in a large number of terms for souvenir items.

- Increasing influence of New Zealand on Pitcairn and Australia on Norfolk post WWII has led to the adoption of lexical items such as *P bach* ‘a cottage’ or *hurray* ‘good bye’ and *N sool* ‘to let a dog loose on someone’.

Cumulatively, these and other factors have led to significant lexical divergence.

6.13 Proper names

6.13.1 Cultural and linguistic importance of proper names

Proper names rarely feature prominently in lexical studies. There are several reasons why they are of central importance in P and N, however:

- The study of pristine place-naming provides insights into the nature of place-naming in general.
- Proper names can, at times, give insights into older pronunciations.
- People’s names and nicknames can reveal cultural aspects of language use.
- The boundary between proper and common names in P and N is more permeable than in most other languages.

6.13.2 Toponyms

Pitcairn Island is famous for its pristine toponyms and has been singled out by Ross and Moverley (1964: 170–188) as an important case for the study of the origin of placenames. A detailed map with P toponyms can be found on the Pitcairn website (www.lareau.org/pitc.html).

Fletcher Christian allocated land by means of a lottery, believing it to be the fairest method. But there were only nine names in the draw – those of the mutineers. The Polynesians had none of their own land to work on but that allotted to them by the Europeans.

Over time, these plots were subdivided as children inherited from their parents. Even if left unused, land was not forfeited but could be passed on down through absent generations. Someone who had left the island fifty years ago could bequeath their land to their children, who would divide their diminutive plots before bequeathing the ever smaller patches to their children, none of whom had even been to Pitcairn.

By contrast, every family who resettled in Norfolk were given 50 acres of land and there has been far less subdividing than on Pitcairn.

Many locations on Pitcairn Island were named after people and events they took part in. Places named after first generation settlers include:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Adam's Rock</i> | a rock given to John Adams for fishing purposes when the island was parcelled out by the mutineers |
| <i>McCoy's Pitt</i> | a precipice used by William McCoy as a latrine site |
| <i>Buffett's Harbour</i> | place where John Buffett fell in while fishing |
| <i>Fletcher's</i> | location of Fletcher Christian's house |
| <i>Hole-for-Matt's</i> | a fishing spot used by Matthew Quintal |
| <i>Christian's Cave</i> | Fletcher Christian's place of retreat |

Anthroponymic placenames not only memorize Pitcairn Islanders but also short-term visitors and residents:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Adam's Ground</i> | site of a garden belonging to a missionary of the name Adams who lived on Pitcairn 1913–1917. |
|----------------------|---|

A significant number of places bear the nickname of Islanders, including:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Dubbin/ Dubbon</i> | was the nickname of Robert Young (b. 1795 as the second son of Edward and Nancy Young). It is part of the hillside near Outer Valley where he had his garden. |
| <i>Duddie</i> | a coastal rock claimed by Thursday October <i>Daddy</i> Christian (b 1820) as his fishing place |

Many placenames on Pitcairn Island have a strong affiliation with the local flora:

An interesting aspect of Pitcairnese is manifested in the fascinating place-names of which more than 520 have been recorded. 118 of these are of botanical, anthroponymous-botanical or historical-botanical origin, referring to trees and other plants. The majority of the tree-names had their origin in the presence of an outstanding individual tree, or a grove which in many cases no longer exist. 44 plants of known identity figure in the local place-names, whereas three of them are connected with unknown species of *Eucalyptus* and *Dioscorea*. The origin of nine botanical place-names is uncertain, involving two or three species. There are five names involving unspecified grasses and ferns, whereas one, *out ah flower* is obscure. The plants most frequently referred to in Pitcairn place-names are the coconut (included in 14 names), *aute* or paper mulberry tree (in nine), *big-tee* (Polynesian banyan), taro, orange, *pulau* (beach hibiscus), *fe'i* (mountain plantain), palm (pandanus) and ginger (turmeric or wild ginger), with four placenames each. (Göthesson 1997: 42)

The placenames of Norfolk Island have been documented in detail by Nash (2013), and are rarely as picturesque as those of Pitcairn. Placenames recording events are much less common, but some deserve to be mentioned:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Stephen's Rock</i> | place where Steven Christian was landed to go and get the horses harnessed while the other crews continued the long, slow haul down to Ball Bay with a dead whale in tow. |
| <i>Sofa</i> | a cliff which found a name when an islander returned home to find another man intimately engaged with his wife. In a rage the husband dragged the sofa down the cliffs and pushed it over. |
| <i>Now Now Walley</i> | “Two Pitcairners went shooting and spotted a pig. They agreed to stalk it and fire together. At the right moment both shouted ‘Now!’ and each waited for the other to fire first – and the pig escaped” (Wiseman 1977: 4). |
| <i>Jacob's Rock</i> | Mr. James Jacobs was the first NSW Headmaster appointed to Norfolk Island's school. When his ship arrived, “a strong easterly gale prevented disembarkation at either Cascade or Kingston. After seeking shelter below cliffs on the western side of the island, the crew managed to land the family, including five young children, on the large rock named after them” (Edgecombe 1991: 108). |

Several places bear the nicknames of Islanders associated with them:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>Pot's Farm</i> | after Rebecca ‘Pot’ Christian |
| <i>Cat Street</i> | after Uckoo Cat Douran who lived there and whose wife had a fish-and-chip shop called Cats. |

An intriguing name is *Broak Road* – an acronym made up of the family names of the owners of the houses that stand there: Buffett, Robinson, O'Connor, Adams and King.

Places themselves at times also receive nicknames. Thus Selwyn Bridge is also known as *Gada Bridge* because unmarried couples caught having sexual intercourse (*gada*) had to do repair work, and Hundred Acres Reserve is also called *Parloo Park* ‘Petting Park’.

Plant-derived placenames involve Norfolk Pines such as *Lone Pine* (near Emily Bay), *Ar Pine for Robinson's*, *Bun Pine* ‘Burnt Pine’ (the commercial settlement), and *Selwyn Pine Roo-ud*. Other plant names are encountered in *Mulberry Valley*, *Fig Valley*, and *Mo-oo Stone*, a rock or islet covered in *mo-oo* ‘flax lily’. Plant names on neighbouring Philip Island for most part are a memory of the days

before the near total devastation of its vegetation caused by rabbits, pigs and goats. Here we find *Cotton Terrace*, *Hibiscus Dykes* and *Short Moo-oo Valley*.

One difference between the situation on Pitcairn and on Norfolk was that Pitcairn had no previously named features whereas Norfolk did. This does not imply that the Pitcairners accepted the nomenclature of previous settlements, and name changes such as that of *Murder Valley* into *Music Valley* suggest that they actively wished to obliterate the memories of the Penal Settlement Days.

There have never been haunted places on Pitcairn. By contrast, Norfolk is one of the most haunted places on earth. The Pitcairner map in Edgecombe (1983: 122) shows a location *Ghostie Ghostie* off Mill Road and *Ghose Corner* where Bullock Hutt Road branches off Anson Bay Road. Its ghostliness is caused by the light beams of vehicles catching huge spider webs in roadside bushes.

Pitcairner politics and culture would seem to account for the absence of any landmarks named after Australian politicians. English Royalty is represented in *Queen Elizabeth Avenue* and a *Prince Philip Drive*. Queen Victoria who ‘gave’ the island to the Pitcairners, is honoured by *Queen Victoria Gardens*, opened in 2007.

6.13.3 Nicknames

The practice of giving nicknames is rife on both Pitcairn and Norfolk. In 1992, Ansett Airlines ran an advertisement for its Norfolk Island flights headed by ‘Ask the operator for Cup-a-Tea, and you’ll get John Buffett’ (Sun Herald, March 29 1992: 142). What the advertisement does not mention are four competing accounts of the origin of the nickname *Cup-a-Tea*:

- “One of the mainland teachers, who was describing for us the unknown delights of train travel, mentioned the buffet car. From then on, John Buffett, who was in our class, was known as “Cup-a-tea” (Marrington 1981: 30–31).
- He always invited people to join him for a cup of tea.
- His complexion was the colour of tea.
- He was found by the husband of the wife he was in bed with and who poured a cup of tea over him.

The tradition of nicknames goes back to the beginnings of settlement of Pitcairn in 1790. Best known to outsiders are the nicknames of Island residents, as they appear in the Norfolk Island telephone directory. The names listed are only a small subset of a much larger body of nicknames known to Norfolk islanders and superficially look similar to nicknames found in Australia. They include the nicknames of mainlanders; in the past, ‘it was usual to refer to them by giving them their full Christian and surname, e.g. Gus Allen, Bob Edwards, Charlie Fysh, Ida Everett’

(Moresby Buffett 16th July 1979, handwritten notes). Traditional nicknames are still reserved for Norfolk Islanders. The listing of nicknames in the telephone directory has attracted much comment over the years, e.g.

Norfolk Island has the world's only telephone directory to list people by nickname. They include: *Beef, Cane Toad, Carrots and Chilla Dar Bizziebee, Duck and Diesel Honkey-dorey, Kik Kik, Grin, Lettuce Leaf, Mutty, Moose, Morg and Moonie Onion.*

In the words of the Norfolk language, a mixture of English and Polynesian, the aim is to *faasfain salan bai dems nikniem* 'to find people quickly by their nickname' (*The Telegraph*, 9 May 2006).

A longer list of nicknames has been compiled by Norfolk Online (<http://www.norfolkonline.nlk.nf/Salan/Nicknames.pdf>). Their salient properties include:

- Words of Tahitian origin not found in everyday language continue to be used as nicknames. The Pitcairn placename *Nuni's Aute*, 'Nuni's mulberry trees' on Pitcairn Island refers to Polly Christian (b. 1814) whose nickname derives from T. *noni* 'small, fair'. The nickname *Hakoo/Akoo*, which is still current on Norfolk Island, derives from the Tahitian word for 'ugly' and the nickname *Maia*, once common among women on Norfolk, derives from the Tahitian word for 'midwife'.
- Nicknames can provide insights into earlier pronunciations, as in two nicknames given to first generation women: *Main Mast* or *Memaa* and *Balhadi* ('bald head').
- Nicknames are passed from generation to generation, i.e. *Ettie/Ette*, a nickname that is handed down in the Christian family, first given to Elsie Adeline Christian (b. 1875, Norfolk) and *Goottie/Gottie/Gotty* ('goat'), first documented for Gustave Adolf Krisman Quintal, (b. 1859, Norfolk) whose family kept goats, and the names *Kik* and *Kik-Kik*.
- Nicknames can also inform us about the social and cultural practices of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders. For instance, Charles Christian (b. 1792) had a club foot and his nickname was *Hapa* (T. *hapahapa* 'irregular, crooked'). The fact that he was allowed to live, rather than being killed at birth, demonstrates that Christian values rather than Tahitian ones had become dominant at this early date.
- Nicknames are used as a form of social control and they can change over lifetime as the person's social standing changes. N nicknames often originate in the Norfolk Island Central School, where young islanders learn to establish their social role and status.

6.14 Lexical fields

6.14.1 Lexical fields and cultural prominence

Lexical field studies are concerned with the relationship between words in a particular semantic domain as well as questions regarding the density of semantic fields across languages. In the ‘Eskimo words for snow’ approach, lexical fields are regarded as indices of cultural preoccupations.

Mühlhäusler, Nebauer-Borg and Coleman (2012) used a classification of N words that reflects the wishes of a large number of community members consulted. Whilst not following any principles of scholarly classification, it highlights semantic fields such as that of ‘getting stuck, falling apart and shaking about’ for which P and N have numerous lexical expressions, such as *maolo* ‘fall to pieces’, *muttapilli* and P *bublehulu* ‘getting stuck’, *winey/wiley* ‘getting tangled’, and others. This reflects a precarious life on isolated islands with dense vegetation, steep cliff faces and the need for improvisation and constant repairs.

Källgård (1993: 4–85) has designed a chart that informs both about the number of lexical items documented in 12 semantic fields as well as their putative provenance. The most densely populated semantic fields in P are plants (23.4% of the words in his 923-item wordlist), fishes (9.2%), daily work (8.1%) and food/cooking (7.8%). Words of Polynesian origin are used less than expected in the description of life forms (24 out of 85 fish names, 3 out of 24 bird names, 55 out of 216 plant names).

Such synchronic analysis tells us little about origin and development, though there are sufficient data to undertake such a task.

6.14.2 Plant names

The emergence of names for the plants used and found on Pitcairn illustrates the gradual adaptation of language to a new natural environment. The process took a long time and the lack of names for endemic and potentially culturally useful plants may have accelerated its ecological decline in the first 50 years of settlement. Mühlhäusler (2002) has noted a close correlation between the extinction of Pitcairn plants and the lack of names for them.

Naming is driven mainly by utilitarian motives. The plants that are used for food, firewood and building materials are named, as are garden weeds and decorative plants. The most important staple food plants had English or St. Kitts names rather than Tahitian ones: *plun* ‘banana’, *cocknut* ‘coconut’, *bread* ‘bread fruit’, *lemon*, *tayty* ‘sweet potato’.

Pitcairners have a large number of names for culturally useful and managed plants together with the ecological knowledge required. Examples are found in appendix 6.2.

6.14.3 Names for outsiders

In contemporary P, *English* means ‘a meddling outsider’ or ‘fastidious, especially about mud, from the common attitude of visitors’. N examples include the disparaging expression *dar es English*, ‘that is English’ or *oe you how English*, ‘oh, you are very English’. *English sullun* is used to refer to people not of Pitcairn descent. The word *outsider* is documented for N from the late 1950s, as is *dem horse*, as in *haed plenty horse roun’ar hall*, meaning ‘There were lots of outsiders in the hall.

Other expressions that refer to ‘outsiders’ in present day N are:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>Mainlander</i> | Australian residents |
| <i>toolies</i> | tourists, possibly a word play on the colloquial ‘tool’ (e.g. ‘he is a real tool for behaving like that’) |
| <i>loopies</i> | tourists, from their ‘strange and sometimes erratic behaviour while driving’ |
| <i>TEPs</i> | Temporary Entry Permit holders, also referred to as <i>been ya five menets</i> ‘been here for five minutes |
| <i>strienja</i> | stranger, anyone who is not a resident |
| <i>NODs</i> | Post-2015 expert, consultant, administrative person from the Australia involved in the re-colonization of Norfolk Island. The acronym derived from <i>nudda one o dem</i> ‘another one of them’. The term is similar to <i>one o dem</i> ‘genitals’. |

6.14.4 Basket making

After the opening of the Panama Canal Pitcairn Island began to be visited by numerous cruise and trading vessels, and souvenir baskets sold to their passengers and crew provided an important source of income. P has numerous terms for different kinds of baskets and terms related to basket making, including:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>baby basket</i> | the smallest type of souvenir basket |
| <i>hu’a</i> | a string of pandanus or paioori leaf used in basket making |
| <i>jono</i> | to make designs in weaving |
| <i>kit</i> | any basket |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>ni'au basket</i> | basket made of coconut fronds. This is the type the islanders use themselves, as distinguished from different types of souvenir baskets |
| <i>sewing basket</i> | souvenir basket with lid |
| <i>shopping basket</i> | the most common type of souvenir basket, without a lid |
| <i>square basket</i> | souvenir basket |
| <i>taal'e</i> | a basket of any kind, probably Polynesian |
| <i>thatch</i> | material for basket-making used on roofs before corrugated iron. The last thatched roof was taken down in the 1960s. |
| <i>uuini</i> | basket, not made nowadays, since no one on Pitcairn knows how to make it. It's round and has a handle, all in one piece from coconut leaf. |
| <i>wola-wola</i> | too loosely woven, of a basket. |

Woven hats and baskets are also sold to tourists on Norfolk Island but their economic importance is far less than on Pitcairn.

6.14.5 Whaling terms

American whalers began to visit Pitcairn in 1809 and by the 1840s, a number of Pitcairn men had served on their vessels. After their move to Norfolk Island in 1856, the Pitcairners set up their own whaling operations in 1858. The last whaling season was 1962. During this period, about 200 predominantly American whaling vessels called on Norfolk (Tofts 1993).

A large number of terms were used in this industry and several were used metaphorically in everyday N. The following list was culled from notes made by Shirley Harrison, Rachel Nebauer and myself:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>shove out</i> | to start whaling by boat |
| <i>greasy luck</i> | good luck when whaling or fishing |
| <i>se gally</i> | to lose one's nerve when a boat is fast to a whale |
| <i>way goe fluke</i> | when a whale dives and throws its tail (flukes) into the air |
| <i>potagii, potegi</i> | an unreliable or changeable fellow or a male who shirks work, a comment on the unreliable nature of the Portuguese crew of some whale boats. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>fars-boo-utt</i> | a boat made fast to a whale, which generally takes off at a fairly rapid speed. The cry <i>fars-boo-utt</i> was uttered to alert other boats that a whale had been harpooned. In present day N it can also mean ‘take a look at that!’, said of something which is about to disappear quickly and requires immediate attention. |
| <i>fin-out</i> | for a whale to be dead and swim on its side with the fin sticking out, used metaphorically to mean ‘totally exhausted, flaked out. |
| <i>in ar cowfish</i> | to be in a panic, disorganised state; as when a whale gets in among the cowfish, it thrashes around because the cowfish attack it. |

With the closing down of the whaling industry in the 1960s, whaling expressions are rarely used by the younger generation of speakers.

6.15 Word-formation

6.15.1 Types and functions

Word formation refers to a number of formal processes employed to create new words, including zero derivation, derivational morphology, compounding and reduplication. Languages differ greatly in their capacity to create new words from internal resources. Pidgins and creoles, as discussed at length in Mühlhäusler (1979) in particular, have often been characterized as lacking word-formation devices. P and N by contrast have a productive word formation component, which helps keep the language separate from English and adds referential power.

P-N Word formation has received very little attention by previous researchers, in spite of its high visibility.

6.15.2 Zero-derivation and/or multifunctionality

Källgård (1989: 40) states that ‘conversion (or ‘zero derivation’) is a characteristic feature of Pitcairnese.’ Ross and Moverley (1964), who are inclined to seek Tahitian substratum influence for un-English constructions state:

Tahitian appears to be almost entirely lacking in ‘inflection’ of the normal, Western type: the nouns do not decline, nor the verbs conjugate. The parts of speech are not those of

the West: there seems to be an almost complete lack of distinction between our categories, noun, verb, adjective and adverb (1964: 141).

And:

The lack of distinction between the 'normal' parts of speech in Tahitian has been carried over into Pitcairnese, and this has sometimes resulted in a Pitcairnese use of an English word in an abnormal function. Thus, noun as verb: *bole* 'to make a small hole in anything'; cf. *dial bole* 'a small opening' (and see further *bole*); hypocrite 'to simulate virtue, dissemble'; adjective as verb: *mad* 'to play tricks, games'; *rotten* 'to spoil (a child)'; *soft* 'to become soft or softer, to make soft'; preposition/adverb as verb: *'bout* (about) 'to deal with, to be about (some task)'; *off* 'to fall off, to lose (a fish)'; pronoun as adjective: *she* 'effeminate, impertinent, presuming'; verb as adjective: *count* 'important'. Some such Pitcairnese examples can be paralleled in English dialect or earlier English (see, for instance, *dark*) but even these are, more probably, of the local origin just described (1964: 158).

Laycock and Buffett (1988: 72) comment:

In Norfolk, it is common for the same word to be used as many different parts of speech, and with many different meanings; this is called multifunctionality. Many examples will already have been encountered so far; the process can be further illustrated by taking the word *morga*:

As a noun:

Hetieh morga 'Here comes the thin one'

As an adjective:

Hi es morga wan. 'He is thin.'

Hi daa morga. 'He is so bony.'

Yu d' morgares salan ai bin sii. 'You are the gauntest person I have ever seen.'

As an intransitive verb:

Shi morgaren f' hem. 'She is thinning down to please him.'

Shi el morga w'laut. 'She gets thin without effort.'

As a transitive verb:

Wi yuus a' morga orl dem hors for d'rieses. 'We used to thin all the horses before the races.'

Em letl salan s' morga mii. 'The children have made me thin.'

As an adverb:

Yu kaa duu morga wen yu 'You can't act daintily when
faet es daa. you're so fat.'

Harrison does not list multifunctionality as a feature shared by N and the Atlantic Creoles but mentions dialectal English and Tahitian influence (1972: 74):

Change in the word class of a word with no formal indication of the change is quite common in Modern English derivations (e.g. 'faint', 'time' used as noun, adjective, verb; 'full' used as noun, adjective, adverb, etc.) and also in English dialects (e.g. see glossary, 'after' 'side' 'wash').

The elimination of many formal distinctions between word classes is to be expected in any mixed language. Nevertheless, the Tahitians on Pitcairn would have been completely familiar with the free movement of a form from one class to another owing to practice in their own language (Tryon 1970: 41).

Gleißner accepts Laycock and Buffett's (1988: 72) statement and adds that:

Although conversion exists in English as well (cf. Marchand 1969: 359–379), its extent of usage in Norfolk is more similar to TAH. With respect to the latter language, it is said that distinct word classes do not exist. Tryon claims that 'there are really no such parts of speech as 'verb', 'noun', 'adjective' in TAH, each part of speech being determined solely by the slot it fills and the function it performs in the sentence'. (1997: 56)

She also points out that multifunctionality is common in English-derived Creoles:

Especially between adjectives and verbs, there does not seem to be a real categorical distinction in the Atlantic Creoles (Holm 1988: 176–177) and in Norfolk, since adjectives can be employed in verbal position and also take verbal markers.

Gleißner's comparison between multifunctionality in Norfolk and Tok Pisin leads her to the conclusion that Tok Pisin differs from both N and the Atlantic Creoles, a conclusion that is supported by my more detailed comparison (Mühlhäusler 2008).

From the sources cited, it emerges that none of the writers support their claims with more than just a few anecdotal examples, and that their examples provide astonishingly little support for their claims. I shall therefore attempt to provide my own account of multifunctionality in P-N, bearing in mind problems of identification and the persisting problem of having a methodology suited to comparison.

The functional possibilities of English have been described in much detail by Marchand (1969) and in condensed form by Adams (1987). It is the latter classification that I shall base myself on, as it is detailed enough to allow a comparison. Note that the numbering provided is that of Adams, which is not totally consistent.

IA.I N → V noun is the object in a paraphrase

Intransitive verbs meaning ‘to hunt or to collect what is referred to by the noun’ are exemplified in English ‘*to fish*’, ‘*to blackberry*’, ‘*to whale*’. N has just one example *fish* – *fishen*, which is a subset of the much larger English set. In all other cases, this meaning is expressed by circumlocution or lexicalization as in:

hulus tieti ‘to garner potatoes’ from Tahitian *hero* ‘to scratch’
rama ‘to gather shellfish, periwinkles’

IA.II N → V_{intr} ‘to produce entity denoted by noun’

English has numerous examples such as ‘*to flower*’, ‘*to seed*’, ‘*to foal*’, ‘*to lamb*’, ‘*to steam*’, ‘*to tunnel*’. No clear-cut examples were found in P-N.⁴

IA.III N → V_{intr} ‘to perform action implied by noun’

English examples are ‘*to crusade*’, ‘*to dual*’, ‘*to race*’, ‘*to view*’, ‘*to parade*’. Two examples were found in N:

parade raun’ar hall ‘to parade round the hall’
fowl ‘to swallow like a fowl’.

IA.IV N → V_{intr} ‘to play the instrument denoted by noun’

English has ‘*to drum*’, ‘*to fiddle*’, ‘*to harp*’, ‘*to trumpet*’, ‘*to whistle*’. No examples were found in P-N.

IA.V N → V_{intr} or V_{tr} ‘to feel what noun denotes’

English has ‘*to experience*’, ‘*to pity*’, ‘*to hunger*’, ‘*to lust*’, ‘*to panic*’. The sole example found in P-N is *hilli* ‘lethargy, be lethargic’.

IA.VI N → V_{tr} ‘to make a copy of noun’

English has ‘*to echo*’, ‘*to picture*’, ‘*to model*’, ‘*to photograph*’, and others. No examples were found in P-N.

IB N → V_{tr} noun is indirect object in the paraphrase

Adams (1973: 44) lists, among others, ‘*to cripple*’, ‘*to fool*’, ‘*to knight*’, ‘*to widow*’, ‘*to heap*’, ‘*to phrase*’, etc. No examples were recorded for P-N.

⁴ The absence of N examples indicates either ‘no examples found in the corpus’ or ‘no examples elicited’.

IC N → V noun is the complement in a paraphrase**IC.I N → V_{tr} take on the role denoted by noun**

English has ‘to captain’, ‘to father’, ‘to pilot’, ‘to rival’, ‘to witness’, etc. No examples were found in P-N.

IC.II N → V_{intr} ‘to behave in the manner that is typical behaviour of noun’

Adams (1973: 44) lists a number of transitive and intransitive verbs derived from common nouns, including ‘to boss’, ‘to butcher’, ‘to doctor’, ‘to mother’, ‘to ape’, ‘to dog’, ‘to hog’, ‘to ferret out’, ‘to parrot’, ‘to clown’, ‘to fool’, ‘to clam up’, ‘to balloon’, etc. Only one of these is documented in N, *horg et* ‘to hog it’. However, P-N has a productive subclass derived from proper names (see eponyms above).

IC.III N → V_{intr} ‘to cause to be like noun’

English examples are ‘to landscape’, ‘to riddle’, ‘to sandwich’. No examples were found in P-N.

ID Instrumental verbs**ID.I N → V_{tr} or V_{int} ‘to perform an act by means of noun’**

This is a productive category in English with examples such as ‘to brake’, ‘to hammer’, ‘to nail’, ‘to screw’, ‘to stone’, ‘to signal’, ‘to rope’, ‘to padlock’, etc. There are numerous examples in P-N both replicating the English model and local neologisms. Noun stems of both English and Tahitian origin are used.

a) subset of English forms:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| <i>ironen</i> | ‘to iron’ |
| <i>faensen</i> | ‘to fence’ |
| <i>ple-enen</i> | ‘to plane’ |
| <i>ne-elen</i> | ‘to nail’ |
| <i>daemen</i> | ‘to dam’ |
| <i>buckelen</i> | ‘to buckle’ |

b) coinings using English stems:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>hoofen</i> | ‘to walk on one’s hooves’ |
| <i>button</i> | ‘fasten gate by means of a catch’ |

c) coinings using Tahitian stems:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>papahaia</i> | 'to pound on a wooden block' |
| <i>anna</i> | 'to grate by means of a husker' |
| <i>parlu</i> | 'to attract by means of burley' |
| <i>yolla</i> | 'to grate with a stone grater' |

II N → V_{tr} 'to apply the substance or entity referred to by noun'

This is a productive pattern in English, which has 'to dust', 'to grease', 'to powder', 'to sugar', 'to label', 'to man', 'to hold' and numerous others. P-N replicates some of this English inventory, e.g.:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| <i>pepper et</i> | 'to pepper it' |
| <i>salt et</i> | 'to salt' |
| <i>spice et</i> | 'to spice' |
| <i>hollow et</i> | 'to hollow' |
| <i>butter et</i> | 'to butter' |

Innovations are rare, but I have found:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| <i>cheesen</i> | 'to put cheese on' |
| <i>boelen</i> | 'to put holes into' |

Lexical items of Tahitian origins do not appear to be susceptible to this program. Thus forms such as the following were rejected by my informants.

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| * <i>mitien</i> | 'to put cream on' |
| * <i>potaren</i> | 'to put taro leaves on a dish' |

IE N → V locative

N possesses a number of intransitive constructions including *botm* 'to be at the bottom', *up'ar wall* and *up ar tinny* as in *yous time fer up ar tinny* 'it is your turn for sleeping on the (tin)wall-side of the bed'.

IE.I N → V_{tr} 'to put something in/on noun'

English examples include 'to bed', 'to book', 'to cage', 'to floor', 'to pocket', 'to land'. N examples are a small subset of the English set:

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| <i>behgen</i> | 'to put in bags' |
| <i>bohgen</i> | 'to bog'. |

IE.II N → V_{intr} or V_{tr} ‘to perform an activity at a certain location’

English examples include ‘to bath’, ‘to chair’, ‘to market’, ‘to school’, ‘to garden’, ‘to shop’. P-N has a small subset, i.e. *baath* ‘to bath’.

It is not clear whether there are also examples of P-N innovations. Consider: *Dem two muss bee starten hoem* ‘those two must be going home’, where *hoem* could be analysed either as an adverbial, a noun or a verb.

IE.III N → V_{tr} ‘to spend a period of time denoted by noun’

English examples are ‘to holiday’, ‘to honeymoon’, ‘to vacation’, ‘to winter’, etc. No examples were found in P-N.

IF N → V_{tr} ‘to remove noun from’

English has ‘to bone’, ‘to dust’, ‘to gut’, ‘to milk’, ‘to weed’, ‘to husk’. In P-N I only found *melken* ‘to milk’.

IIA Adj → V_{intr} ‘to become the quality denoted by the adjective’

Adams (1973) comments that there is a small number of these in English, including ‘to bald’, ‘to idle’, ‘to dim’, ‘to mellow’, ‘to pale’, ‘to slim’, ‘to sour’. By contrast, most semantically compatible adjectives can also become an intransitive verb in P-N by the addition of the continuous marker *-en*. Laycock and Buffett (1988: 14) comment:

As there is no clear distinction in Norfolk between verbs and adjectives, the same ending *-en* can be used with adjectives, to indicate continuous action, or, more usually, the state of becoming:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>hi neh sien</i> | He is acting nastily. |
| <i>hi maaden f'her</i> | He is showing off for her. |
| <i>hi oelen</i> | He is growing old. |
| <i>hi borlhieden tuu suun</i> | He's going prematurely bald. |
| <i>ai faeten faas</i> | I am getting fat fast. |

Additional examples involving subtle semantic differences are found in my N corpus:

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>yaela</i> | ‘yellow’ | <i>yaelaren</i> | ‘to be angry’ |
| <i>ugle</i> | ‘ugly’ | <i>ugle-en</i> | ‘to be angry’ |
| <i>nehse</i> | ‘nasty’ | <i>nehse</i> | ‘to be naughty’ |

Some adjectives are not used as intransitive verbs, including:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| * <i>stiddien</i> | 'to become quiet' |
| * <i>mehoeen</i> | 'to become timid' |

IIB Adj → V_{tr} 'to cause to be(come) adjective'

English examples are 'to bare', 'to better', 'to blind', 'to blunt', 'to dirty', 'to dry', 'to free', 'to humble', 'to ready', 'to right', 'to tame', 'to warm'. N has *umnet* 'to open', but none of the other examples listed by Adams have N equivalents. N has a few examples of its own, operating on verbs of St. Kitts, Tahitian and English origin:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>morga et</i> | 'to make thin' |
| <i>meamear et</i> | 'to make twisted' |
| <i>rohtn et</i> | 'to spoil' |
| <i>studd et</i> | 'to stir up' |

This pattern is not very productive as the favoured way to express causatives is by means of circumlocution with *mek(en)* as in:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Yorlye se meken her nanu.</i> | 'You (pl.) are making her jealous' |
| <i>You meken em yaelo.</i> | 'You made him angry' |

IIIA V_{tr} → Noun 'agent of action'

English examples are 'to cheat', 'to spy', 'to sweep', 'to help', 'to go-between', 'to rebel', 'to sneak', 'to stray', 'to cook'. P-N has inherited *cook* but not added other forms.

IIIB.I V_{tr} → Noun 'object of action'

Examples include 'to drink', 'to puzzle', 'to eat', 'to catch', 'to find', 'to reject', 'to import'. Because of stress differences, some of these are not clear examples of zero derivation. Examples for P-N are *fryup* 'a fried meal', *cookup* 'a cooked meal' and *share out* 'a fish share'.

IIIB.II V_{tr} → Noun 'instrument'

English examples are 'to hoist', 'to cover', 'to lift', 'to polish'. No P-N examples were found.

IIIB.III V → N ‘concrete results’

I shall not comment on Adam’s (1973: 51ff) criteria for distinguishing between concrete (used with an article) and abstract (no article) nouns here. Her examples include ‘*a cry*’, ‘*a grunt*’, ‘*a growl*’, ‘*a ride*’, ‘*a swim*’, ‘*a try*’, ‘*a stroll*’, ‘*a look*’, ‘*a peep*’, ‘*a rest*’, ‘*a smoke*’, ‘*a guess*’, etc. P-N has a few of these including *arnsar* ‘an answer’ and *smoek* ‘a smoke’.

IIIC V → N ‘abstract’

Adams (1973: 54ff) distinguishes a number of subcategories depending on whether the abstract result is associated with the subject or the object as in ‘*John’s resolution*’ vs. ‘*John’s defeat*’, respectively, or with both as in ‘*John’s rescue*’. These distinctions are often determined by context. A difficulty is that the distinction between intransitive verbs and adjectives is not always clear in P-N. In view of these problems, I shall give only examples involving the derivation of abstract nouns from adjectives or verbs. It is a fairly productive process in P-N. Examples are:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>aansa</i> | ‘to answer’, ‘answer’ |
| <i>beng</i> | ‘to crash’, ‘explosion’ |
| <i>bliem</i> | ‘to blame’, ‘blame’ |
| <i>cheing</i> | ‘to change’, ‘change’ |
| <i>huwehuwe</i> | ‘to be unclean’, ‘uncleanliness’ |
| <i>flog</i> | ‘to flog’, ‘beating’ |
| <i>fright</i> | ‘to frighten’, ‘frightened’ |
| <i>hili</i> | ‘to be lethargic’, ‘lethargy’ |
| <i>jok</i> | ‘to joke’, ‘a joke’ |
| <i>kumfrum</i> | ‘to originate’, ‘origin’ |
| <i>dark</i> | ‘to be dark’, ‘darkness’ |
| <i>stolly</i> | ‘to lie’, ‘a lie’ |

P-N can derive abstract nouns where English does not. There are also instances where P-N cannot derive abstract nouns where it is done in English, as in *griew* which is only a verb ‘to grieve’, or *nanu* ‘to be jealous.’

IV Other types of multifunctionality

Adverbs and prepositions at times can become verbs as in:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>upet</i> | ‘to advance’, ‘to up (the price)’ |
| <i>bihine</i> | ‘to support’ |
| <i>arftar</i> | ‘to chase’ |
| <i>soonar</i> | ‘to prefer’ |

The most common cause of this type appears to be the variable absence of the copula in P-N, which favours reanalysis. My findings are summarized as follows:

| type | productive | subset of English | not in N |
|----------|------------|-------------------|----------|
| IA.I | - | + | - |
| IA.II | - | - | + |
| IA.III | - | + | - |
| IA.IV | - | - | + |
| IA.V | - | - | + |
| IA.VI | - | - | + |
| IB | - | - | + |
| IC.I | - | - | + |
| IC.II | + | + | - |
| IC.III | - | - | + |
| ID.I | + | (+) | - |
| ID.II | + | (+) ² | - |
| IE.Ia | - | + | - |
| IE.II | - | + | - |
| IE.III | - | - | - |
| IF | - | + | + |
| IIA | + | + | - |
| IIB | + | + | - |
| IIIA | - | + | - |
| IIIB.I | (2) - | - | - |
| IIIB.II | - | - | + |
| IIIA | - | + | + |
| IIIB.I | ? | - | - |
| IIIB.II | - | - | ? |
| IIIB.III | - | + | + |
| IIIC | + | + | - |

The data suggest that P-N differs from English as follows: The number of multifunctionality pattern types is only about 40% of the acrolect, and the total number of lexical stems that can undergo multifunctionality (tokens) is small when compared to English. In all instances where P-N has multifunctionality it is also encountered in English, and in the vast majority of cases the list of multifunctional P-N items is simply a subset of English. Productive use of multifunctionality patterns is rare and typically limited to lexical bases of English origin.

6.15.3 Derivation by affixation

Productive derivational morphology employing affixation is almost absent in P and N. As Harrison (1972: 202) has argued, ‘in theory, the whole range of English derivational affixes could be represented in the structure of N words, since Norfolk speakers merely adopt a word from English if the need for it arises’. Among such words she mentions *Islander*, *whaler* and *ungrateful*. She argues (1972: 205) that many words which are regarded as derivational structures in English are better treated as monomorphemic in N as neither *-er* nor *-ful* are productive derivational affixes.

s-final words in N: As Silverstein (1981) has pointed out, there are a number of grammatical phenomena that are difficult to elicit and of which native speakers tend not to be aware, including augmentative and hypocoristic constructions. In Mühlhäusler (1983), I have presented a range of English words ending in *-s*, which have remained largely ignored by descriptive linguists. Among the functions of this *-s* are the signalling of affection, as when attached to proper names or terms of endearment such as ‘*Sues*’, ‘*Diddums*’, ‘*Flowers*’ and afflictions, such as ‘*the hots*’, ‘*shits*’, ‘*trots*’, and ‘*bonkers*’, among others. Unlike diminutives and augmentatives in other languages *-s* is of very limited productivity in English.

Only one *-s* affix has been documented for P *humpus-bumpus* ‘a dish made from mashed bananas and flour’, but there are several instances in N, including:

Augmentative/intensifiers:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>baabahulu(s)</i> | roughly or aggressively shake someone |
| <i>buswarga(s)/bus-</i> | ugly beyond description, derived from the nickname |
| <i>whargus</i> | <i>Warga</i> of William Patterson Quintal (b. 1891) |
| <i>epututu(s)</i> | motivation, initiative, vigour, ‘get up and go’ |
| <i>hulu(s)</i> | scratch around with hands, gather underground-bearing vegetable tubers such as potatoes or sweet potatoes (<i>kumera</i>) for use at the table before they are fully mature and ready to be harvested, to dig up, pull up |
| <i>kutus</i> | very good (augmentative of <i>gude</i>) |
| <i>kwikstiks</i> | hurry up, quickly, lickety-split(s) |
| <i>nitho/nithos</i> | nothing at all |

Unpleasant phenomena or afflictions:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Bolos</i> | windy weather, and generally very cold with it |
| <i>booroos, rootoos, rottos</i> | meaningless chatter, to talk a lot of rot |
| <i>furus</i> | flatulence, fart |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>hippalicks</i> | feeling of being very agitated, having butterflies |
| <i>hurus / hooroos</i> | phlegm, mucous discharged from the throat' |
| <i>jolaps / johlaps / jollups</i> | > E. <i>jalap</i> purgative drug from roots of Mexican <i>jalapa</i> 'vine, lumps in fruit'. On Norfolk there is an old practice of incising fruit (melons in particular) and inserting an effective amount of purgative in order to dissuade culprits from returning to steal more fruit. |
| <i>sleps</i> | slips! Derived from a term used in marbles if a marble slips out of a child's hand without the child having gripped the marble well enough to have delivered (snitch it) correctly: slipped! <i>Aa, sleps!</i> is also used used as an exclamation ('sorry, I let off!') when a person unintentionally breaks wind. |

Hypochoristic forms:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>bululus / boooloos</i> | sweetheart, said to a child or lover |
| <i>snobbles</i> | nickname for someone bearing the Nobbs surname |

Many nicknames in P and N also end in an -s, e.g. *Pullis* (Ivens S. Nobbs, b. 1891, Norfolk), *Totus* (Arthur B. Buffett, b. 1912, Norfolk); *Potts* (Charles I. Buffett, b. 1914, Norfolk), *Boomps* (Ivy Mabel Buffett, b. 1917, Norfolk), *Pumbles* (Dolores Pearl Buffett, b. 1917, Norfolk), *Streaks* (John A. Anderson, b. 1931, Norfolk); *Steggles* (George E. LeCren, b. 1942); *Puddles* (Alan A. Buffett, b. 1960), *Spindles* (Charles H. Menghetti, b. 1943), *Linas* (Selina Agnes Coffin, b. 1911, Pitcairn).

6.15.4 Compounding and lexical phrases

No systematic analysis of P-N compounding has been given by previous researchers, though many are listed in existing vocabularies. Harrison (1972: 205–206) notes for N that there are a range of compounds that “may be borrowings of ‘ready-made’ English compounds”. She notes that “many locally-made’ combinations contribute to the compound-class”, but provides only 16 examples representing a handful of compound types. Her account, as well as that of Gleißner (1997: 57), who found that compounding was uncommon, reflect the absence of compounds in representations of the language rather than their absence in the language. My own database contains several hundred compounds not found in English. Most of the lexical patterns that generate them are shared with English.

However, there are a number of new patterns that appear to have developed independently and/or originate in St Kitts Creole. These include:

Compounds with the lexical base *bastard* in initial position to indicate a less useful or uncultivated variety as in:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>bastard aienwood</i> | ‘sharkwood tree’ |
| <i>bastard oek</i> | ‘kind of oak tree’ |
| <i>bastard taala</i> | non edible taro’ |

Verb serialization is common in P and N and will be dealt with in the syntax chapter. However, there is a productive subclass in N that combines the verb *steal* with another verb to signal that an action is carried out in secret, as in:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| <i>walk-steal</i> | ‘to walk stealthily’ |
| <i>torkstiil</i> | ‘to talk stealthily’ |
| <i>duustiil</i> | ‘to do by stealth’ |

These may have come into N via the Pidgin English spoken at the Melanesian Mission.

Another construction may have a similar origin: *make/mek* + adj or noun. The only example documented for P is *meken big* ‘to give oneself airs’ but many more are documented for N, including:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| <i>make tall</i> | ‘to stretch up’ |
| <i>make ugle</i> | ‘to be about to cry’ |
| <i>make flaeshi</i> | ‘to dress glamorously’ |

As in some Pidgins and Creoles *make* appears to function as a general verbalizer.

May game ‘to poke fun’ is listed in Wiltshire (1938). Harrison (1972) observed that some of the uses of N *make*, *miek* are also found in English dialects. Harrison mentions that Melanesian Pidgin English has many *make* constructions, for instance *make flash* ‘to dress up for a dance’. Harrison (1972: 319) further notes a possible connection with West Indian Creole. Given that *make*-compounds are very rare in P but reasonably productive in N, this is not likely.

Whereas *home* in P in the olden days referred to England, for the first generation of Pitcairners on Norfolk *hoem* was Pitcairn Island. A number of compounds

beginning with *hoem* ‘home’ signal something of Pitcairn origin or similar to what was found on Pitcairn as in:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>hoem naenwi</i> | ‘dreamfish’ |
| <i>hoem oefi</i> | ‘Pitcairn variety of the <i>oefi</i> fish’ |
| <i>hoem oven</i> | ‘an oven built into a chimney’ |
| <i>hoem aul</i> | ‘cuckoo’ |
| <i>hoem plun</i> | ‘kind of plantain’ |
| <i>hoem routi</i> | ‘kind of ti plant’ |

Next to several classes of endocentric compounds (see appendix 6.4), P and N also have exocentric compounds, including:

N + N:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| N <i>faentail</i> | ‘kind of bird with a fantail’ |
| P <i>wipe-feet</i> | ‘floor mat’ |

Adjective + N:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| P <i>black back</i> | ‘orange fish with a black back’ |
| P <i>red breast</i> | ‘Henderson Island parrot’ |
| P <i>bosses-and-dogs</i> | ‘telephone system with two networks – one for official use and one for the remainder of the population’ |

Whereas P and N compounds are generally produced from patterns shared with English, there is at least one exception. English compounds of the type *V-ed* + N correspond to P-N compounds of the type *V+N* in examples such as:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| <i>fryflour</i> | ‘flour fried in lard, basic breakfast’ |
| <i>smoekfish</i> | ‘smoked fish’ |
| <i>soltfish</i> | ‘salted fish’ |

Verb-particle constructions:

N, and to a seemingly lesser extent, P, share with English the use of verb-particle combinations to signal new meanings. Whilst affixation has been identified as a non-productive word formation process in P and N, verb-particle constructions by contrast are of considerable productivity and there are many instances of such constructions not found in English or not having the same meaning. Their syntactic properties have been dealt with in the syntax chapter. A list of verb particle constructions can be found in appendix 6.5.

6.15.5 Reduplication

In a preliminary paper (Mühlhäusler 2003) I noted that Ross and Moverley (1964) list a mere 28 reduplicated lexical forms. Of these:

- Only four items featured an English root.
- The productive Tahitian pattern of partial and full reduplication is not encountered.
- Some reduplicated forms are the accidental result of phonological simplification.
- Reduplication is either a formal property of lexemes with no semantic consequences or of the iconic type, where reduplication signals greater intensity or distribution.

The present analysis is based on a corpus of more than 100 examples. At least some of these follow a word formation grammar that is significantly different from English. Productive reduplication in P-N is similar to that found in St Kitts Creole and in the majority of instances is of the iconic type, which is frequent in animated N speech. Of greater interest (because they are not predictable from universal discourse properties) are the following three categories, most likely to have originated in St Kitts.

‘X-like’ suggests something is like the adjective or verb that is reduplicated:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>hili-hili</i> (adj.) | ‘rolling, undulating, hilly, as rolling hills’; ‘rough, choppy, swelly, as a rough sea’ |
| <i>miek-miek/maek-maek</i> (verb) | ‘to work unsystematically, to muddle around’. |
| <i>pick-pick</i> (verb) | Documented in St. Kitts and Scots |
| <i>tun-tun</i> (adj.) | ‘to pick at repeatedly, be picky’ |
| | ‘unreliable, constantly turning’ |

Deverbal adjective:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>brek-brek</i> | ‘broken into small pieces’ |
| <i>huhi-huhi</i> | ‘to be torn in many places, to have more than one tear, to have gone into holes (of knitted things)’ |
| <i>kraek-kraek</i> | ‘badly chapped’, of hands for example |
| <i>teya-teya</i> | ‘torn in many places’ |

Deverbal noun:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| P <i>baiti-baiti</i> (P-N) | ‘an insect that bites multiple times’, ‘a kind of shellfish that causes multiple small lacerations on feet if walked upon’ |
| P <i>fart-fart</i> (noun) | ‘wild beans’ (synonym for <i>lab-lab</i>) |
| P <i>pili-pili</i> | Polynesian burr-grass (Göthesson 1997: 122), > <i>pili</i> ‘to stick’ |
| P <i>pick-pick</i> | ‘a kind of triggerfish’, when cooked it’s easy to pick flesh from bones |
| P <i>uli-uli</i> | ‘mosquito larvae’, > <i>uli</i> ‘to wriggle’ |

Finally, there are some minor other types of reduplications that would seem to be local innovations:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <i>daed-daed</i> | ‘father’s father, grandfather’ |
| <i>Kik-Kik</i> | Kik, the son of Kik (nickname) |
| <i>tumolla ha tudder one ha tudder one ha tudder one</i> | ‘second day after tomorrow’ |

6.16 Lexical attrition in P and N

In the last couple of generations, both P and N have lost a considerable amount of vitality and both varieties have become endangered. This is evident not just in changes in pronunciation but also in the loss of many of the older expressions documented in earlier accounts.

Källgård (1981) has made a detailed study of P 30 years after Moverley and noted that of the 706 words listed by Moverley 59 words were dead (1981: 21) and 78 were only passively understood by some speakers. He also lists 205 ‘new’ words, though most of these are not additions to the lexicon during the 50-year period studies but simply words not noted by Moverley. “Words of Polynesian origin are not disappearing at a greater rate than other words, but words of nautical origin and archaic English words seem to be on the way out of Pitcairnese more quickly than other words. One of several striking examples is that the floors in the Pitcairn homes are not called *deck* any longer” (1981: 21). In the introduction to *Fut yoli noo bin lane aklen* (1991) ‘Why didn’t you please teach it to us?’ Källgård comments that P “has lost a considerable number of words during the past 30–40 years. All languages lose words, of course, but in the case of P it is obvious that the process at work is quite rapid – a process of Anglicization and impoverishment”. Källgård expresses the hope that the reevaluation of the language could turn around this decline, but this does

not appear to have happened. Lexical attrition continues to progress on Pitcairn, and the Norfolk Islander Colleen Crane, who visited Pitcairn in 2014, informed me (p.c. 2015) that most Pitcairn Islanders only knew a small number of words.

The situation on Norfolk Island was first studied by Harrison (1976: 407–420), who had noted the growing difference between traditional Broad N and Young Peoples' Modified N. Her categories differ from those used by Källgård and preclude direct comparison. She employs a list of 140 diagnostic entries and provides comments on the following: older usage, frequency of use among old people, meaning, young people's use (new forms), frequency assessment for young people.

Given that her notes are impressionistic and qualitative, it is not possible to translate them into a precise quantitative statement. My reading of her tables suggests:

- 10% of her lexical items were rare or near obsolete even among older speakers.
- Half a dozen words were common only in some families.
- Only 45 of the 140 examples are still in active use among young people.
- About 15 items are passively recognized.
- 10 forms are not recognized at all.
- A significant number of older forms has been replaced by new ones, not necessarily borrowed from English. Examples are:

| Old form | New form | Meaning |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>blaek</i> | <i>bun fe sun</i> | sunburnt |
| <i>engre</i> | <i>gurre</i> | angry |
| <i>roel off; fly off</i> | <i>dew off</i> | fall down a cliff |
| <i>sloo</i> | <i>skid</i> | slide off the road |

A different meaning is assigned by young people to a number of older words including: *boohoo* 'swelling from a bump', which has been generalized to mean 'having a cut or swelling' and *sly* 'to look slyly at a person', which has come to mean 'to do something on the sly'. What is equally evident is the gradual elimination of words reflecting calquing from Tahitian. Whereas most speakers of N still use *le-eg* to mean 'leg and foot' *harn* nowadays only means 'hand', and no longer 'arm' documented in the 1930s.

A problem with Harrison's comments is that they refer to a small and not necessarily representative sample of informants. Many of my middle-aged informants recognize and use forms classified by Harrison as obsolete in the 1970s, including *myse fish* 'my girlfriend', *gehl* 'wife', *tarpa mouth* 'sticky beak', *papahaia* 'to beat,

pummel'. I have had no problems eliciting hundreds of hitherto unrecorded N words from this group, though many of the words are not regularly used. What is of concern is that the number of speakers in their twenties and thirties who still use them has become very small. Thus, when comparing the texts recorded by Harrison in the 1970s with the language found on Facebook and internet forums, one notices a significant reduction in the number of word types regularly used. I have identified only about 100 N words commonly used in the electronic media and around twice that number in the print media. However, many Norfolk Islanders continue to live a traditional way of life, and in domains such as lighter-ing, fishing and agriculture, N remains dominant. It also continues to be the home language of a significant number of Islanders.

6.17 Neologisms and revival

The vitality of languages is reflected not just in the preservation of existing words, but in the creation of new ones. When Källgård examined changes in P between Ross and Moverley's work and his own (1981: 20), he listed 205 new words (29% of the lexicon). "However, probably most of the 'new words' existed 30 years ago". There has been no study of new words in P since.

No detailed study of neologisms in N is at hand, though it is possible to make some observations:

- Expressions reflecting technological or social change continue to be coined, such as: *honda rash* 'a painful condition experienced by motorcycle riders', *Christmas Islander* 'Islanders who live in Australia and only visit once a year', and *Fraedy Corner* 'dangerous corner = relocated Post Office'.
- New eponyms are created regularly, e.g. *Loppera House*, the new controversial fire station at the airport (completed in 2009 at huge cost) by Neville Christian, the Minister of Finance whose nickname is *Loppy*.
- Existing word formation is used to create words such as *gwen-to* 'future', or *foremother* 'Polynesian female ancestors'.
- New nicknames are added, particularly for unpopular Australian administrative personnel, such as *Pothoel* 'pot hole, someone to be avoided', or *Garb-ar-ball* 'someone who had his hands in his pockets most of the time'.
- New business names often involve semantic extension or word play such as *Aata Orn Tours* with Arthur Evans (*aarta* 'to admire'). It is probably an anthroponym which derives from the name Arthur. *Eldoo Hire Cars* ('it is affordable, can be done'), *Se Moosa Bus* (name of a mobile food stall, a pun on English 'bus' and the N *bus* 'to burst') and *Big Suff* (name of a surf

shop playing on the ambiguity of this word: ‘big waves’, ‘an important person’).

In spite of such creativity from internal resources, borrowing of English words remains dominant and, in the long term, will impact on the vitality of N. There is talk about setting up a language society which, among other tasks, will be involved in creating new words.

6.18 Conclusions

The study presented in this chapter differs from previous ones in that it regards content and use rather than form as the central property of language, as I have argued in detail in Mühlhäusler (2011). This chapter is also based on a vastly larger number of lexical items of P and N than previously compiled. Considering such a large corpus has necessitated corrections and additions, including:

- The importance of proper names and their interaction with common names reflects the strong links between people, place and history.
- The lexicon developed in response to the specific social and natural ecological conditions of Pitcairn and Norfolk. The large percentage of non-shared lexicon reflects differences in the conditions on the two islands.
- Tahitian influence on the lexicon referring to natural kinds is far less prominent than made out in earlier accounts.
- The influence of St. Kitts Creole is significant both in the core lexicon and in the derivational lexicon.
- Two aspects of the lexicon previously ascribed to Tahitian (multifunctionality and reduplication) significantly differ from it.
- Whilst obviously related to English, P-N has developed ways of reducing the dependency on borrowing from English. It has achieved the referential power needed for the social and natural ecology it is used in.
- Recent increased dependency on borrowing results from the shift of the language from traditional to new domains and functions as well as lexical attrition.

There remain many opportunities for further lexicological research. Areas requiring attention include an investigation of the differences of lexical information in words of P-N and those inherited and borrowed from English, a description of the wide range of meanings of words used in context, as well as a study of the metaphors and idioms of P-N.

As Uncle Willie would say whenever we asked him for a story 'bout dem old days': "Youse ears good en clean, boy? Cos when I se dade et gwen youse turn fe larna dem little sullun wathing we bin doen ya."
(Marrington 1981: 104)

7 Discourse features and pragmatics

7.1 Introduction

A study of language in use provides a fruitful ground for discovering some of the subtler ways in which the P-N language differs from other varieties of English. The pragmatics and discourse features of P-N reflect life in an insular environment, the esoteric nature of the speech community, Tahitian conventions for language use and, above all, continuity and connection with the past.

Insularity is manifested in attenuated access to what happens 'outside', greater density of communicative networks and more vulnerable social and natural ecologies. This vulnerability in the history of Pitcairn and Norfolk is one of the reasons for the alternating periods of dependency and self-reliance. Insularity also contributes to the importance of communicative norms that protect the social fabric such as indirect speech. Social criticism is expressed by means of rumours or allusions rather than by threatening an interlocutor's face.

Examples of esotericity are the development of linguistic devices to exclude outsiders, an implicit way of speaking and cultural prerequisites such as knowledge of past events and one's forebears. The Tahitian roots of P and N pragmatics are reflected, for instance, in the conventions for eliciting and providing information. There is no requirement to answer direct questions and, when information is given, it is typically vague. Tahitian influence is not pervasive, however, and many aspects of P and N language use reflect local developments. Thus, Tahitian stories and myths are absent in the repertoire of stories told to children.

Pitcairn and Norfolk are small communities with dense multiplex social networks and have been, for most of their history, low information societies where there was little information that was not shared by all community members. In such societies non-public information is regarded as a valuable commodity and not shared readily (see Keenan 1978).

I shall draw on the ethnography of speaking approach, a standard method (established by Hymes 1964) of documenting communicative practices within

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the wider context of social and cultural practices. This approach distinguishes three levels of analysis:

- The situation, which captures the physical, temporal and psychological context in which speech events occur (chapters 3 and 8).
- The speech event, which is defined by a bounded (temporally and spatially) set of components throughout: same purpose of communication, same topic, same participants, same location. Examples are: exchanging greetings, telling jokes, giving speeches, or, in the written medium a letter, an interpretive sign or a poster. Speech events are made up of speech acts.
- The speech act, which is an utterance that serves a particular communicative function such as apology, greeting, request, threat, complaint, compliment or refusal.

Ethnographic descriptions are pre-theoretical and their main virtue is that they force ethnographers to pay attention to a comprehensive set of parameters. The descriptions being etic rather than emic, they allow cross-cultural or diachronic comparison. It makes it possible both to capture the differences between P and N and the pragmatic changes that have occurred in both languages. Ethnographic research is concerned with groups defined by features of their ethnicity, which includes a common language, a common narrative and shared metaphors.

I have attempted to deal with discourse and pragmatics of both P and N, though my first-hand experience is mainly with Norfolk Islanders.

7.2 The situation: outside perceptions and discourses

When one visits the local bookshops, the library on Norfolk Island or the homes of islanders, one notes that a large variety of publications on the island's history are not just available but that they are also read and discussed. For Pitcairn, a number of chapters in Ross and Moverley (1964) provide a good overview over the changing situation during the last 200+ years, and for the Pitcairners in the New Zealand diaspora there is a detailed report by Solomon and Burnett (2014) which highlights both the continued strong positive views on history, culture and language. Two of the most useful books dealing with the situation of traditional Norfolk Islanders are those by Wiseman (1972) and Marrington (1981), both based on extensive interviews with Norfolk Islanders. *Norfolk On Line News* <<http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/newsletter-log-in.html>> features numerous valuable contributions by Rachel Nebauer.

Both Pitcairn and Norfolk have been the subject of outside criticism as well as romantic imaginings since their stories have been known to the outside

world. As Ball (1973: 4) has observed about Pitcairn Island “is the repository of more history-romantic history, bloody history, bogus history – than any other island in the Pacific.” What outsiders write on the two islands is of great interest to their inhabitants, and derogatory comments such as those of Birkett (1997) on Pitcairn or Macklin (2013) on Norfolk are cause for general debate. Whatever internal divisions may exist, Pitcairners and Norfolk Islanders pull together when under attack from outsiders. Outsider criticism is commonly expressed in terms of a narrative of fall from grace, moral and physical decline and the consequent need for intervention. Examples are discourses on:

- The deleterious effects of inbreeding among the Pitcairners and the need to introduce new blood, expressed in numerous reports from officials visiting both Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. Their concerns about genetic deterioration were finally laid to rest by Shapiro’s (1936) studies on their excellent physical and mental state.
- The inability of the Norfolk Islanders to manage their new home. In particular their inability to arrest the spread of weeds and pests.
- The negative effects of the P and N language.
- The inability of the Norfolk Islanders to manage their island’s finances, which led to the abolition of self-government in 2015.

Amoamo (2016) describes how this mythologizing of Pitcairn Island takes place through retellings of the Bounty story and points out that islands in general serve in literature and popular culture as distant paradises: symbolizing the possibility of starting afresh. Low (2014) has provided a similar account for the Pitcairn descendants on Norfolk.

This “island utopia effect” (Mühlhäusler 1998, Mühlhäusler and Stratford 1999) has also skewed the few accounts of the numerous short-term visitors to Pitcairn and Norfolk as well as the views of some of their inhabitants who feel compelled to conform to outsider stereotypes, a phenomenon reinforced by the growing tourism activities on both islands.

7.3 Situation – the cultural narrative

Hayward (2006: 224) has noted:

Fundamental to any notion of Pitcairn identity, and to the identity of Norfolk’s Pitcairn descended population, is the historical event of the Bounty mutiny and the settlement of Pitcairn by the mutineers and Tahitians. While this is a fixed reference point, its interpretation has varied and experienced a notable revival in the 1930s–1950s. As a result, the prominence of Bounty mythology in present-day public culture on Norfolk Island does

not so much evidence an ‘ossified image of the past’ as a refigured one that complements a set of socio-political arguments and feelings that crystallised in the 1980s.

To a lesser extent, this also applies to Pitcairn Island, where after long neglect of their history, there now is a revival. Three bronze plaques in Adamstown commemorate the nine mutineers, the Polynesian entourage and the story of sociogenesis (*Weekend Australian*, 25–26 May 2019: 10):

Bout ya 200 years ago, January 1790, dem Bounty mutineer end ems Tahitian gerl cum or far Bounty. Uwas descendancy start ya! Path of uwas ancestors.

‘About here 200 years ago, in January 1790, the Bounty mutineers and their Tahitian women came off the Bounty. Our descendancy starts here. Path of our ancestors’.

The world-famous Bounty Saga (cf. Clarke 1986) features in a vast body of writings discussed, for instance, by Sellick (1978). There are at least some of the 1.200 books and 3.200+ magazine articles (Amoamo 2016: 73), including Nordhoff and Hall’s (1932) trilogy with an estimated readership of 25 million (Hayward 2006: 90) The internet has made most resources accessible, e.g. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_the_Pitcairn_Islands>. A particularly valuable resource is the Pitcairn Islands Study Centre of the Pacific Union College.

The Mutiny on the Bounty features in several well-known movies, the first one an Australian silent film, *The Mutiny of the Bounty* (1916). The second, Charles Chauvel’s *In the Wake of the Bounty* (1933) starred Errol Flynn. Chauvel spent three months on Pitcairn. The involvement of the Pitcairn Islanders in its production greatly contributed to their awareness of and pride in their past. In earlier days, the events of the mutiny had been a taboo topic, glossed over. The next film was *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935) starring Charles Laughton and Clark Gable, based on Nordhoff and Hall’s (1932) novel. It was shot in California and Tahiti and first screened on Norfolk Island in 1938 (Hayward 2006: 91). It attracted considerable public interest as it reminded the Islanders of their Tahitian connections.

The fourth version of the Bounty Saga was released in 1962. It starred Marlon Brando, Trevor Howard and Richard Harris. It was shot in Tahiti and was a commercial flop, in spite of its famous cast.

The most recent film, starring Mel Gibson, is a historically more accurate depiction of the mutiny. It was produced in French Polynesia, New Zealand and the U.K. and attracted much interest from the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders.

The Bounty Saga is kept alive not only by the regular screening of Bounty movies but also by a number of more permanent institutions on both islands. The museum on Pitcairn Island features salvaged Bounty relics as well as books and articles. The Bounty Saga is taught to the Pitcairn children at the school.

The Bounty Saga is very much in evidence on Norfolk Island. It is present in the street names *John Adams Road*, *Fletcher Christian Road*, *Edward Young*

Road, *Matthew Quintal Road* and business names such as *Bounty Tours*, *Bounty Centre*, or *Fletcher Christian's Apartments*. A monument featuring a model of the Bounty and a plaque inscribed with the names of the 194 original Pitcairn settlers occupies a prominent position in Burnt Pine. The events of the mutiny are re-enacted at the Salty Theatre *Mutiny on the Bounty Show*. Fletcher's Mutiny Cyclorama is a 360-degree panoramic painting depicting the Bounty mutiny and Norfolk Island history. As Ritzau (2006: 54–55) has observed, the tourism industry “has led to prominence of the Bounty myth on the island. Never absent, is it now the dominating theme”. Note however, that the Norfolk Islanders' fascination with the Bounty Saga predates mass-tourism and that it is also strongly in evidence outside the tourism domain.

The Bounty Saga features prominently in the N language poetry, for instance Ena Ette Christian's (1986: 38–53) epic poem *Norfolk I'len's Story* or Alice Buffett's 1997 poem *F'Baek t'biesiks*.

Children are familiarised with the Bounty Saga at home, in the Norfolk Studies offered at the School, and there is a children's book titled *Tale of Two Islands* (Duke 1991). The story of the Pitcairners is also featured at the local minigolf course and the nearby *Walk in aa stick* ‘Walk in the wild’.

The Pitcairn saga is featured in a number of series of commemorative stamps issued on Norfolk Island from 1990 and a miniature sheet of stamps to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Mutiny was issued jointly with Pitcairn and the Isle of Man in 1989.

A shared narrative is not an accurate historical account but a representation of the collective memory of a society and like all memories adapted and retold many times over. Inevitably, some events are omitted or downplayed and others emphasised. Thus, the brutality of the events in the first ten years of Pitcairn history were downplayed in the past, as has the contribution of the Tahitian women. Both now feature prominently in the narrative.

The narrative internalised by the Norfolk Islanders contains the following key episodes:

- the idyllic time the British crew of the Bounty experienced in Tahiti
- the mutiny
- the search for a new home
- the violent first decade on Pitcairn Island
- John Adam's conversion and the founding of a pious new society
- renewed contacts with the outside world
- the disastrous relocation to Tahiti in 1831
- the Englishman Archibald Hill's religious dictatorship
- relocation to Norfolk Island – a gift from Queen Victoria with the task of turning hell into paradise

- disappointment with the conditions on Norfolk Island and return of some families to Pitcairn
- the erosion of traditional forms of governance after 1890
- the removal of female suffrage in 1896
- the eviction of the Pitcairners from their houses in Kingston in 1908
- the destruction of Pine Avenue during World War II
- Pitcairn descendants becoming a minority on Norfolk Island
- the recolonization of Norfolk Island in 2015 and the ongoing ‘mutiny’ of the majority of Islanders.

These episodes are told and retold and re-enacted. As Low (2012: 240) argues:

Social beginnings, of the sort that the Pitcairners’ settlement represents, are consequently not separated from the present and located in an increasingly distant past. Rather, provided they are recollected and commemorated, they can continue to ‘infuse the present’ (Schwartz 1982: 395) in important ways. Settlement as a social beginning holds commemorative significance for Islanders beyond its role in supporting their claims of priority to subsequent settlers to the Island. As the letter I described at the beginning of this chapter illustrated, the Island elders’ claims to the Island as home were indeed supplemented by the historical detail of their ancestor’s precise date of arrival. However, the letter also contained an appeal – by reference to the Norfolk Island official seal – to the ‘great gift to the Pitcairn people’. It is largely this belief in a gift of territory from a distant monarch to the Pitcairn Islanders that establishes Islanders’ sense of a fundamentally different relationship to Norfolk Island.

Importantly, these episodes are seen not so much as a linear progression, but as a cycle where events repeat themselves. Thus, the eviction of the Norfolk Assembly from Kingston in 2016 is seen as a repeat of the eviction of the Pitcairners from Kingston in 1908 and the recent recolonization is interpreted as a repetition of the imposition of Australian governance around 1900. The local paper, the *Norfolk Islander*, for many years republished accounts of events that took place decades ago but bear close similarity to the present. The absence of an obligatory tense distinction in N reinforces the blurring of past and present.

7.4 Speech events

7.4.1 General remarks

The cultural rules underlying language use of the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders are quite distinct from those of mainstream British or Australian English and often a source of misunderstandings, as the pragmatics of P and N are carried

over to English as spoken by the Islanders. The situation is comparable to that of English speaking Aboriginal people in South East Queensland (Eades 1982). Research on the ethnography of speaking on Pitcairn and Norfolk is still in progress. For Pitcairn, the following remarks are based on written sources and, for Norfolk, on a combination of my field notes and comments made by numerous observers. I shall employ the conventional categories of Hymes (1964) and subsequent modifications.

7.4.2 Setting and scene

Setting refers to the physical circumstances (place and time), scene to the psychological ones, such as sense of seriousness. Whilst English in Australia is a neutral language, which can be employed in any setting and scene, N is not. Essentially, both P and N are interconnected with their speakers' island homes or the makeshift homes created in the diaspora. Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders tend to treat their variety as belonging to a pluricentric language and have passive competence in each other's variety.

There are a number of rules that govern where N can or cannot be spoken. Not conforming to these rules is regarded as accountable behaviour, i.e. a reason must be provided why one is doing it.

N can be and often is used:

- at culturally important events such as Bounty Day, funerals, family gatherings;
- during shared economic or recreational activities of Norfolk Islanders, including fishing, playing Jaero (card game);
- during lightering and fishing;
- among drivers of tour buses when not surrounded by tourists;
- among women preparing food for tourists;
- during wreath making;
- increasingly, in the social media (see appendix 7.10).

N (traditionally) is not spoken:

- within the earshot of outsiders: In some families this included spouses of non-Pitcairner origins, in others they were permitted to hear but not encouraged to speak it. This rule can be relaxed when Islanders want to antagonize outsiders: “at times some Islanders do seem to derive a perverse kind of pleasure in the obscurity which can sometimes be achieved from speaking broad N in front of non-speakers” (Rachel Borg, *Norfolk Online* 27 July 2012). Speaking N in front of tourists now features in a

number of tourism events¹ and N is being taught at NICS to children of all backgrounds.

- in the presence of children, but note: Whether or not children were spoken to in N and whether N was used in their earshot has varied greatly, a consequence of past attempts by Australian schoolteachers and officials to discourage the use of N in the home.
- in public speeches: The language of the vast majority of public speeches by Norfolk Islanders, even when addressing an audience of other Islanders, is English. Exceptions are funeral and wedding speeches and the Bounty Day address.
- in the church, the school, Government House.

7.4.3 Participants

N has always been for use among people of Pitcairner ancestry, and the community remains divided as to who is entitled to speaking it. With a growing number of Pitcairn descendants living away from Norfolk, the dense multiplex communication network of the past has been weakened. When long-term absentees come to visit or settle they have to establish their credentials. When Shirley Harrison's daughter came to Norfolk to do research on the sensitive topic of nicknames she was treated like someone from the community once her *cumfrum* was established, and was given information which I myself was only allowed to share after 15 visits.

Low (2014: 194–205) provides a detailed study of who is entitled to speak N and participate in speech events. The situation is summarized as follows:

Very little agreement can be reached regarding whether mainlanders² can – or indeed should – be speakers of Norf'k. Some argue that anyone living on the Island should be allowed to speak Norf'k, while others argue that only Islanders can legitimately do so. Most of my respondents represented themselves as open to non-Islander residents speaking Norf'k if they could speak it correctly, yet still cited the potential for such an act to be criticised by other Islanders. In my interviews, it became apparent even though some Islanders personally recognised non-Islanders' rights to speak Norf'k, they did not presume

¹ It is noted that outsiders are not given all aspects of the language but rather a bowdlerized version.

² *autsaiida* 'outsider' (n.) is one of the numerous expressions for residents and visitors with no Pitcairn ancestry: *hors* 'horses', *nyuu salan* 'newcomer', *salan fram wieh* 'people from the outside', *strienja* 'strangers', *toolies* 'tourists', *loopies* 'mad tourists', *termites* 'outsiders who undermine Norfolk Island', and others.

to speak for all Islanders in this regard and avowed that some Islanders would not accept non-Norfolk Islanders speaking Norfolk. Harland, an Islander in his mid-60s for instance, noted that for him, a non-Islander's demonstrated fluency in Norfolk did not automatically mean he would conduct the conversation in Norfolk.

Not all participants in speech events are active speakers. There is a large group of active listeners in whose presence N is often spoken but who speak English – a kind of dual-lingualism found in other Pacific communities:

Children, in the past, were not encouraged to speak unless spoken to:

Lettle sullun bin use-a be seen but not heard an ef you tark you gwen cetch et an ef you cly dem tull you es mio un.

'Little children used to be seen but not heard and if you spoke you were punished and if you cried they said that you were a crybaby' (Fay Bataille lesson plans n.d.).

7.4.4 Ends

Speaking P and N serves a number of ends:

- to affirm/live one's identity;
- to achieve a match between the contours of language and the contours of the speakers' physical and social environment: Many Norfolk Islanders find it difficult to talk about their island in English only;
- to keep alive the memory of past events and people;
- to exercise social control: Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders have a number of linguistic devices used to put others in their place. In P direct in the face expressions are more common, as is the case in mainstream English. N, by contrast, favours an indirect approach. Thus, direct threats to a person's face such as overt criticism or suggesting mental inferiority (*P gwen buu-huu your head* 'I am going to smash your head' or 'you's an idiot' are common in P but rarely found in N where social control by means of language more commonly is achieved by means of gossip, *dem tull* 'rumour' or by quoting another Islander's *thing fer dems* 'so-and-so's saying';
- social healing: In 2010 Källgård noted that subsequent to the Pitcairn Island sex scandal the community had become torn apart and divided. There remained one thing in common, however, an interest in P.

Language is central to the Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders' identity (Mühlhäusler 2013) Note that an act of identity, a construction of a way of speaking different

from that of English, had developed among the sailors and their Tahitian consorts even before the mutiny:

There, in such an ambivalent space, even the language of the crew began to change. What stuck in the memory of those who tried to describe Christian on the morning of the mutiny was the sort of Tahitian-English pidgin he was using. *Mammoo* (mama), ‘silence’, they remember him shouting. While it is difficult to point to anything stronger than hints in James Morrison’s and Peter Heywood’s account of the mutiny, there is a suggestion that the crew of the *Bounty* had been marked by something more than tattoos at Tahiti. They had begun to intersperse Tahitian words in their speech with one another. By the time Edwards had collected them in the *Pandora*, this pidgin had made them bilingual. It was a highly threatening strangeness to Edwards, and he promised extreme punishment, even gagging, if a word of Tahitian was spoken. On the *Bounty*, their pidgin would not have been to exclude others’ understanding what they were saying, but to underscore a relationship changed by their Tahitian experience. It bred familiarity. It lessened distinction between them and increased distance between their present and their former selves. It blurred the genres of their sailors’ talk. Bligh might rage at their seamanship, but it was more than their incompetence that angered him. They were touched and changed by something outside their wooden walls. They showed it on their skin and in their speech. (Denning 1992: 57–58)

Once the Pitcairners had become a pious well-regulated society, the link between mutiny and language weakened, but continues to re-emerge whenever there is conflict with the controlling external powers. British interference after the sex scandals of the 1990 has led to an increased awareness of P as a marker of identity, and after the recent recolonization of Norfolk Island by Australia both identification with and use of N have significantly increased.

From the 1820s onward P had become a distinguisher between the descendants of the original mutineers who embraced their language as a marker of identity and the “interlopers” who began to join the community in the 1820s, a distinction that persisted on Norfolk Island. Harrison (1986: 13) reports:

My older informants recall that in the households of some descendants of the ‘new-comers’ to Pitcairn, John Buffett (1823) and George Hunn Nobbs (1828), a predominantly English-speaking practice still persisted in the early twentieth century. For example, in the case of the family of one of the grandsons of the original John Buffett, informants recall that English was the main language spoken in the home and that the children were affected variously by that influence; one son is remembered as speaking only English (even in informal talk with other Islanders), another two as speaking a lot of English but some Modified Norfolk in situations where Broad Norfolk was the norm, and another as conforming to the usual pattern for use of Broad Norfolk and Norfolk English. Similarly, in the homes of the grandchildren of the original George Hunn Nobbs in the early 1900s there was more evidence of English speech than in other families of Pitcairn origin; in one family, at least, English was insisted on in the home, though the children spoke Broad Norfolk to their peers at school, and to Islanders outside the home.

LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) have shown for Belize and Labov (1971) for Martha's Vineyard that external threats are powerful factors in bringing about strengthening of identity, expressed typically as linguistic focusing. In the case of Norfolk Island, out-migration and tourism constitute the main threat. N distinguishes two groups of Islanders that work outside: Those who are in fly-in-fly-out employment are referred to as *tampon* 'one week in-three weeks out' and those who work more or less permanently as *Christmas Islanders* 'Islanders who only visit for Christmas'. Whilst the Norfolk Islanders no longer make up the majority of the Island's population (and with about 20,000 visitor days or about 600 visitors on any one day on the island of 1,500 people), the impact of tourism is numerically significant. It also has created considerable economic dependency; the employment of islanders in the service industry and the growing gap between rich mainlanders and poor islanders. As yet, there is no strong indigenous (as some of the Norfolk Islanders have begun to refer to themselves as) leadership, and community role-models are few. Nevertheless, there are strong indications that language is now perceived by many to be a core concept of Norfolk identity. For instance, Low (2012: 185) reports that:

Many Islanders told me their language was the most tangible evidence of separate identity. Some, such as Charlotte, saw it as a sign of historical continuity and as a source of pride, partially brought on by its recognition elsewhere as an object worthy of academic study and the status that academics have given it as a language rather than a dialect of English.

Another aspect of speaking in societies where most knowledge is common knowledge is to avoid social conflict. This is achieved, for instance, by not mentioning the names of those featuring in a delicate story but refer to *one maen*, *e'e* 'so and so', *myse father* 'an older male', *some sullun* 'some person/people' or *twaa* 'person not present'. It is also manifested in the frequent use of taboo expressions. In the old days a famous relic from the convict days, Bloody Bridge, was referred to as *ar Naughty Bridge*.

7.4.5 Act sequence

Act sequence refers to the conventions regarding which speech acts make up a speech event, and what order they are performed in. This parameter is useful for analysing a specific event but often does not lend itself to generalizations.

Very few conversations or texts are in P or N only. Being a diglossic community requires frequent switching between P-N and English. Speech events are often introduced by a number of formulae used in speech acts (see below) such as invitation, request, information seeking or expressing sympathy. At the end of a speech event one often encounters *dars ett* 'that is it'.

Where monolingual English speakers employ different styles, Norfolk Islanders employ different languages. Code switching is required when speech acts or topics change (e.g. local vs. international) or by a change in the level of formality.

7.4.6 Key

Key refers to the tone or manner of performance (serious or joking, sincere or ironic, etc.). Early reports on the Pitcairners emphasize their serious disposition and the absence of light hearted speech or verbal jokes. Murray (1853: 128) writes:

During the whole time I was with them I never heard them indulge in a joke, or other levity; and the practice of it is apt to give offence. They are so accustomed to take what is said in its literal meaning, that irony was always considered a falsehood in spite of explanation. They could not see the propriety of uttering what was not strictly true for any purpose whatsoever.

The key (or tone) of speaking in the past was serious, a tradition which goes back to the days of the whalers who visited Pitcairn. Many of them came from a puritanical New England background and reinforced the somber tone that prevailed in the early 19th century:

I have never heard an oath among them, or even an angry word; while their scrupulous adherence to truth – the first test which should be applied to claims of regeneration, in failure of which the most obtrusive sanctity may be at once set down for cant – their practical morality, and strong sense of religion, free from all ostentation of piety, might put many of ‘the Serious’ in Europe to the blush. (Metoixos 19 October 1850)

Present day N has a much wider register of tone ranging from serious to jocular. There is, however, one area of the N language that differs significantly from Australian English, the absence of cursing. There are very few if any expressions that have the same crudeness that some English four letter words have, and those Islanders given to cursing tend to switch to English.

P and N are favoured in light-hearted discourses and speaking and hearing their language makes the Islanders feel at home and in enjoyable company. Shirley Harrison (fieldnote 1-3-1980) comments that there is “a Norfolk tendency to jocular exaggeration”. As observed by Rachel Borg (Norfolk Online 27 July 2012): “If we were to look for one over-riding factor to explain why the Island’s language did not disappear into the mist of time or crumble under such sustained pressure to ‘speak English properly’ and to stop ‘murdering her Majesty’ it is that to speak N is a joy. It is too much fun to stop”.

Another Islander, Mr. Albert Buffett (p.c. 2016) similarly says: “I have always maintained that if French is the ‘language of love’ then ‘N is the language of laughter’, because when listening to a group of Norfolk Islanders talking N there is always a lot of laughter involved”.

7.4.7 Instrumentalities and message form

Instrumentalities refer to the channel or medium of communication (e.g. speaking, signing, writing, speaking), while message form refers to the variety selected from the participants’ repertoire. For most of their existence P and N have been oral languages and have remained predominantly oral. Most messages are still written in English, though there is growing use of N on the internet, in texting and in public signage.

The verbal code chosen (English or N) is determined by the conventions of diglossia. There are additional options within N such as that between Broad and Modified, which are determined by factors such as topic, competence of interlocutors and medium. As regards the latter, Modified N dominates internet communication, whilst Broad N is employed in formal letter writing. No systematic account of the non-verbal behaviour of Norfolk Islanders exists.

7.4.8 Norms of interaction and interpretation

I have scanty data for P, but at least some of the following, documented for N, will apply to both varieties.

Responsibility for the correct interpretation of a message rests with the hearer rather than the speaker. I was told that to understand N you have to have grown up on Norfolk Island, know your *cumfrum* ‘history and family relationships’, have gone to school there, and to have lived there most of your life. This makes it near impossible for outsiders fully to understand what is meant when Norfolk Islanders talk to one another or write readers’ letters to the Norfolk Islander. Several of my informants have also reminded me that the meaning of words can only be interpreted when you know the full context in which they are uttered.

Meaning is often implicit – in a small community much more information is shared than in a large one and, consequently, such shared knowledge is often not mentioned. Seemingly simple sentences may convey a great deal of information to an insider but appear trivial or uninformative to an outsider. The completion marker *se*, for instance, is used to confirm a statement or a

proposition within a question. Pronouns are often omitted when recoverable from the context.

In many small communities most information is known to all community members and non-shared knowledge is a valuable commodity. Norfolk Islanders generously share produce. However, sharing information is highly constrained. Many Islanders have documents relating to their history and language, which have never been seen by other Islanders. The N language has several expressions meaning 'I am not going to tell you', for instance *I se oop and I se sly*. A non-accountable answer to the expression *larna me* 'tell me' is *nor larnen*. Such utterances are not rude, rather they are a reminder to the interlocutor that his or her request for information was inappropriate.

Eliciting information and answering questions is highly constrained: It is not necessary to provide an answer. An answer may be provided a long time after the question was asked and after the answerer had had sufficient time to consider the matter. None of these responses are necessarily rude. Rather they are a mechanism for avoiding the unhappiness explicit answers may cause. Persons who try to fish for information are referred to in N as *paloo sullen* (*paloo* = berley for fishing).

Answers can be very vague such as the reply *upcooks* 'I don't know or do not want to tell you where' or *up in Arnie's room behine ar clock* (same meaning).

Expressing agreement is often a strategy of conflict reduction or a demonstration to outsiders that the Islanders speak with one voice.

Disagreements often remain unresolved. Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders have a long tradition of individuality. Not wanting to lose an argument is a trait encountered in many small close-knit communities. There is, for instance, a lot of litigation on Norfolk Island and many arguments, most of them ending with the parties agreeing to disagree. Arguments such as whether John Adams was responsible for Fletcher Christian's murder in 1793 or not continue to the present. On Pitcairn the question of who first produced spirits on the Island has been an important factor in family politics. Lummis (1997: 92) comments on the conflicting accounts given in Ned Young's journal, by the Polynesian woman Jenny and by John Adams and expresses sympathy for Jenny's account that Ned Young rather than McCoy was the culprit:

As, of necessity, alcohol on Pitcairn had to be made with tropical produce reduced to a kind of molasses it was much more within the experience of Young's West Indian origins than within McCoy's experience in a Scottish grain distillery. Shifting the responsibility to McCoy was not difficult given his reputation for drunkenness. It had the appearance of a calculated lie designed to shift the moral odium for the production of alcohol, and its subsequent effects, from Young to McCoy".

Disputes often persist over generations as losing, as against rehashing, arguments appear to be culturally discouraged.

The disagreement about the best part of Norfolk Island is another dispute. “God’s Country is a general term often used in good-natured ribbing. If one Norfolk Islander talks to another where on Norfolk they live, you will often hear them talk about *God’s Country*. It is a long-running joke, a subtle jibe and an allusion to the fact that they live in the best part of the island.” (Nash 2012: 15).

Among the disputes about the meaning and correct pronunciation of words, is that about the first person non-singular pronouns *ucklun* and *ouwa*. I have collected several passages where islanders using *ouwa* ‘we’ are told that this is what is displayed on a watch (see appendix 7.1).

Next to unsettled arguments among the community there are arguments with outsiders. Norfolk Islanders have asserted since 1856 that Norfolk Iwas a gift from Queen Victoria and that the document shown to them was stolen. This account is retold numerous times within the community and is appealed to when negotiating with Australia about matters of government. It underpins the ongoing “uneasy relationship” (O’Collins 2002) between Australia and Norfolk Island. This is not the place to comment on the legal rights and wrongs, but the near-universal belief that the Norfolk Islanders are right illustrates that communication is not a simple matter of transferring a message from speaker to hearer. Input in everyday transactions rarely equals intake. What matters is uptake, what the listeners regard as their understanding. The uptake the Pitcairners had from the beginning has always been that Norfolk Island was a gift. Outside legal and constitutional experts cannot change this.

The norms of interaction within the community and with outsiders exhibit significant differences. Paramount among these is the Polynesian practice of *ha’avare* ‘scrupulous lying to outsiders’ (Christian 2011: 318) and its P equivalent *hypocrite ar English* and N *two face*. It is the reason not only for a number of conflicting early accounts of the mutiny and the turbulent first years of socio-genesis on Pitcairn, but has remained the norm of interaction with outsiders (Hendery et al. 2015). Telling outsiders what they want to hear (gratuitous concurrence) and what the Islanders want them to hear has been a survival strategy, as both islands remain dependent on the goodwill of outsiders. Hunt (1914: 26) comments on this with regard to the Norfolk Islanders’ morals:

Critics in the past have spoken severely regarding their morals. According to some who have written, and many who have spoken, they inherited the vices of both classes of their ancestors, though it is hard to reconcile the comments on this head regarding the Norfolkers with those glowing panegyrics with which visitors to Pitcairn used to delight English readers of their narratives. It may be that the ‘untruthfulness and practiced concealment’ with which they have been charged, is, or was, responsible for these discrepancies.

Professor Raymond Nobbs, a Norfolk Islander, has reflected on this. Nobbs (1984: 17) noted that: “Nothing so excited the first visitors to Pitcairn as the evidence of piety and religious observance . . . The piety that Adams instilled in the Pitcairn community became legendary.”

And Nobbs (1984: 20):

Small wonder that the Pitcairners should be led to increase their emphasis on piety by the heart-warming chorus of praise which reverberated from the great nations of the world. However, by the end of the 19th century, this sincerity was being questioned. Some paralleled the Pitcairners’ actions to what Plato had identified in the Republic: ‘I wonder if we could construct some magnificent myth that would itself carry conviction to our whole community’. Whether the Pitcairners sought to defraud the world is beyond this review.

Next to misleading outsiders, not providing them with information deemed to be *dars fer ouwas* ‘our own affairs’ remains common.

Overt assertion of truthfulness is relatively infrequent in P and N discourse as it is assumed to be the unmarked interpretation. If the story told seems unbelievable, as is the story about a whale skeleton up in Palm Glen in the interior of Norfolk, it requires justification, in our example the fact that the speaker’s father said so:

T.M.: *Ye ap deya . . . big piis’ wiel boen.*

‘Yes, up there lies a big piece of whale bone.’

J.M.: *Dem jes tek et deya.*

‘They just took it there’

J.: *Truuli?*

‘Truely?’

J.M.: *S’ful’ mohs en dem gat aa hoel baekboen en orl em rib.*

‘It is covered by moss and there is the whole backbone and all the ribs’

T.M.: *Papa laana auwa baut et.*

‘Father told us about it.’

(Conversation recorded by Shirley Harrison Tape 13, side A, transcribed by Rachel Nebauer)

One reason for the absence of truth assertion is that, historically, Pitcairn Islanders, after their conversion, were renowned for their truthful plain speaking. Another reason is that in a small community with such a large proportion of shared knowledge, telling lies among insiders is fraught with difficulties.

It is interesting that the word for untruth in P-N is *stolley*, *stolly* ‘story’. If it is not a story it must be true by default. The anthropologist Shapiro, who spent time on Norfolk Island in 1923–24 and on Pitcairn in 1934–35, reported that *estolley* means ‘it is a story’ or ‘it is a lie’. In the 1938 wordlist collected by the

Robinson sisters for Administrator Pinney *es stolly* and *youse talin stolly* are listed as ‘you are telling a lie’. The extension of the meaning of *story* ‘to lie’ is documented in a number of English dialects but it may have been reinforced by the Pitcairners after 1820, when the use of language was particularly circumspect. Alice Buffett (p.c. 2000) informed me that the word *lie* as in ‘not tell the truth’ was regarded as ‘not civil talk’ by the forebears of the Norfolk Islanders from Pitcairn, so rather than say *you are lying*, they would say in a more courteous way *it is a story*.

7.4.9 Genres

The analysis of communicative genres and their classification has been a long-standing concern of anthropological linguistics. Initially genres such as myth, letters, or narratives were regarded as self-contained objects. The *Ethnography of Communication* by contrast focusses on language use in contexts and views genres as an integral part of the communicative repertoire of a community as manifested in language use. The identification of formal characteristics is only one aspect of the analysis of genres. For the purposes of this chapter the following aspects of P and N genres are of particular interest:

- The apparent absence of traditional Tahitian speech genres
- The absence of West Indian children’s stories such as the Anancy stories
- The many qualitative and quantitative differences between P-N and Standard English genres.

7.4.9.1 Wisecracks and practical jokes

Verbal short jokes are still rare in N, but longer funny tales (wisecracks) are enjoyed widely. They were told in either English or N or a mix between the two languages. Many of them are a social comment on conceited outsiders or community members, busybodies and overly religious people and other frailties. Some of Greg Quintal’s stories also report common pranks such as putting underwear in somebody’s stew or putting pepper in the underwear of someone suspected of unfaithfulness (see appendix 7. 2).

Norfolk Islanders often refer to themselves as *cusseed* and this manifests itself in many ways, including the practical jokes and pranks they play on one another. There are a number of N lexical items that are memories of these

practices, including *johlaps* ‘the practice of incising fruit (melons particularly) and inserting a purgative in order to dissuade culprits from returning to steal more fruit.’ Marrington (1981) devotes a large section of her book to pranks (appendix 7.3).

7.4.9.2 *stolley* ‘tales, untruths’ told to outsiders

The tall tale is often told to outsiders with a straight face, as a sort of gullibility test. The true entertainment provided by the story is then at the expense of the outsider and serves a purpose of community bonding. A shorter version are verbal jokes at the expense of outsiders. Thus, tourists when inquiring about the name of a tree are at times informed that it is a *car whar tree* ‘I do not know tree’ and a visiting sailor who inquired about the name of a fish was told it was *sailor’s piss*. Another example of making fun of outsiders is given by Marrington (1981: n.p.):

If we seldom speak Norfolk in front of strangers it is out of politeness, although I admit that we sometimes have a gentle joke at a visitor’s expense. Recently a waitress was asked by a group of mainlanders to tell them the name for a certain local dish. She said it was *guddar* (instead of *muddar*) and asked if they would have some. A joke much appreciated by us Islanders at a nearby table. *Guddar*, a word of unknown provenance means ‘to have sexual intercourse’.

More examples can be found in appendix 7.4.

7.4.9.3 Rumour and gossip

The metalinguistic descriptor *dem tull* ‘rumour’ is found in both P and N. Through rumour gossip the behavior of individual Islanders is continually discussed and evaluated, and through these evaluations norms are reasserted. A second function of *dem tull* is to relieve a speaker from the responsibility for what they report. Low (2012) provides a thorough analysis of this genre. Many of the rumour concern actions by the expatriate administrators, who have a long record of keeping the Islanders in the dark about their actions. These rumours can persist for instance in the following account of the eviction of the Pitcairners from Kingston in 1908:

Where the Administrators office is now, the Pitcairners squatted in the houses there. I don’t know who else lived there, but my great-grandmother she was a sick lady when they did the evictions, and she was the one who was carried out on her bed and was left on her bed on the verandah, and rumour says it’s her ghost that haunts that they see in that house (Audrey, recorded interview 27/11/2007). (Low 2012: 84)

A second example is concerned with the hospital, a frequent topic of *dem tull* on Norfolk:

Paul: Yeah, you don't wanna lose that. But I think there's also an awful lot of people on the Island who . . . are suffering. And I think that if the government did step in with some assistance financially then that'd be a good thing. For instance, the hospital on Norfolk Island. I heard a rumour; you know, *dem tal* [they say], that for people having babies and other things that can [currently] be carried out on Norfolk Island, they'll have to go away. [. . .] The hospital here is capable of looking after different things. I don't want to see that lost (Low 2012: 229)

Rumours about marital and financial matters, illnesses, fishing and politics continue to play an important role, which is summarized in a saying: “There are no rumours on Norfolk, only information”.

7.4.9.4 Ghost stories

Wiseman (1977: no page numbers) writes in his chapter on Norfolk Island Haunting: “There is that odd feeling of isolation and loneliness that characterizes Norfolk. Maybe this is due to the convoluted landscape limiting observation in most places to a few hundred yards, and sometimes concealing the older houses until you are almost upon them”.

He retells a number of popular ghost stories, as do Maev and Gill Hitch (1998) in their little book of Norfolk Island *form* ‘ghosts’. Many ghost stories told to children feature *Billy Tin*, a scary figure who frightens people in *friedy* places such as *Ghose Corner* or *Ghosi Ghosi*. Evans (n.d.) has published a children’s book featuring the local ghost *Hukimilish*.

Recurrent themes in Norfolk ghost stories are drowned people turning up in the houses of spouses and relatives and big cattle-like monsters (*friedi mumu*) who obstruct people’s path. By contrast Pitcairn was ‘homely’ and familiar and free from ghosts. As the narrator in a story collected by Flint observes:

Em use-er see dem thing on Norfolk Island dah’s make we like Pitcairn better ‘n here!
‘They habitually see these things on Norfolk Island this is why we like Pitcairn better than here’.

An Australian documentary series called *The Extraordinary* did a piece on Norfolk Island in the mid-90s and interviewed many of its residents on the subject of ghosts and hauntings <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9i01Ksb1UI>> (31/07/2017): “A lady who has lived on the island for 50 years mentions that at least 50% of the population, which was a little above 2,000 at the time, have seen or heard a ghost.”

The cultural significance of Norfolk Island Ghosts has been discussed in detail by Wiseman (1977: chapter 7) and by Rachel Nebauer-Borg, (<http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-aa-trii-o-nohlej-the-tree-of-knowledge/page/11/>, Friday, July 31, 2015):

Because wells were dug by hand it was important, as far as possible, to ensure there was going to be water where you were digging. The Islanders would first divine for water, generally with a forked green peach branch *yu hoel et iin yus haan en w'said gat' wortu aa thing gwen' dip en efyu hoeletor wan glaas' wortu gwen' dip* 'you hold it in your hand and where there is water the branch will bend and if you hold it over a glass of water it will also dip down'. A good diviner was worth his weight in gold and there are still several Islanders well versed in this art.

Digging wells was very dangerous work and, not surprisingly, several people lost their lives while digging wells. Children from a very early age had 'the fear of God' drummed into them when it came to going near wells. As we were growing up we also constantly had it drummed into us just how dangerous our well was and that we should stay well away from it (or else). Luckily, I never personally found out what 'or else' meant.

Many of the wells across the Island were not particularly well covered or secured when we were growing up but often the fear of ghosts like *Hukimilish* and *Billy Tin* were more than enough to keep children well away from the wells. There are several generations of Island children brought up on a very familiar warning *Mainaut en du gu gen aa wael bembeya Daedi Dickens kam f' yuu* 'Be careful and don't go near the well in case Daddy Dickens comes for you'. No doubt these children drifted fitfully off to sleep with this stern advice and ghastly images of Daddy Dickens floating about in their little heads. Daddy Dickens had died in a well and had somehow, very usefully, passed into Island folklore.

More examples of ghost stories are given in appendix 7.5.

7.4.9.5 Whaling and fishing tales

Whaling and fishing both feature prominently in the history of Pitcairn and Norfolk and are talked about a lot. Kenny (1999 and 2005) has published detailed accounts of whaling and fishing (including many tales) and Tofts (1993) has compiled a booklet of shark fishing tales. There are many tall stories told by fishermen. One of the themes is that of the climbing fish.

Temuti (*Pagrus unicolor*) is the name of a fish listed for Pitcairn by Ross and Moverley (1964: 261). The name *tumuti* on Norfolk Island refers to a mythical climbing fish. Abe Bataille and his friend once went fishing and caught three or four strange looking fish. Abe threw them into the bottom of the boat but when he looked later they had all gone. He was about to accuse his friend of stealing them when he noted the last of the *tumuti* was climbing up the wall of their boat. When he looked more closely he saw that it had four legs. More examples are given in appendix 7.6.

7.4.9.6 Bounty Day speech

Bounty Day recalls the arrival of the Pitcairners on Norfolk Island in 1856 and is an event that brings together their numerous descendants, including many that travel from other places to take part in the event. The Bounty Day speech is delivered in traditional N and aims at reminding the Norfolk Islanders who they are and that Norfolk Island is theirs. During the days of self-government it was given by the Chief Minister. An example of such an address, given by David Buffett in 1999, is still widely quoted in the community (appendix 7.7).

7.4.9.7 Funeral notices and funeral speeches

Funerals play an important role in the Norfolk Islanders' culture and many members of the community take part in making wreaths, digging the grave and attending the funeral. Shops are closed whilst the funeral cortege passes through *Bun Pine* 'Burnt Pine'. Funeral speeches typically begin and end in N and, at times, are entirely in N. Most of them are reproduced in the *Norfolk Islander* together with eulogies and poems by family members.

7.4.9.8 Nursery rhymes and children's stories

There were no nursery rhymes in traditional N but the local poet Archie Bigg published a collection of nursery rhymes adapted from English models (Bigg 2003). The beautiful illustrations of the booklet by the local artist Tracey Yager, together with the fact that he provides versions in both traditional N spelling and in the Laycock-Buffett system, have made this a very popular book. A number of stories for children were written by Louise Taverner in recent years but have as yet not been published. An example is given in appendix 7.9.

7.4.9.9 Pitcairn Hymns

Singing hymns became established on Pitcairn Island following John Adam's redemption, and a number of visitors have commented on the practice of bi-weekly family hymn singing and singing hymns to farewell visitors to the island (appendix 7.8). Even today, visitors to Pitcairn are farewelled by Pitcairn men singing: *In the sweet by and by/We shall meet on that beautiful shore*. A detailed account of hymn singing both on Pitcairn and on Norfolk is given by Hayward (2006: 36–41 and 118–132). As other forms of religious expressions, all Pitcairn Hymns are in English. Some of them can be traced back to the New England whalers, others were composed by the Pitcairners, including George Hunn Nobbs' and Driver Christian's *Gethsemane* and Gustave Quintal's *Oakleigh*.

Hayward (2006: 120) notes the close connection of the texts of the Pitcairn Hymns with the Islanders and their cultural history. Thus, the hymn *Let the lower lights be burning*, originally a tale about shipwreck in Cleveland Harbor was sung by Norfolk Islanders whilst lighting lanterns on the beach to direct whaleboats in distress back to the shore. The words in *The Ship of Fame* were interpreted as featuring “the history of ships transporting the mutineers to Pitcairn, and the Pitcairners to Norfolk Island (either or both of which might be analogized as ‘Canaan’s Shore’) offer a strong point of local identification for the song” (Hayward 2006: 122).

Come Ye Blessed is one of the two official songs of Pitcairn, the other being *We from Pitcairn Island*. *Come Ye Blessed* is also the official song of Norfolk and it is sung at most island events. The hymn is known in Norfolk Island as the “Pitcairn Anthem”. The lyrics are taken from the Matthew chapter 25, verses 34–36 and 40.

Then shall the King
 Say unto them
 On his right hand:
 Come ye blessed of my Father
 Inherit the kingdom prepared for you
 From the foundation of the world
 I was hunger’d and ye gave me meat,
 I was thirsty and ye gave me drink
 I was a stranger and ye took me in,
 Naked and ye clothed me,
 I was sick and ye visited me,
 I was in prison and ye came unto me
 In as much ye have done it unto one of the least of
 These my brethren
 Ye have done it unto me,
 Ye have done it unto me.

The Norfolk Coat of Arms granted by the Queen in 1980 features the motto IN AS MUCH and the Pitcairn Anthem continues to be a symbol of distinctive identity and is sung at many events. It is also sung to farewell islanders leaving Norfolk on important business such when the President of the Council of Elders Albert Buffett departed to take the petition for the reinstatement of self-government to the UN in New York. It has also become a symbol of defiance against Australian intervention. When the unpopular Administrator Gary Hargrave departed in 2017, he was greeted on arrival in Australia by a group of Islanders singing the Pitcairn Anthem.

7.4.9.10 Other genres

Norfolk is increasingly used in the electronic media. Examples of Norfolk as featured in the internet chatroom are given in appendix 7.10

7.5 Speech acts

7.5.1 General remarks

The concept of speech act goes back to Austin's (1962) *How to do things with words*. Austin's idea constitutes a philosophical rather than an empirical approach. He distinguished the act of saying something (locutionary act), what one does in saying it (illocutionary act), such as warning or promising, and how one is trying to affect one's audience (perlocutionary act).

John R. Searle's (1969) *speech act* is often meant to refer just to the same thing as the term *illocutionary act*, which are the most commonly analysed speech acts. In the ethnography of speaking a speech act is the smallest unit of analysis. Speech events are regarded as sequences of speech acts.

The original conception of speech acts has turned out to be of limited use for empirical ethnographic work. Reasons include:

- There are no culture or sub-culture neutral definitions for speech acts. Kreckel (1981: 45–47), for instance, has demonstrated that the felicity conditions for the illocutionary act of warning can differ between groups of speakers and between speakers and observers.
- The illocutionary force of speech acts is not a given, but can be discursively negotiated.
- A number of speech acts can be combined in a single utterance.
- Austin and Searle privilege collaborative speech acts and ignore non-collaborative and punitive ones, such as verbal abuse, needling, curses, etc.
- There is considerable discrepancy between locutionary forms and illocutionary force. For instance, questions are often not expressed by interrogative constructions, agreement does not require overt agreement markers, and expressions of gratitude do not necessarily imply an act of thanking.

It is not clear how many speech acts can be distinguished in any given language including P and N. In what follows only a selection of salient acts is

dealt with, particularly those that exhibit differences with Standard English. I have concentrated on the formal lexical and grammatical devices conventionally associated with speech acts. The reader needs to refer to the section on norms of interaction and interpretation which spell out some of the cultural prerequisites to interpreting P and N speech acts (see section 7.4.8).

7.5.2 Quoting someone's favourite saying

Ar thing fer dems, the locutionary parameters of phonetic, syntactic and semantic features of utterances produced by members of the Norfolk community are employed frequently in a number of illocutionary functions ranging from simple reinforcement through adding a synonymous expression to warnings and complaints. The intended illocutionary force is sensitive to context. Thus, the expression *Dar thing fer Lin* (Lindsay Buffett, who died in 1931): *lubby Red Stoo-an side ess* 'leave Red Rock (a coastal islet) where it is' could be a warning to someone not to interfere or advice 'it is better not to do anything about it'.³

Many of these expressions are used as a kind of social delineator and for social control. They are memorable usages of N that are recognised by others through their continuing association with the original speaker or action. Some of these *dar thing fer dems* are found with specific families only and are used as deliberate markers of identity. Examples taken from a list collected by Nobbs-Palmer (1986: 84) are:

3 Low (2012: 184) writes with regard to this expression:

As Audrey, an Islander born in the early 1930s explained to me:

[The phrase] means, 'leave it where it is'. Lyn, as in Lindsay Buffett, wanted to get some good stone and there's a red stone somewhere [on Norfolk Island] and someone suggested that they blast this rock and get it. And he said, 'Nah just leave it where it is. Forget about it. *Lubbe side es*. Leave it where it is'. And that became a saying on the Island [. . .] And that was something that was said before I was born and it's still around (emphasis in original, Audrey, recorded interview 27/11/2007).

As Audrey's description of the term's origin indicated, Islanders understand themselves, their peers and their ancestors as the agents of N language creation and remember many of these acts of creation. N also provides a means of indexing a family identity alongside Islander identity as certain words or phrases are only used by particular families [. . .].

| SAYING | LITERAL MEANING | SPECIFIC MEANING |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Dar thing fer Chat's: Car know-a yesteddy en des daye es de saem daye!</i> | One would never know yesterday and today is the same day! | Referring to a sudden change in the weather. (comment or complaint) |
| <i>Dar thing fer Daddy Att's: Dem cetchen Hell, cetchen Hell!</i> | They're catching Hell, catching Hell. | Referring to any competition in which the opposition is being thoroughly beaten. (gloating, rejoicing) |
| <i>Dar thing fer Eric's: Too hot fe gut a hilly!</i> | It's too hot to be comfortably lazy! | Commenting or complaining about the heat |

A recent example of *Dar thing fer dems* appeared in a letter to the editor of the *Norfolk Islander* of July 7th 2018 (no page numbers): It refers to the practice of Norfolk Islanders giving an envelope with a farewell card and money to community members leaving for medical treatment in mainland Australia.

And as for the many yorlye that 'se had some manners', ketching Beck and me at uckluns weakest by shuwen a money lomgfa card een uckluns harm . . . we se jes lors fe words. En fact, dar thing f' Shankie, 'that's unbeleweable.'

'And as regards the many of you who had some manners, you caught Beck and me at our weakest point by shoving money with the card in our hands . . . we were just lost for words. In fact, as Shankie always says: 'that's unbelievable.'

Another example is the favourite expression of a toothless old lady, Aunt Tabo, *em teagues an em togues* 'thieves and rogues', which I have come across in a number of texts. It was first recorded by Flint in the late 1950s in a text which also gave the variant:

I gonna have er tell ah thing fer Aunt Tabo's again – some o' dem theeags an' eh thogue ser full up ah saddle fer pine gum.

'I will have to tell you Aunt Tabo's saying again – some of these thieves and rogue have put pine gum on my saddle.'

I have collected many more examples of *dar thing fer dems* on Norfolk Island but have never seen these expressions used in P.

7.5.3 Naming

Naming belongs to the subclass of illocutionary speech acts referred to as declaratives. This speech act has been far more important in P and N than in Standard English. It is closely connected with the transformation of Pitcairn from hell to

paradise. It is possibly no accident that Alexander Smith changed his name to John Adams following his redemption. Like the Biblical Adam, John Adam's task was to name the features and inhabitants of paradise and the conventions of naming places, life-forms and people have persisted to date. Whilst names in most modern Western societies are regarded as arbitrary labels, in many traditional societies names reflect essential being and as such mirror social beliefs, practices and aspirations. This second approach is very much in evidence in P and N.

With regard to place names, Pitcairn features what Ross (1958) has labeled "pristine naming" and over time the Pitcairners have created a profusion of place names. As Amoamo (2016: 76) has observed:

Upon arrival the island was a blank slate on which to inscribe place names and suggest the mutineers and their descendants saw Pitcairn as a new independent world, not a replication of Britain and Tahiti. The cultural landscape of Pitcairn tells of the relationship between people and place. Place names depict past events, reminders of people and their actions. Lack of allusion to anything British found in other colonial outposts is notable, perhaps not surprising given the mutineers rebelled against such heritage in the very act of mutiny.

Nash (2011) has shown that a similar trend can also be observed on Norfolk Island, where the British place-names introduced during the penal settlements between 1788 and 1854 have been largely replaced by names created by the Pitcairners.

7.5.4 Nicknaming

Nicknames are of great importance in both P and N and the practice of giving nicknames can be traced back to the formative years of P/N. The Polynesian consorts of the mutineers were given English nicknames such as *Sore Mummy* (sore having the same meaning as in present-day P/N 'sick'), *Balhadi* 'bald-headed', and *Fasto* 'fast sexually'.

Nicknames were given to the first generation of children born on Pitcairn and this practice has persisted ever since. Unlike in some Polynesian societies where nicknames for children are obligatory to confuse evil spirits, the nicknames on Pitcairn and Norfolk may be given at different stages in life and by different community members. They may also change during an Islander's lifetime. Examples of early nicknames include:

Big George – (Young) b. 1797

Dolly – Dorothee (Young) b. 1797

Dubbin – Robert Young b. 1795

Daddy, Doctor – Thursday October Christian II b. 1820
 Fat – Charles Christian b. 1818
 Lasso – Mary Christian b. 1793
 Mummy, Jackanaily – Mary Young b. 1825
 Pot – Rebecca Christian b. 1830
 Nunk – Alfonso Christian b. 1846

Nicknames, unlike birth-names, can also be of Tahitian origin, e.g. Polly Christian (b. 1814) had the nickname *Nuni* ‘beautiful’ which is no longer a word of P/N but it can be concluded that it was in use in the first half of the 19th century. Matt Quintal (b. 1791) had the nickname *Big Muti* < T *mate* ‘dead, very ill’ and *Mutty* is still a nickname currently in use on Norfolk Island.

Nicknames, like names are often passed on from generation to generation such as the nickname *Gottie* and *Gotty* from *goat*, the family who formally kept goats, and the initials of Holder Stanley Christian (HSC) were the reason why his nickname was *Horse*. His children had the nicknames *Pony*, *Geegee* and *Shetland*.

Many nicknames are harmless and in the public domain. The Norfolk Island telephone directory contains a section of such nicknames. Other nicknames are deemed dangerous words and handled with greatest care. Nicknames that allude to negative aspects of personality are often used in verbal disputes and as a means of social control. Like family taunts they are used reciprocally, thus helping maintain the egalitarian character of the Islanders’ society.

7.5.5 Requesting

Indirect rather than direct requests are the norm though this needs to be documented in more detail. P and N also have formulae directly to request actions or permissions.

Mum, we ell goe up Mini golf des afternoon, ell we mum?

‘Mum, may we go up to Minigolf this afternoon, please may we, Mum?’

A positive response to this request is *aye* ‘you may’, a negative one *noe* ‘you may not.’

Children are often reminded to say ‘please’ before the request is granted. Buffett (1999: 29) gives the example:

Mam, ai el gu daans desnait? . . . Uni ef yu tal: Pliis el ai mam.

Mum, may I go dance tonight? . . . Only if you say: Please, may I, mum.

A request for someone to tell a story usually takes the form: *larna me* or *larna ucklun* ‘tell me, tell us’, as when the child asks the question *larna ucklen bout dem time you bin see Billy Tin* (Marrington 1981: 16) ‘tell us about the times you saw Billy Tin’ (a ghost).

7.5.6 Thanking

The usual explicit way of thanking is *thanks fer me* ‘my thanks’ or *thaenks fer ucklun* ‘our thanks’. In Broad N, but not in P, *prinke, perinke* ‘praise be, thank heavens’ is used:

Myse Ma bin maek some pilhi en shi send eye down fe you. Please tulla yoos Ma, prinke fe me!

‘My Mum has been making pilhi and she sent this down for you. Please tell your Mum, I thank her from the bottom of my heart!’

Thanking in the religious sense used to be the norm at every meal on Pitcairn and Norfolk but the religiosity of the Olden Days has given way to a more secular way of life. Saying Grace is practiced at more formal events such as *Thaenksgiwen dena* ‘Thanksgiving lunch’ on Norfolk Island.

7.5.7 Stereotypes

A stereotype is a set idea that members of a community have about what someone or something is like. They are uttered to underline or reinforce a common perception and belief. There are numerous stereotypical expressions on both islands and only a few can be mentioned here.

Both Pitcairn and Norfolk have been spoken about for a long time as *uwas paradise* ‘our paradise’ and this stereotype is reinforced by outsiders’ accounts such as Birkett’s (1997) *Serpent in Paradise*, Christian’s (2005) *Fragile Paradise* or Clarke’s (1986) *Hell and Paradise*.

Related to the Paradise stereotype is that of fall from grace. A frequently encountered expression on Norfolk is: *See de way we se cum* ‘Look at what we have come to’. The history of Pitcairn and Norfolk is often portrayed as a sequence of fall from grace and redemption.

The widely shared belief of the Norfolk Islanders that human behaviour is determined by one's genes finds expression in the stereotype: *een ar breed or in ar blood*. This theme is also found in Pitcairn and Norfolk songs and poetry. An example comes from three lines of a song written by Meralda Warren of Pitcairn:

*I've got the blood of the mutineers:
Christian, Young, McCoy
Quintal, Adams un all hem others*

There are stereotypes about the Islander families which often go back to the putative characters of the original mutineers and interlopers. Thus, whilst the Christians are portrayed as hardworking and sensible, the McCoys and Quintals are often maligned, the Nobbs's are regarded as stand-offish, and the Evans' as having no proper *cumfrum*.

7.5.8 Passing judgement

“The Pitcairn language is rich in condemnatory phrases such as *making big, uppi-uppi, you not getting top of me, yousa an idiot, and you dunno talk diffy*, which are used quite frequently to keep individuals in their place” (Sanders 1953: 274). Their effect is to condemn and constrain those who would be different in any particular situation, thus “reaffirming the importance and conformity and the principle of equivalence on which this is based” (Frazer 1970: 76).

Explicit commentary on others is a common speech act in P and N and one way of ensuring conformity to social norms. It also serves as a way of bonding, as negative judgements are often reciprocal and jocular. Next to the frequent use of eponyms referring to particular undesirable traits there are a number of descriptors applied to people, food and situations.

Wha-wha-ha ‘conceited’ is an epithet frequently applied to non-Islanders or Islanders who do not honour their language and culture:

Shi dar wha-wha-ha shi jest as soon make out shi car whose you en semis thing se even feget whuta-waye fe talk Norfook

‘She is so conceited she will probably pretend she does not recognize you and even to have forgotten to speak Norf’k’ (Nobbs-Palmer 1986: 50)

Car doo, car moosa doo ‘inadequate, worthless’, is often used to comment on outsiders and those who do not conform to social norms:

Indeed hi car moosa doo! ‘Indeed, he is barely up to scratch’
Hi cardoo fe dorg eat! ‘He is not good enough for a dog to eat’

The last expression is also used when talking about food.

The word *cumfrum* ‘origins’ is not documented for P, where the term *de-scendency* is employed. In N *gut no cumfrum* is frequently used in reference to Australians and to Norfolk Islanders who have forgotten their origins.

Not a bet-a use shi sti dere puttorn daffy! Too easy fe si shi gut no-a come frum!

‘She may as well stop putting on airs. Anyone can see she has no background’ (Nobbs Palmer 1986: 36)

In P and N there are a large number of descriptors with negative connotation, most of which are not shared, including:

Pitkern:

Green as a nanu ‘inexperienced, tasteless’ ‘from the name of a tree with inedible green fruit’
As a brute brutish
Youse horn se bol ‘you are not so keen now’ (lit: your penis is flaccid)
Not good as a her ‘said of a weak man’

Norfolk:

gatamuun appearing to some to be behaving oddly or uncharacteristically
laiwieh hien a hen which only runs a short way from a rooster and then lets the rooster catch her, applied to a woman acting in a coy manner
sael-o what a sight!, used to draw one’s attention to anything you might find laughable or ridiculous.
potagarlic bad smelling person or object
portugee, unreliable person
pottagee
ippy clown; s.o. who makes silly mistakes
scrubber, uninhibited, precocious teenagers
scrapper
fraedy moomoo ‘battle axe, very dominant woman’
tartar people who exhibit repetitive or consistent negative traits or behaviour, and who become noted for that behaviour

7.5.9 Greeting

The common greetings in P and N are *wutta-way you* ‘how are you’ and *bout you bin?* ‘where have you been’. The answer usually is *I gude* ‘I am fine’. A common alternative in N is *I cooshoo* ‘I am comfortable’, though this reply is regarded as inappropriate among older speakers. Strangers or outsiders are often addressed by *who’s you?*

In N, there are many special address forms used by insiders, ranging from formal to jocular:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>smegos</i> | ‘jocular address among males (probably from <i>smedj</i> ‘masturbate) |
| <i>brud, pa, ma</i> | ‘polite address to fellow Islanders, not necessarily direct relatives’ |

The address can be followed by the addressee’s name or nickname. As a kind of joke the name of an unpopular person is used instead of the addressee’s real name, as in:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>whuttaway you Mr Hargrave ?</i> | ‘How are you Mr Hargrave? (the unpopular former administrator)’ |
|------------------------------------|--|

7.5.10 Inviting

In N there are a number of expressions for islanders inviting themselves into other people’s homes such as *saia* or *invitation fer Menzies*, though to be invited normally requires an explicit invitation. Uninvited but welcome visitors are greeted as *tumpully*. Not to be invited to an event one had expected to participate in is expressed by *sore-neck*. Nobbs-Palmer (1986: 42) gives an example:

You gwen te dar wedding des night? Heppy noo-a, I gut are sore neck.

‘Are you going to the wedding to-night? Gosh no, I wasn’t invited.’

For outsiders to be invited to a function or to an island home is not common and typically requires a formal request or an introduction from another Islander. It is customary to wait outside until invited in by the expression *cum in ar house*.

7.5.11 Leavetaking and farewelling

In everyday speech the metalinguistic descriptor for ‘good-bye’ in P-N is *tull good bye*. P has an expression, probably originating from New Zealand, *hurray*, which corresponds to English ‘good bye’. N has a number of distinct phrases, including *hooroo*, *pinai* and the most common *see you morla*.

Apart from verbal farewells, there are a number of other conventions of leavetaking and farewelling, particularly for people departing for a long time or permanently. These include the already mentioned hymn singing and shoving an envelope with a farewell card and money in the departing party’s pocket.

7.5.12 Expressing agreement and disagreement

Agreement with one’s interlocutor is expressed in a number of ways. An example for P is:

She musa same as Bose. Yeah, musa.

‘She is different from other people, isn’t she. Yeah, almost’.

In N some expressions for agreement are:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>cum hemmy start – aha</i> | Come on, let’s go. – agreed |
| <i>aye</i> | expression of assent |
| <i>enwha</i> | Absolutely, what do you think! |
| <i>inau, eenow</i> | emphatic agreement, My word! |

Disagreement in N again is signalled in a number of ways:

Fer! What rubbish! That is not the truth at all.

Estolly!

Hinkabus! I think not!

I hiah tull you en dar oodere coo-utten. Tulle s jock,

I hinkabus! (Nobbs Palmer 1986)

‘I heard tell you’re courting that one over there’.

‘I think not, you’re joking, of course!’

’Pouri! Rubbish!

Stoens expresses stronger disagreement than the above expressions. In N *stoens* means ‘male genitals’ as it does in Biblical English.

Stoens t’daa! ‘I totally reject that! There’s no truth in that!’

7.5.13 Expressing impatience or frustration

N has a number of expressions uttered in frustration, including:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Foepoe shugaret!</i> | Curse and hang the thing! |
| <i>Gijan</i> | Oh my goodness (frustration) |
| <i>haenget</i> | Hang-it-all |

7.5.14 Introducing and finishing a story

Narrators usually frame a story by using short phrases signalling its beginning and end. An example for P is: *Well, one time one ship come* ‘Once, a ship arrived’.

In N *gut* ‘there is, was (near past)’ or *haed* ‘there was (distant past)’ are used as in

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Gut wun ghel</i> | There is, was a woman |
| <i>Haed some shepherd</i> | There were some shepherds |

Another way of initiating a story is illustrated in Nebauer (2011: 18): *Yu el ri-memba Dusi* ‘Do you remember Ducie?’. Formulae for finishing a story are often omitted, though occasionally one hears *dars ett* ‘that is it’.

7.5.15 Abusing

Whilst there are many expressions for abusing one’s interlocutor in P, direct verbal abuse is not encouraged in N and the P metalinguistic descriptor *swear somebody* is not documented in N. Källgård (1981: 28) provides a list of abusive terms, including:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>go wipe</i> | ‘wipe your butt’ |
| <i>go wash</i> | ‘go and wash yourself’ |
| <i>go tiittoi</i> | ‘go and masturbate’ (rare because it is considered very dirty) |

An expression I have come across in N on a number of occasions is *goo de-ed* ‘get lost, go dead’.

7.5.16 Varia

There are numerous other speech acts which demonstrate the expressive power of P and N and put to rest any notion that one is dealing with a Pidgin or impoverished English.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>it-et!</i> | ‘stop staring’ or as Nobbs-Palmer (1986: 22) translates it: “Why don’t you take a bite while you are at it.” |
| <i>cut myse throt</i> | ‘I’d rather have my throat cut!’ Used facetiously, particularly when denying an affair or association with a person or persons one finds repulsive.’ |

Nobbs Palmer (1986: 45) gives the example:

Dem tull hi use-a goo-a fe you! – Ho, cut myse throt!

‘They tell me he is courting you. – Go on! I’d rather cut my throat first’.

7.6 Conclusions

What sets P and N apart from English is not just its grammar and lexicon but the way the Islanders communicate, whether they speak P-N or English. These differences demonstrate how pragmatics combines a carry over of Polynesian patterns, the importance of religion, and the development of pragmatic conventions for managing the complex human ecology of the two islands. The history of communication between Islanders and outsiders reveals a large number of misunderstandings as well as deliberate attempts by both parties to mislead their interlocutors. The fluency of the Islanders in acrolectal English has often led outsiders to assume that they understand what is said. However, this is a fallacy similar to the one identified by Eades (2013) for communication between mainstream Australians and Aboriginal speakers of English.

The study of pragmatics has not featured a great deal in accounts about P-N. The reason for this is the standard view of linguists that their primary task is to document the structure of languages and that structure can be studied separately from use. This has meant that the methods for studying use are not integrated

with those used for structure. I have employed methods of narratology, sociology of language and ethnography, all of which fall short of delivering what I had hoped to deliver. Integrational Linguistics and Ecolinguistics offer many valuable theoretical insights into human communication but as yet lack the methods of dealing with large bodies of empirical evidence.

Islands are marked by a duality. On the one hand they are insular, sea-bound and cordoned off from other communities. On the other, they are (multi-directionally) connected through sea-lanes (and, more lately) air routes. Different islands occupy different places within this polarity at different historical moments. (Hayward 2006: 4)

8 External history and changes in progress

8.1 Introduction

The history of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands exemplifies Hayward's statement, and the language that developed there reflects this. Next to a great deal of internal development we encounter periods of extensive borrowing. There is, however, one constant, the *Bounty Saga*, which constitutes the defining factor of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islander ethnicity.

The history of the *Mutiny on the Bounty* and the subsequent history of the mutineers and their descendants has been told and retold for more than 200 years.

The Pitcairn story, if only in dim outline, is known to many. Its various aspects recall many of the classic clichés, legends, stories, and parables of the Western world. Pitcairn is the very prototype of the man-and-woman-cast-up-on-an-island which has become a cartoon genre. It is the Bali Hai of the song, that special island. It is complete with Fayaways. It is the Swiss Family Robinson. It is Robinson Crusoe with sex. It is Adam and Eve and the apple, it is the Fall – the Redemption. It is the story of the Exodus, the Revelation, and the Promised Land. It is Utopia. Unplanned and imperfect Eden, Pitcairn has survived many pre-calculated versions of the perfect community (Silverman 1967: xiv).

To retell the story would require several volumes and I can only refer the reader to some of the large number of sources on Pitcairn and Norfolk listed at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_the_Pitcairn_Islands>).

This chapter will focus on socio-historical factors that have had a significant impact on the development of P and N.

8.2 Language contacts before the mutiny

Understanding the language contacts in Tahiti is crucial to understanding of P-N, as by the time the *Bounty* landed in 1788 norms for intercultural communication had already become established.

Captain Cook had visited Tahiti three times, first in 1769, then in August and September 1773 and finally from August to December 1776. The Master of

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the vessel from 1776 to 1780 was William Bligh, who subsequently became captain of H.M.S. *Bounty*. During these visits Cook and his companions acquired considerable insights into the natural kinds, society and language of Tahiti. As observed by Adler (2008), many of their accounts were shaped by preconceived ideas about Noble Savages, including their language (Rensch 1991). Early accounts of the Tahitian language include those of midshipman Monkhouse (made during Cook's first voyage) and Corporal Gibson, who had acquired some knowledge from his Tahitian girlfriend during the *Endeavour's* first visit. There were a number of wordlists such as that by Bougainville and an anonymous list provided by Isaac Smith, midshipman on the first voyage.

Drechsel (2014: 100) has demonstrated that the language recorded was not a vernacular Tahitian but an emerging Maritime Polynesian Pidgin (MPP). By the time the *Bounty* visited Tahiti, its use had become institutionalised as a medium for communicating with Europeans. The often-heard assertion that Ancient Tahitian was one of the languages involved in the genesis of P requires a reassessment. Captain Bligh himself stated that "the length of time that he remained at Otaheite, with the advantage of having been there before, gave him opportunities of making, perhaps, a more perfect vocabulary of the language than has yet appeared" (Du Rietz 1986: 5).

The gunner William Peckover was probably the best speaker as he had sailed with Cook on all of his three voyages and because he was in charge of trade with the natives.

Bligh's vocabulary has never been located, nor has that of the junior officer Peter Heywood who, subsequent to the mutiny, spent about 29 months among the Tahitians. His lost dictionary was used extensively by English speaking missionaries and incorporated into Davies (1851).

As Adler (2008: 67) notes, conventional accounts of early culture contacts ignore the patterns of sub-cultural differences in shaping European-Polynesian contact. "The Captains, officers and scientists belonged to an educated and wealthy elite, while the sailors and marines were drawn from, sometimes even impressed, from the most impoverished of the lower classes" (Adler 2008: 62). Tahiti, like Britain, was a class society such that one is dealing with culture contact involving complex interaction between socially heterogeneous parties.

The only short wordlist by a mutineer belonging to the lower classes is that by Matthew Quintal (also spelled Quintrell). It exhibits a different selection of words than those featuring in the vocabularies of upper-class recorders (Ernst 1993: 42). Drechsel (2014: 52) argues that at the outset of their mutual encounter, members of the *Bounty* crew and their Polynesian consorts spoke MPP "as apparently corroborated by Matthew Quintrell's short Tahitian vocabulary." Interestingly, none of the

items on Quintal's list featured in Drechsel's (2013) MPP wordlist. None of the words from Quintal's list has survived in P (see appendix 8.3).

Culture contact for the Bounty crew led to two consequences, both of them abhorrent to Bligh. One of these was the practice of getting tattooed, the other language mixing. Even before the mutiny, the British sailors used a mixed language (Denning 1997: 57–58): Mixing Tahitian words with English created solidarity between sailors and locals and was probably the preferred medium of communication for amicable intercourse on land. However, English remained the language of the sea as the mutineers under the command of Fletcher Christian went in search of their new home and it remained the language of authority. On Pitcairn the status of Tahitian was diminished further as the relationship between the Tahitians and the British turned sour. The mutineers might have become less inclined to use Tahitian words and Jenny's account (Jenny 1819) suggests that they discouraged its use.

It remains a matter of speculation what the role of the male mutineers might have been in suppressing and/or transmitting Tahitian words. The fact that many of the words of Tahitian origin of P-N differ considerably from their Tahitian etymon in meaning, form and grammatical class suggests the important role of the British males as well as imperfect acquisition on the part of the children.

8.3 The principal linguistic socializers

The number of linguistic role models available to the children was very restricted, a fact which has led some linguists to speak of a laboratory situation. However, unlike in a laboratory setting, the nature of the ingredients is not fully understood and surprisingly poorly documented. Unlike statements to the effect that only two languages were spoken on the island, there were at least three.

8.3.1 The Polynesian women

The question "Why did Tahitian not become the language of Pitcairn Island?" has occupied the minds of many observers. Silverman (1967: 203) gave a tentative answer:

How was it possible for the youth to grow up speaking the language originally exclusive to the lone male survivor with an excellence that astonished Captains Folger, Staines, and Pipon, and many others, when all their mothers had Tahitian or cognate tongues as their native speech? As Doctor Shapiro points out, not only do we usually think of mothers as teaching their offspring the rudiments of language, but where the women so outnumbered the one surviving

man who had no English companion to exercise and to keep agile his mother tongue, we might logically expect the natural influence of the maternal language would have predominated.

The Polynesian entourage did not all come from Tahiti: of the six men, two came from Tubuai, one from Raiatea and three from Tahiti. Of the 13 Polynesian women two originated from Tubuai and one from Raiatea. Whilst Raiatean differs little from Tahitian, Austral, spoken on Tubuai, was probably not mutually intelligible with Tahitian in 1789. “Of the remaining Tahitian women, three were from an upper class background and became partners of Christian Fletcher, Edward Young and John Adams respectively, the remaining ones were nondescripts of the Polynesian lower classes who alone were normally permitted to consort with the crews of visiting ships” (Ross and Moverley 1964: 51).¹ Not all of them had come voluntarily and there was an attempt by the women to leave Pitcairn Island on a home-made raft. The last of the Tahitian women died in 1850.

We note that “though three Tahitian women were servicing six men of their own race, there was never a full-blooded Polynesian child born there, and this can only have been by design” (Christian 1983: 160). It is also of interest that six of the twelve women had no children. Whatever the reasons (contraceptives, VD, abortions or infanticide), the childlessness of 50% of the women and their low fertility of the others is possibly an index of their lack of identification with Pitcairn Island.

Beechey, who visited Pitcairn Island in 1825 regards 1799, the year when Adams and Young were the only male survivors and repented their previous lifestyle, as crucial in the cultural history of the island (see appendix 8.1).

What other languages the Polynesians on Pitcairn used remains unclear and fictional accounts abound. Cal Adams (2008: 65), the great-great-great granddaughter of John Adams writes: “The women mostly spoke to the children in the Tahitian language and the men, mainly, in English. When there was any trouble understanding us, we would revert to a broken Tahitian style of speech. Hence, the children began to develop a very sweet-sounding language which was a mixture of Tahitian and English”.

Visitors after 1808 never bothered to interview the women with the exception of Jenny, who fled Pitcairn in 1817 and whose story was published in the *Sydney Gazette*

¹ Langdon (2000: 36–38) advances the still hotly debated theory that the Tahitians in 1779 were in part a mixed race, combining the genes of an original darker population with those of the crew of the Spanish Caravel *St. Lesmes*, which was lost near Tahiti in 1550. By 1789 the lighter mixed-race population had become the upper class. Langdon points out that of the 5 Polynesian women that gave birth to children on Pitcairn, five were likely to have been members of the upper class and that only 3 of the 23 children alive at Folger’s visit in 1808 did not have a mixed-race mother. There are major implications of this for genetic research on the Pitcairners.

of July 17th 1819. She was also interviewed by Kotzebue in March 1824, who reported that she spoke tolerably good English, but with a foreign accent (Kotzebue 1830: 225).

Fletcher Christian's wife Mauatua (Christian 2011) had a good passive understanding of English and made efforts to speak it. According to several sources, the other women also had acquired some knowledge of English and may have been forced by the mutineers to address the children in it. Initially the women are likely to have used mixed English-Tahitian idiolectal jargon varieties rather than a stable pidgin and over time more sophisticated approximations to Standard English. Whether they spoke the more stable P that developed among the first generation of children is not known.

8.3.2 The mutineers as language socializers

8.3.2.1 Past research

Past researchers have opted either for a logical approach, as did Gleißner (1997), or for a detailed empirical examination of the phonological properties of the language (Harrison 1972). Gleißner (1997: 15–16) suggests:

- Fletcher Christian: presumably some influence on P-N (influence would certainly have been stronger if he had not died so early), speech of educated man, probably with features of northern dialect;
- Edward Young: presumably considerable influence on P-N; speech of educated man probably with some characteristics of Dorset Shire (where his family came from) and/or of St. Kitts;
- John Adams: presumably considerable influence on P-N; he is said to have been a speaker of Cockney;
- William McCoy: presumably some influence on P-N;
- Matthew Quintal: presumably some influence on P-N;
- John Williams, Isaac Martin, William Brown, John Mills: presumably little influence on P-N.

Harrison (1972: 226) carried out a quasi-synchronic comparison between the sounds of English dialects and N and arrives at an interesting conclusion:

East Anglia is the dialect area with which Norfolk appears to share most phonological characteristics: features of other dialects are not represented in as concentrated a fashion as those of Norfolk, Essex and Sussex. The basis of the connection between East Anglia and Norfolk speech is not obvious since none of the original seamen on Pitcairn was born in that area.

Harrison's (1972: 226) solution to this conundrum is: "The role that East Anglia played as an East coast centre of commerce and seafaring activities after the Navigation Act of 1664 makes it likely that many East Anglian qualities existed in the speech of the *Bounty* sailors".

This conclusion has a number of problems, however:

- Synchronic comparisons are notoriously unreliable as both islands had numerous visits from and intermarriages with speakers of a range of dialects of English subsequent to the formation of P-N.
- The notion of dialect areas defined by isoglosses is highly problematic. A perusal, for instance, of the maps for the pronunciation of *write*, *right* and *wright* in *The Linguistic Atlas of England* (Orton et al. 1978) demonstrates that it is not possible to establish bounded areas.
- Under conditions of dialect mixture and creolization, straightforward correspondences between a mixed variety and the varieties involved in the mixing process are rarely in evidence. Regarding the problems of the notions of substratum and adstratum see Mühlhäusler (1997: 114–115).

Lexical and grammatical features lend themselves better to establishing linguistic ancestry as they are less variable and more permanent than pronunciations.

8.3.2.2 Edward Young

The evidence examined suggests that Edward (Ned) Young was the most important linguistic socializer and his ways of speaking are reflected in the lexicon, grammar and pragmatics of P. The language has repeatedly been characterized as an Atlantic Creole (Avram 2003) and this view is shared by contemporary speakers of N. A few years ago, Mrs. Gaye Evans, Clerk of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, commented in an email dated 27-10-2011:

You will of course recall my telling you about my visit to Barbados in 1989 as a Minister of the Government, and how whilst there, I only spoke N which was understood at all times. My ability to speak their language of course ensured my being treated with great hospitality and great friendships were forged. The same thing happened in 1999 when Dids and I both went to Trinidad and Tobago. Again, I spoke their language. I know that you will of course remember, that at the time I told you about my experiences you were not aware of the connection and dare I say it, were somewhat hesitant in agreeing fully with me.

Similar observations were made to me by the Hon. David Buffett, former Chief Minister.

A closer examination of its lexicon and grammar in recent years has confirmed a significant number of Atlantic features (Baker and Mühlhäusler 2013). It appears that Ned Young rather than the Tahitian women was the dominant linguistic role

model for the first generation of children born on Pitcairn Island. This claim is supported by observations such as:

- Young was popular with the women both as a sexual partner and as a teacher and educator;
- Five of Young's seven children were old enough by 1800 to have received significant linguistic input from Young;
- Young married Fletcher Christian's widow, thereby becoming the stepfather of Thursday October, Charles and Mary Anne;
- Young was the last remaining officer and the only fully literate mutineer after Fletcher Christian's alleged death in 1793;
- Young promoted the love for literacy by reading to both the Polynesian women and other mutineers;
- By teaching Adams to read and write, he ensured that literacy would continue to be taught to the children.

Ned Young's diary got lost and only small extracts can be found in Beechey's report on Pitcairn Island (Beechey 1831). None of the passages quoted mentions anything about his background or the language situation on Pitcairn Island. To add to this problem, the archives on St. Kitts burned down a few years ago. We therefore have to rely on indirect evidence, secondary sources and logical argumentation.

Unfortunately, we know less about Edward Young than we would like to because there was a stigma of some sort attached to his birth. He appears to have been an illegitimate child of Sir George Young or his brother Robert, and an African or part African woman. One theory about Young's origin is that he was born in Peel on the Isle of Man² but there is little support for this view. Another one, found in a number of publications, is that Edward Young was Sir George's nephew. Research by Mrs. Hesketh-Williams on behalf of Flint has failed to find any evidence of Sir George ever having described Edward as such. However, given that Sir George (a) is known to have been in the West Indies for at least part of the decade in which Edward was conceived, (b) employed Edward to work on the vessel he commanded, the *Catherine* in 1784–1785, and (c) wrote a letter in 1788 recommending that Edward be employed on the *Bounty*, it seems far more likely that Sir George would have been his father.

Like Ned Young's provenance, his linguistic abilities must remain in part an informed guess. His repertoire would seem to have included educated English, St. Kitts Creole (informal English) and Tahitian or Maritime Polynesian Pidgin.

2 See <http://pitcairn.fatefulvoyage.com/people/person.php?name=Young>.

Ned Young, being an officer, could speak educated English. Unfortunately, it has not so far proved possible to discover anything about how Young acquired his education. From Cox (1984) it would appear that it was only in the late 18th century that the Moravian and Methodist churches in St. Kitts began to provide religious instruction for slaves and free coloureds before the start of the next century. Victoria O’Flaherty (p.c.) informed Philip Baker that there were a few cases of children of mixed racial descent in St. Kitts in the late 18th century who were sent to England to be educated and Young was probably among these.

The extracts from Young’s diary (begun in late 1793, in Beechey 1831) confirm his ability to write complex grammatical English as the following passages (Beechey 1831: 65–66) illustrate:

I thought that if the girls did not agree to give up the heads of the five white men in a peaceable manner, they ought to be taken by force, and buried.

We did not forget their conduct; and it was agreed among us, that the first female who misbehaved should be put to death; and this punishment was to be repeated on each offence until we could discover the real intentions of the women.

Note the use of the passive, *do*-support in negative sentences and correct plurals. Also note the stylistic variation *women-girls-female*.

It is important to understand how Young used his linguistic repertoire. It would seem that in his last years he advocated moderate and serious language. In his “Twenty Years Residence on Pitcairn Island”, John Buffett (1846) comments on a volume by the non-conformist preacher Philip Doddridge, first published in 1741 and reprinted numerous times. It appeared “to have been much used, I am inclined to think by Young”. This would seem to imply both in Young’s own readings and in his readings to others. The introduction to this book of sermons concludes with the words (1803 edition): “It is a sufficient consolation for our labours, and far more than an equivalent for all, if we may have a testimony in our consciences, that we compose and regulate our discourses in such a manner as may be approved by God, in whose name we speak (Doddridge 1742).

During their visits to Pitcairn Island in the first half of the 19th century a number of observers commented on the Pitcairners’ avoidance of swearing and crude expressions. This use of language may have been one of the lasting influences of Ned Young. Buffett (1846) mentions that he read from the Bible to his fellow mutineers and to the women: “I am inclined to think by Young, as some years before his death he was a great reader of his Bible and used to relate the contents to his wife who is still living and can now recollect many of the historical parts”. Young probably had a reasonable knowledge of colloquial Tahitian:

It is fair to assume that no other educated European had earlier been able to acquire such a comparatively intimate knowledge of the Tahitian language as he (i.e. Heywood) had

done, with the possible exception of Fletcher Christian and Edward Young on remote Pitcairn Island (Du Rietz 1986: 6).

Nevertheless, his mastery of Tahitian was probably not very advanced and his imperfect grasp of pronunciation and meaning of words may be one of the reasons, why words of Tahitian provenance in P often differ in these respects from their source language.

Ned Young's knowledge of St. Kitts Creole can be deduced from the significant number of pronunciations, words and constructions of Kittian provenance in P-N.

Thanks to Baker and Bruyn's reader (1999), dealing with the language of eleven texts written by Samuel Augustus Mathews on St. Kitts in the late 18th century, we have a reasonable idea about the informal or creole variety of English spoken on St. Kitts. In addition, a wordlist of contemporary St. Kitts is appended to Baker and Pederson (2013). A technical comparative analysis of P-N and St. Kitts Creole has been made by Baker and Mühlhäusler (2013).

By 1798 the only remaining mutineers were Adams and Young. By this time, Adams had become deeply religious and he got Young to teach him literacy so as to be able to read the Bible. Young died of asthma in 1800. Thus, for several years, Young was the primary source of English available to the children growing up in Pitcairn and, without him, literacy would not have survived his death.

The first reported indication of Young's contribution to the language of Pitcairn can be found in Ross and Moverley's (1964: 244) entry for [mɔ:gə] 'thin'. After considering English dialectal forms attested in unpromising areas, including *mager* (Shetlands) and *morga* (Wiltshire), they quote Fred Cassidy (p.c.) to the effect that Jamaica has both lower-class [mɑ:gə] and middle-class [mɔ:gə]. They conclude that Pitcairnese [mɔ:gə] is due to Edward Young.

The evidence for Young's influence is presented in the chapters on phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. It confirms that the creole features in present-day P-N do not so much reflect the first generation of children's language making but the ways of speaking informally, introduced by Ned Young.

8.3.2.3 John Adams

John Adams, who sailed on the *Bounty* under the name of Alexander Smith, was the longest survivor among the mutineers and after the death of Ned Young in 1800 until his death in 1829 the leader of the small Pitcairn community. Until 1823 he provided religious and general education to the children born on Pitcairn as well as their mothers. Between 1800 and 1823, when Buffett and Evans arrived on Pitcairn, he was the only native speaker of a British variety of English, and one would expect that his role as a linguistic socializer must have been pervasive. His

influence was somewhat diminished after Young's demise, as he began to drink heavily again. The dates reported for his redemption and conversion to a sober Christian life style vary, as does the name of the angel involved: "One night in 1800, the last surviving mutineer John Adams sees the Archangel Michael who instructs him that Pitcairn's children must be taught to read from the ship's Bible. He also tells him to swear off the grog".³

By contrast, Nechtman (2018: 69) mentions a number of accounts that claim that the Angel Gabriel appeared to Adams one night, about ten years after Young's death, around 1810. Ten years is a long time as it leaves open the possibility of Young's systematic instruction of the children being followed by years of far less structured education and the development of the language of the children with reduced influence from the English model.

Following the rediscovery of Pitcairn in 1808, Adams was interviewed by a number of visitors but the many discrepancies between his stories makes it difficult to distinguish between truth and fabrication. Numerous sources, including Wikipedia, suggest that his real name was John Adams but he used the name Alexander Smith until he was discovered in 1808 by Captain Mayhew Folger. His children used the surname Adams. According to this source he was born as John Adams on 4 December 1767 at St. Johns, Hackney, Middlesex, England, and died on 5 March 1829 (aged 61).

The traditional wisdom also implies that he was an innocent bystander rather than an instigator of the mutiny. However, all of these issues remain open to questions:

Alexander Smith, when found on Pitcairn Island – the last survivor of the nine – came to be known as John Adams, no longer a mutineer but the patriarch and central figure of a deeply religious and highly moral little community. He had registered for service in the *Bounty* as Alexander Smith, but whether that name or John Adams, or neither, was his real name is uncertain (Pitcairn Register book 1929: 5).

The first born on Pitcairn referred to him as Aleck, and evidence presented below suggests that Alexander may have been his real name. His place of origin too is a problematic issue. Linguists from Ross and Moverley (1964: 50, note 2) onwards have accepted the version of which appeared in one of his attempted autobiographies: "I was born . . . of poor But honast parrents My father Was Drowned in the Theames thearfore he left Me and 3 More poore Orfing Bot one Was Married and ot of All harmes".

³ <http://www.traveller.com.au/norfolk-folk-curious-castaways-in-anyones-language-gs7jua#ixzz55AUrK7GI>

The linguistic evidence for Adam's Cockney origins, however, is weak. A number of salient Cockney features are conspicuous by their absence, including:

- there is no rhyming slang in P-N
- P-N retains the [h] at the beginning of words
- T glottalization is very rare in P-N
- Cockney variably pronounces English [æ] as [ɛ] or [ɛi], whereas in P-N it tends to become [a:] as in [sta:n] *stand*.

There are other examples of non-influence of Cockney but a detailed study is beyond the scope of this book.

A new document sheds light on this puzzle. In 2017, I was given the uncompleted draft memoirs of Mr. Tom Lloyd, founding editor of the *Norfolk Islander*. They contain information that casts a very different light on John Adams's provenance. On October 18th, 1936 an article was published in the Sunday Mail (Glasgow) headed *After the Mutiny on the Bounty-Kirkcaldy Man who founded a great Colony*. It was written by David Henderson of Glasgow, who claims to be the great-great son of Alexander Smith by his Scottish wife who was left in Kirkcaldy when he sailed on the *Bounty*.

This article was based on a number of letters written by members of the McCoy and Christian families as well as Pitcairn's famous author Rosalind Young (1894), who mentions a wife and child left behind by John Adams in Kirkcaldy. Henderson argues that John Adams, the Kirkcaldy man whose real name was Alexander Smith, after his mutineer comrades had been murdered, became chief of an uncivilised people and died in exile venerated by the natives as a saint. If John Adams was indeed of Scottish origin his way of speaking would have reinforced the speech of two other Scottish mutineers, John Mills from Aberdeen and William McCoy from Ross-shire. These three are the likely source of at least some of the Scots English words used in P and N. Other expressions may have entered the languages via Ned Young's St. Kitts Creole, as there was a high proportion of Scots among the British in the Western Caribbean from the seventeenth century onwards (Holm 1978: 82; Hancock 2008: 9–19). Scots English expressions in P-N could have been introduced and/or reinforced by Adams.

John Adams' principal linguistic influence on Pitcairn was that he promoted the English language and English literacy. He was aware of his own limitations and he petitioned visiting captains and the English missionaries in Tahiti to send a teacher and a clergyman to Pitcairn (see section on interlopers). He also influenced the manner in which the English language was used, in particular the avoidance of any form of aggressive or indelicate language, as Kotzebue (1830: 102) notes: "Abusive words are strictly prohibited, and some of the Islanders, perfectly astonished at hearing a sailor on board the American vessel which visited them

swear at one another, enquired of the Captain whether such expressions were permitted in his country”.

8.3.2.4 Fletcher Christian

Fletcher Christian was born in 1764, in Cumbria and educated at Cocker mouth Grammar School. Because of his family’s bankruptcy he joined the navy in 1783. Fletcher Christian had travelled in the West Indies and may have picked up the occasional creole expression. There was no particular reason for him to use them on Pitcairn and no evidence that he spent significant amounts of time on St. Kitts.

Fletcher Christian had gained the rank of Master’s Mate on board *H.M.S. Bounty* in 1787. On October 28th 1788, he led the mutiny on the *Bounty* sailing her back to Tahiti, and then to Tubuai and a number of other possible hiding places (Maude 1958) and finally to Pitcairn Island. Fletcher married Maimiti (or Mauatua) on June 16th, 1789, at Tahiti. Their children were Thursday October Christian, born 1790, Charles Christian, born 1792 and Mary Ann Christian, born 1793. Fletcher Christian is reported to have been murdered by the Polynesian men in 1793, though there are other accounts suggesting that he secretly returned to Britain (Christian 1999: 322). A detailed, though in part speculative account of Fletcher’s life is given by his great-great-great-great son Glynn Christian (Christian 1999, Christian 2011).

Fletcher was the community leader and respected by the other sailors and the Polynesian women. However, his role as a direct linguistic socializer is diminished by the fact that by the time of his departure (in both senses of the word) there were only seven children on Pitcairn and the oldest of his four children was four years old.

8.3.2.5 William McCoy

William McCoy, according to the *Who are the Pitcairners?* site of the Pitcairn Islands Study Centre, was born in 1763 at Ross-shire, Scotland. He died in 1798. He gained the rank of Able Seaman of the Royal Navy, on board *H.M.S. Bounty*. Little is known of his early life, but he appears to have been an employee of a Scottish distillery at one point.

In 1796 McCoy began to use his distilling skills and this led to the early troubles on Pitcairn. His own skills killed him, for in a fit of delirium tremens, he leapt to his death from a cliff in 1798.⁴

⁴ <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/McCoy.shtml>>

McCoy's consort Teio came to Pitcairn as the only woman who brought a child with her, a girl born in November 1789 called Sarah or Sully by the mutineers. She was brought up with two children fathered by William McCoy, his son Daniel (1792) and Catherine, born after his death in 1799. Given McCoy's extended absences from his household and his unpredictable temper, his role as a language socializer was probably quite limited. He may have contributed some Scots English words. Whatever profanities he and his drinking companions may have used were lost in the puritanical phase of Pitcairn history.

8.3.2.6 Matthew Quintal (Quintrell)

According to the *Who are the Pitcairners?* site of the Pitcairn Islands Study Center:⁵

Matthew Quintal was born on March 3, 1766 at Padstow, Cornwall, England. He died in 1799 on Pitcairn. There is no question that he was one of the most violent of the crew members and Pitcairn residents. He had a permanent attachment to Tahiti and had no particular interest in returning to England. Although it is interesting to note that he, more than any other Pitcairn mutineer, not only named his consort after his mother, but each of his children is named for a member of his family. Not the act of a man with no feelings for family. Like McCoy, who appears to have been a friend of his prior to his time on the *Bounty*, the introduction of liquor on Pitcairn affected him badly . . . In 1799, in a drunken rage, he threatened to kill all of Christian's children unless he could take Isabella, his widow, as a wife. Adams and Young refused his demand and realized that their lives and the lives of many others were in danger, and decided that something had to be done. They invited him to Adams' house, at which time he was set upon and overpowered by the two men. By means of a hatchet, the dreadful work of his execution was soon completed.

Matthew Quintal had six children with a number of women. His violent nature often drove them away from home and his role as a linguistic socializer again must have been very restricted.

8.3.3 The children's language choices

The disappearance of Tahitian, the emergence of P, and the predominance of English during ethnogenesis on Pitcairn Island did not just happen but is the consequence of social rather than numerical factors, in particular a number of deliberate choices on the part of the mutineers, their Tahitian consorts and the first generation of children.

5 <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/Quintal.shtml>>

Language transmission in the literature on child language acquisition is typically equated with what happens in middle-class families, and the two-parent two-child academic family is tacitly assumed to be the canonical model. Language transmission in the first generation of Pitcairn was anything like this:

Perhaps the men, with wives who spoke little English, gave their own time in yarnning. The women, by that, were separate too and tightly knit. They bore their children individually, of course, but they reared them communally. It was a common observation later that neither households nor separate mothers seemed to matter. For the children the Island was one household and every woman their mother (Denning 1992: 321).

Denning also argues (1992: 322) that the women were the chief language socialisers on Pitcairn. By saying this, Denning would appear to be influenced by the notion of mother tongue, a notion that is highly problematic, as it ignores the active role of children in making decisions about what language they wish to speak.

The presence of languages in children's environment is often described in terms of linguistic input – however, what is much more important is the question of uptake. It is often argued, for instance, that in highly multilingual or Creole communities, children do not learn the languages of their parents and either create their own Creole or a version of the politically dominant language. Le Page (1983: 258) has commented:

In one of the simplest cases of pidginization and creolization – one not mentioned at all by Bickerton and possibly, though not necessarily, ruled out of court by his second constraint above, that of Pitcairn (see Ross and Moverley 1964) – the murder rate among the men of the original settlement was such that all the Polynesian men and all but one of the British mutineers were dead within ten years, leaving Bosun Adams with ten Polynesian women and their twenty-three children. Under these circumstances, the data most constantly before the children in early childhood must have belonged to the various Polynesian languages the women would have used among themselves;⁶ yet the children, having the (much-admired) models of Young (an educated Antiguan Creole)⁷ for a few years and Adams (a little-educated Londoner) and his Prayer Book readings before them for many years, developed in the process a creolized English in which the influences of the Polynesian language of the mothers (and one lexical item at least from Antigua) are clearly evident.

Children's choices are typically determined by linguistic role models. These may be either adults or older children. To be a role model it helps to be physically available. The majority of the mutineers had died before they could impact on the children's language, or in the case of Quintal and McCoy and to a

⁶ It appears that with outsiders the name John Adams was used but that in the community he was known as Aleck (Alexander).

⁷ He actually came from St. Kitts.

lesser extent John Adams, were often absent because of their heavy drinking. The Polynesian mothers were available throughout as was Edward Young.

There are few actual speech samples featuring the first generation of children born on Pitcairn. What can be found in early reports are recollections rather than accurate records. Folger, who was the first visitor (1808), in his reminiscences (Delano 1817) gives examples of the excellent English spoken by Thursday October Christian and George Young.

Captain Folger inquired, Who are you? – We are Englishmen. – Where were you born? – On that island which you see. – How then are you Englishmen, if you were born on that island, which the English do not own, and never possessed? – We are Englishmen because our father was an Englishmen. – Who is your father? – With a very interesting simplicity they answered, Aleck. – Who is Aleck? – Don't you know Aleck? – How should I know Aleck? – Well then, did you know Captain Bligh of the *Bounty*?

Next to Ned Young, another likely role model was Thursday October Christian, the first child born on Pitcairn. He married Young's wife at the age of 16, by which time he had become a leader among the new generation, a role cut short by his untimely death in Tahiti in 1831. Thursday October was interviewed by Beechey in December 1925 about the languages used on Pitcairn:

Q. What language do you commonly speak?

A. Always English.

Q. But you understand the Otaheitan?

A. Yes, but not so well.

Q. Do the old women speak English?

A. Yes, but not so well as they understand it, their pronunciation is not good.

Being the oldest male child in a patriarchal society, his refusal to speak Tahitian must have set an example to the other children. His patchy knowledge of Tahitian is surprising as he was the only member of the first generation of Pitcairners to marry one of the original Tahitian women. Captain Staines, who visited Pitcairn in 1814 reports (in Brodie 1851: 154) that every individual on the island (forty in number) spoke very good English. He nevertheless felt that the population was fully bilingual and argued:

I cannot, however, refrain from offering my opinion that it is well-worthy the attention of our laudable religious societies, especially that for propagating the Christian religion; the whole of the inhabitants speaking the Otahitian tongue as well as English.

It is not clear what the Otahitian language actually referred to, and it is possible that Raine and later observers mistook the emerging P language for Tahitian. All we can deduce is that there was a developing diglossic situation, with English restricted to conversations with outsiders, religion, education and other public domains and another (or two other) forms of speech used in more private domains.

Dr Ramsey's account of Raine's visit in 1821 provides an interesting passage:

. . . we soon observed a canoe coming off and two of the inhabitants in it – they asked how we did in pretty good English. They speak both their father's and mother's language for they said they must learn the Otaheitan as their mothers could not speak English. They have no idea of grammar hence they speak like a child, almost always leaving out the auxiliary verbs and often the participles. Ex. I like much hear you talk – that very good – Captain Raine very funny man – we like to do well but we not know how – no good in doing wrong; when I do wrong something in my head tell me so – God have nothing to do with the wicked – Talk about that, I like to hear you talk about that – that very good talk – I drink with you, if you please. I not like any more, my belly full. I so very sorry Capt Raine you go away so soon – you stop tonight? If my mother not let me go, I cry very much. If we pray, God always hear us – it is time to say now (alluding to prayer) that very good but we not understand it. Money no use to us, if you give me money I throw it in the sea (Ross and Moverley 1964: 119).

The fact that Thursday October Christian spoke good acrolectal English does not mean that a similar level of competence existed among all children, and Ramsey's account suggests this, in particular the following passage:

Suppose one man strike me, I no strike again, for the Book says suppose one man strike you on one side, turn the other to him; suppose he bad man strike me, I no strike him because no good that; suppose he kill me, he can't kill the soul. He no can grasp that, that go to God, much better place than here.

As outsiders began to visit the island after 1808, westernisation accelerated, and Tahitian ways of clothing and diet declined. Maude (1964: 51–57) comments on the community's identification with the European side of their heritage and notes several examples of racial friction.

8.3.4 Development of stable diglossia

Visitors to Pitcairn Island between 1808 and 1856 repeatedly commented that its inhabitants employed both excellent English and an informal difficult-to-understand language. Linguists such as Flint (1964) or Harrison (1986b) have described this situation in terms of the concept of diglossia, noting, however,

some differences between the P-N English diglossia and the situations originally identified by Ferguson (1959) as canonical cases.

The history of the language shows that the H form is not a superposed variety, but that the H and L forms are found in the origin of the community. The English element of the L form is of British dialectal origin, and the Tahitian spoken in the beginning may also have shown dialectal variation. The community, originally diglossic and to some extent bilingual, later became diglossic only (Flint 1964: 295)

Flint has little more to say about the origin of P-N diglossia and does not mention Ned Young's likely central role in its emergence. Ned Young, like other free Kittians, followed a diglossic (two forms of speech) pattern of language use of the following kind:

High: English

Used in church and education, by white persons and for reading and writing official business, communicating with visitors;

Low: St. Kitts Creole

Used to speak with black Kittians and children, in storytelling, informal and family communication, or when talking about local events etc.

Young was thus bi-lectal, being proficient in the two socially determined varieties and familiar with the rules for their use. He was also aware of the low status and low market value of African languages and their not having a proper ecological niche beyond the first generation of slave speakers. Moreover, he would be familiar with the pidginized form of English and Creole use between new chums and old hands on the plantations.

What struck me is how similar the language ecology of Pitcairn Island is, and probably was in 1799; English was the dominant high language for both the remaining British sailors and the children – by this time the dominant position of the English language had been accepted by the Polynesian women who made an effort to learn it. The women were encouraged to speak to the children in English but would have spoken what is named a bilingual idiolect, a kind of unstable Pidgin with a lot of variation. Edward Young would have used his own St. Kitts informal English when interacting with the children in games and storytelling and acrolectal English in written documents, official contexts, education and religion.

A perusal of the words of St. Kitts origin lends support to the notion that he also interacted with the children through games and story-telling.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>hide-hoo-up</i> | P-N hide-and-peek, called <i>whoop</i> in St. Kitts Creole |
| <i>moomoo</i> | N large animal, frightening beast or person, St. Kitts Creole <i>muumuu</i> stupid, dumb |
| <i>shimmy</i> | N a child's loose-fitting garment St. Kitts Creole singlet or undervest |

In the years following Young's death formal English continued to be used in education and religious functions and when the Pitcairn-born first generation interacted with John Adams and the interlopers. Among themselves, P had become the language of informal interaction and, increasingly, a language that enabled them not to be overheard by visitors.

Stable diglossia persisted on both Pitcairn and Norfolk until the 1960s but has since been eroded among the younger generation whose knowledge on P-N is often rudimentary. The complexities of speech use that have emerged since have been elaborated on by Harrison (1986b, chapter 3).

8.3.5 The linguistic impact of the interlopers

By 1800 John Adams was the only remaining mutineer. As the community leader, teacher and spiritual leader he was an important role model and he managed to inspire a thirst for knowledge. The Islanders seemed to have gained some ground under his tutelage even if at this time their education was rudimentary. Adams was conscious of his limitations and with advancing age looked for a successor to take on his arduous task. In December 1823, the English whaler, *Cyrus*, visited Pitcairn. Adams inquired if he had anyone on board ship willing to stay and help him teach the youngsters. Captain Hall passed his request to his crew and John Buffett, aged 26, volunteered his services. Buffett was born in Gloucestershire. Being bound by no family or home ties, he counted it no great sacrifice to remain. Buffett had, in early youth, been apprenticed to a cabinet maker in Bristol and taught this craft along many other skills.⁸

From 1823 to 1828 Buffett was the school teacher and also played an increasingly powerful role as community leader. As Adams declined in health, Buffett became the de facto religious leader. He married into the community and fathered eight children, three of them on the side.

⁸ <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/Buckner.shtml>> (accessed 4 September 2019).

Harrison (1972: 213–214) suggests that well-regarded personalities such as school teachers tend to become linguistic role models, and she points to a number of lexical expressions that are also recorded in the dialects of Somerset and Devon, including *longa* (variant of *long fe*) ‘along’; *stan up fer* ‘to act as a god-parent or groomsman’ and *stop* ‘to stay, live, abide’.

With John Buffett arrived his younger friend John Evans, born in London in 1804. He is referred to as a Welshman by several writers (e.g. Harrison 1972: 213) but this is a problematic characterization as he grew up in England, and there appears to be no Welsh content in P-N. When Evans was refused to stay, he jumped ship and hid in a hollow tree. He married a local girl, had six children and started his own dynasty. The much junior Evans did not assume a leadership position and views about him vary, with some suggesting that he was well liked because of his humour and gentle disposition and others claiming that he was a *car doo sullen* ‘a useless character’.

In 1828 two more outsiders arrived on Pitcairn, John Hunn Nobbs and Noah Bunker. The latter soon died. Nobbs was the unacknowledged son of Francis Rawdon, Marquis of Hastings, and Jemima French, daughter of an Irish baronet. “Nobbs had served in both the Chilean and British Navies, possessed a good education. The period from 1829–1832 seems to have witnessed a growing division between followers of the impudent and increasingly devout Nobbs and the practical strong-willed Buffett. When Nobbs formed an alternate school that attracted many of his pupils, Buffett quit teaching in disgust”.⁹

The arrival of yet another English-speaking interloper, the imposter Joshua Hill in 1832 (Nechtman 2012) marked the beginning of a very trying period in the lives of Buffett, Evans, and Nobbs. Realizing that these three would be the most threatening to his plans, Hill singled them out for special humiliation and punishment and in 1834 exiled them to Tahiti. They returned after his exposure and deportation in 1837. Nobbs resumed as community leader:

Although not popular with the islanders immediately after his arrival, Nobbs seems to have impressed them with an advanced level of devoutness. His religiosity, according to his critics, seems to have had little precedent in his life before his arrival! Nobbs returned as Pastor, fully consolidating his position vis-à-vis Buffett, who concentrated on his teaching and wood-working until his later call to religious leadership on Norfolk. He was the first islander to be formally trained in the ministry. He sailed to England with Moresby in 1852 to attend seminary. Within two months he had qualified for ordination as deacon and priest and was commissioned by the Bishop of London as Chaplain of Pitcairn Island. After being entertained by many notables, he was received by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Loaded down

9 <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/Buckner.shtml>>

with portraits of the Royal Family and a per annum of 50 pounds from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he returned to Pitcairn in triumph in 1853. He was a Clergyman.¹⁰

Under Nobbs' regime the Pitcairners achieved a high level of literacy. This was often commented on by outsiders:

Reading, writing, geography, mathematics, &c., &c., are taught. Every child must be able to repeat the alphabet, Lord's Prayer, and Belief, before he goes to school. There are now about fifty scholars, some of whom have made very great progress. The writing of some, in particular, was equal to that which might be met with in any merchants' office in London (Brodie 1851: 94).

The importance of the interlopers for the development of the languages of Pitcairn manifests itself in a number of ways.

- On their arrival, the interlopers had no experience of Tahiti and its language and culture. They accelerated the assimilation to European ways of life.
- Children were taught exclusively in English.
- English became the dominant (and in the case of the Nobbs family) the exclusive language of intercommunication.

The interlopers were socially dominant and had large families. By 1828 there were three adults and two children in the interlopers' families. When the community relocated to Norfolk Island in 1856 there were 36, or about 1/5 of the population. Members of the three families probably were important linguistic and social role models.

8.3.6 The Tahitian misadventure – P becomes a language of identity

In the last years of his life John Adams became concerned with overpopulation, and food shortages and lobbied British visitors and missionaries for a more suitable home for the Pitcairners. Maude (1959) provides considerable details on the political forces at work, which in 1831 led to the relocation of the entire population to Tahiti where, it was hoped, the Pitcairners would help the missionaries promote Christian values. After only six months, having lost one fifth of their numbers, the remaining Pitcairners returned home.

Among the dead were two of the remaining Tahitian women. The resettlement was nothing short of traumatic in spite of considerable material support and the friendly reception from the Tahitians. The psychological effects this

¹⁰ <<https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/McCoy.shtml>>

episode triggered were crucial to creating a separate identity, neither Polynesian nor English, of the Pitcairners: It reinforced their insular intolerance begotten of deeply-held religious, ethical and racial views (Maude 1959: 124), in particular their prejudice against Polynesians and other dark-skinned people (Shillibeer 1817: 89).

Their treatment by English residents in Tahiti undermined their belief that they were English as they experienced official attitudes that did not recognize them as Europeans and pressure to assimilate to Tahitian society.

According to Laycock (1989: 622), P became a symbol of non-identity with outsiders as well as a positive marker of a separate community, a kind of communal act of identity (cf. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) in which from remnants of an already moribund Tahitian English jargon “an insider language or cant was created to assist in the preservation of the identity of the Pitcairn-Norfolk group. He hypothesizes (Laycock 1989: 622):

Examples of communities creating new forms of speech (new dialects, new varieties) – mainly by modifying existing forms – are not easily unearthed, but further examples may be found in Laycock and Mühlhäusler (1989) and Laycock (1982). It is not suggested that this is done with the deliberateness of a modern linguistic planning committee, but there is no doubt that small communities can carry out what I call naive linguistic engineering. The process in Pitcairn-Norfolk was carried on, I suggest, by means of remarks such as:

- Do you remember what old x used to say?
- Wouldn't it be a pity if we forgot the old words?
- When we say things the old way the others can't understand us.
- We've got a special way of saying that in our family.

Such statements reinforce the use of the variety and set the standards for group acceptance.

Laycock's hypothesis that the Tahitian-English jargon was moribund by 1831 is highly problematic, as a large proportion of the words and constructions of present-day P and N can be traced to earlier influence from Edward Young and the Polynesian women. Laycock is probably right in asserting that the Tahitian experience promoted a sense of separate identity and the realization that the Pitcairners had a distinctive way of speaking. It also reinforced the negative attitudes the Pitcairners had towards Tahitian language and culture. Captain William Driver, who transported the Pitcairners back to Pitcairn in 1831, provides an interesting insight into the last futile attempt by the first generation of Polynesian women to speak Tahitian as a kind of anti-language:

In common conversation we often heard mingling the worst expressions of the Tahiti *Tuti Oura*. We talked of this and urged its discontinuance. These expressions were such that

no words in our language can embody or convey their full meaning – the Anglo Saxon never stoops so low. This use of vile expressions was confined to the older women. The men and their European companions often reproved them for this and other marks of their sojourn in Tahiti (Merrill 1956: 45).

The Tahitian interlude also created disruption to the established patterns of English teaching and use. As regards English competence, the traumatic experiment, the loss of community leaders and the banishment of the three English speaking interlopers shortly after their return during Joshua Hill's religious dictatorship (1834–1837), all led to the erosion of English among the young. A contemporary observer (Metoixos 1850 in Ross and Moverley 1964: 120) remarked that: “. . . the language of conversation among themselves is fastly degenerating into a dialect”.

8.3.7 Pitkern – Norfolk becomes a pluricentric language

By 1839 the population of Pitcairn Island had grown to 100, and by 1850 it had reached 156. In 1853, as fish became scarce and the island degraded, the inhabitants solicited the aid of the British Government to transfer them to another island. In 1856 all 194 Pitcairn Islanders were relocated to Norfolk, but two families returned to Pitcairn in 1859, followed by a second group in 1864. From then on, the linguistic histories of P and N began to diverge.

8.3.7.1 A difficult new start: Pitcairn 1859 to 1914

In the epigraph of this chapter, the two forces of isolation and contact were highlighted. The resettlement of Pitcairn in 1859 and 1864 heralded the beginning of a period of isolation. With the decline of American whaling, fewer vessels called. But it was another isolation that was more serious: The Pitcairners were cut off from their former community leaders and in the absence of strong leadership a period of economic, educational and moral decline ensued. After the return from Norfolk in 1864, Simon Young and his daughter Rosalind kept a simple system of education alive until, in the last decade of the century, the school came under the guidance of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

The new community was also cut off from part of their collective history. Only four of the old lineages were represented (Young, Christian, McCoy, Buffett). Captain Warren, an American sailor from Rhode Island had married Agnes Christian on Norfolk Island, who bore him eight children, the start of a

new dynasty. Two other Americans, Philip Coffin, who arrived with a shipwreck in 1881 and married Mary Florence Warren, and Lincoln Clark, who had been on the same shipwreck but repatriated to California, returned to Pitcairn in 1906 and married Augusta Ruth Lena Christian. Both had large families and this, combined with their superior education and practical skills, made the American families socially important. Some of the Americanism in P not shared with N may originate from these new arrivals, for instance *candy*, *turpin*, *valise* and *sham* ‘a false pillow cover’.

The much-reduced size of the community and the interdependence of its members would seem to be the reason for a noticeable increase in eponyms. Working with Källgård’s (1998) wordlist and the Pitcairn Islands Study Centre genealogy, one can point to at least a dozen new anthroponymic fish names, about the same number for introduced plants, and about twenty similes and verbs derived from people’s names, nicknames or events.

Between 1859 and 1914 about 20 new anthroponymic placenames were coined (see Ross and Moverly 1964: 170–188) relating to events such as *Upside Nunk Fall*, *Downside Lin Fall*; new plantations such as *Maggies Fence*, *Giffords Plun*, *Kates Coconut* or dangerous places such as *Allen* and *Heywood*, both referring to submerged rocks.

The conversion of the Pitcairn Islanders to Seventh Day Adventism in the 1890s reinforced the importance of American English as well as the development of doctrinal language. The mission schooner *Pitcairn* provided a link between Pitcairn and other Pacific Islands (including Norfolk) between 1890 and 1899 and carried a number of Pitcairners to Pacific destinations, among them some of the surplus women who became mission helpers in the Pacific, Australia and the USA. The influence of the mission on the language is seen in expressions such as *god’s-messenger*: ‘the pastor’, *if we are speared*: ‘au revoir’ and *go drink trickery* ‘to drink tea or coffee’. The last expression was used in the days when nobody dared to show that they drank tea or coffee.

In spite of the efforts of the missionaries fundamental economic, educational and moral problems persisted and in spite of a growing number of visiting ships, Pitcairn remained an isolated backwater.

8.3.7.2 The Norfolk experiment and its aftermath 1856 to 1914

What made the Pitcairners agree to a move to Norfolk Island remains a matter of ongoing research. The belief they held at the time and continue to hold, is that Norfolk Island was a gift from Queen Victoria for their sole use.

The Pitcairners were unaware that there were strings attached to this gift and that their resettlement was a social experiment¹¹ that could be terminated by the colonial authorities if they did not live up to expectations. The term ‘experiment’ features in the instructions given by Sir William Denison, Governor of New South Wales, to Mr. Gregory, the Navy agent on board the *Morayshire*, the vessel that was made available for relocating the community. They include (O’Collins 2002: 4–5): “You will accompany this report with any suggestion which you may think calculated to facilitate the working of this experiment about to be made, or which may tend to the happiness and prosperity of the very interesting people who are the subject of this experiment.”

Some Pitcairners probably realized what was happening to them. This, rather than homesickness, may explain why several Pitcairner families returned to Pitcairn Island after a few years.

It was perhaps well for the little community that they were not more inquisitive and suspicious; for had they been so, they would probably never have consented to leave their original home. They would have decidedly refused to be made the subjects of what the Governor now admitted was only an experiment and however fatherly his intentions might have been, would have objected to be treated as the Experiment, as it was referred to (Belcher 1871: 345).

The intellectual background of the Experiment was that in the romantic era of Queen Victoria, a great interest was taken by the British in the fate of the Pitcairners. Queen Victoria’s aim in granting Norfolk to the Pitcairners was that the race remained isolated and the effect of this isolation from the surrounding world be studied.

The conditions on Norfolk Island were carefully scrutinized and numerous reports were compiled (see Nobbs 2006, chapters 3 and 4), most of them critical of the Pitcairners. The official stance of the British Parliament was that the Pitcairners were not handling their affairs with proper loyalty and respect. In 1896, against the wishes of the Norfolk Islanders, the Government of New Zealand and the head of the Anglican Church in New Zealand, the island was stripped of self-government and its administration placed under the authority of the Colony of New South Wales.

The effects of the Experiment on P-N were several, but the principal one was that the language could continue to develop with little disruption. The diglossic English-N use that had developed on Pitcairn continued. As on Pitcairn,

¹¹ The present generation of Norfolk Islanders is well aware of having been brought to Norfolk Island as an experiment. The following website summarises this experiment from the perspective of contemporary Norfolk Islanders: <<http://www.pitcairners.org/experiment.html>>.

the peculiarities and frailties of members of the community continued to give rise to new eponyms.

Whereas the social and linguistic ecology changed only slowly, the material conditions on Norfolk were very different from those on Pitcairn and necessitated a more rapid adaptation to make the language referentially adequate for talking about new conditions. Let us consider agriculture:

I am not aware however, that there is any person on the island who knows how to use a plough. In the same way, the islanders are now placed in possession of buildings, composed of stone, and plastered within and without; yet they are not in a position to carry out any repairs of these houses, as they know not how to burn lime to make mortar to plaster walls and ceilings, &c.; in fact, there are several trades which ought, for the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants, to be practised on the island, but of which the present possessors are ignorant.

They have water and windmills, yet for want of a competent millwright and smith they have to grind their corn in hand-mills. How then, can their immediate and prospective wants be supplied?

They wear shoes – indeed the character of the work they have to do, and the risk of wounding their feet, compels them to do so; but they have no man amongst them who can mend, not to say make, a shoe (Denison 1858 cited in Nobbs 2006: 28).

The Pitcairners' adaptation to the changed natural ecology and the changing economic resources are reflected in the lexicon of their language, in particular:

- new placenames
- names for new material culture
- new names for natural kinds
- new words for weather and the sea

When Britain evacuated its penal settlement in 1854 Norfolk Island had a developed infrastructure of roads, agricultural areas and settlements which all bore names. Most of them fell into disuse and the Pitcairners imposed a new layer of names (described in detail by Nash 2013).

There are many house names that recall Pitcairner settlers and most of them are still in use. Examples include *Alex Nobbs* (built 1896), *Allendale* (built for Charles Allan Christian in 1883), and *Annie Dongs House*.

Very few Pitcairn Island placenames were used on Norfolk. An exception is *Big Fence*, a large walled area in the convict settlement. Metonymy is in evidence in the placenames *Dar Mustard* and *Dar Cabbage*, places close to where these vegetables grow. Other placenames are simply descriptive such as *Red Stone*, a coastal rock and *High Side*, a hillock out at *Steele's Point*. Nash (2013 188) states: "This was coined by the early Pitcairn Islanders who came up from their homes in Kingston to the gardens up country".

Events are recalled by placenames, too. *Now-Now Valley* recalls two Pitcairners who were hunting pigs in this steep and inaccessible part of Norfolk Island. One exclaimed *Now! Now!* before shooting the pig. There are several other versions of this account.

Another pig hunt is the source of the placename *Side Johnny Nigger Bun-et* ‘Where John Jackson Burnt it’:

John Jackson was an American Whaler who married and settled on the Island. Out pig hunting one day on the Northern coastline he decided to flush the pig out with fire, which led to an uncontrolled coastal fire . . . that leaped wildly through the long dry grass and bracken and galloped down the cliff-face with such pace and ferocity that by the time it had died out it had scarred the cliff-face and ripped through a large area of land burning it to a sorry black frizzle – with not a porker left in sight! (Borg 2013).¹²

When the Pitcairners arrived in 1856 on Norfolk, they encountered a different topography and different pre-existing settlements which precluded the carryover of the P absolute spatial orientation system. This meant that N had to develop a much broader range of uses of spatial description, discussed in chapter 5.8.

New words for material culture such as building styles, harvesting and processing food, sheep, cattle and horses, vehicles and communication made an appearance, whilst some of the expressions referring to the old ways of life on Pitcairn became obsolete. Some words such as *scarify* were borrowed from English but N had many internal resources for creating new terms. Some examples are:

- hoemubm* ‘oven built into the chimney of a home’
saenet ‘to mix sand and paint to protect wooden outside walls’
leho, ‘an ox or bullock, castrated after adulthood’ is derived from P
lehoon *lehoo* ‘to scrape breadfruit, potatoes etc. with a shell scraper to remove the skin’

Numerous names for new natural kinds make their appearance. Naming nature is unsurprisingly driven by utilitarian motives. Wiseman (1977) reports that hunting, gathering and foraging were important in the economy of the Island, as was logging. The names of many plants reflect how Islanders gradually discovered their usefulness, high visibility or otherwise. Thus, whilst there are many fungi on Norfolk Island, only two were named, the *shiny mushroom*, a fluorescent fungus used in playing ghostly pranks and the *jews ear*, which was collected and exported to China. The Norfolk Island *chaff-tree*,

¹² <<http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-a-pitkern-norfk-perspective/page/21/>>

Achyranthes arborescens, as the name indicates is suited for cattle feed. It has become endangered with fewer than 60 plants left on the Island.

Pest plants were introduced to Norfolk during the penal settlement and by the Melanesian missionaries who also excelled in introducing beautiful flowers. The problematic consequences of earlier introductions were soon experienced by the Pitcairners, who struggled with weeds when they began to cultivate the soil. The *South American Parrot Lily* (*alstroemerica*) became known as *curse of the Island*, the exotic decorative plant, *solanum hermannii*, is known as *poison bush*, and the exotic datura is known as *cranky*, possibly because of its effect on people. It was used as an abortive in the old days. The sweet pea bush (*polygile myrtifolio*) is known as *Cascade curse*. The *wait-a-while* (*caesalpinia decapetala*) or lawyer vine, a climbing palm species with sharp bristles and a pungent smell, native to Australia, is called *Horse Piss*.

The developing subsistence affluence on Norfolk Island crucially depended on words describing weather conditions that affected fishing and agriculture. A *mackerel sky* describes clouds that look like the markings on the back of mackerel and signals that rain can be expected within the next three days. *Poison win* is an easterly wind that blows into *Dar Cabbage* which adversely affects planting and fishing. *Weather spilen* meaning the weather is deteriorating and its opposite *weather maken* typically refer to conditions that affect fishing and agriculture. *Beanseed weather* refers to the humidity, which can make bean seeds germinate.

One of the measures of success of the Experiment was the educational achievements of the Pitcairners and in particular their ability to speak acrolectal English. Their continued use of N was seen as an obstacle but the various intervention methods were inconsistent.

As Harrison (undated fieldnotes) was informed, the English competence of the first children born on Norfolk Island was less developed than that of their Pitcairn-born parents. One reason is that some families lived as subsistence farmers inland and had very few contacts with outsiders. Another reason is that N became the dominant language for them and that the children's English role model, the Revd. George Hun Nobbs, stopped teaching in 1859. He was followed by the much less popular Englishman, Thomas Rossiter. An outsider from Hertfordshire, Rossiter was appointed by the Australian government as a Schoolmaster with the aim of improving the tone of the children (Mercer 1981: 4). The intention of the government was reflected in a talk given by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir William Thomas Denison:

. . . it is indispensable to continue Mr. Rossiter's service for years to come. Upon the school must be placed the main dependence from preventing these interesting colonists

from relapsing into the listlessness which the climate and abundance with which they are surrounded are so apt to superinduce; without it there might ensue a complete forgetfulness of the habits and pursuits of civilised life (Denison 1858).

Rossiter's appointment aroused suspicions in the community and the return of his local assistant Simon Young to Pitcairn did not help matters. In 1884, George Hun Nobbs' son Alfred became teacher-in-charge. Following Alfred's conversion to Seventh Day Adventism, Gustave Quintal was appointed Headmaster in 1892.

The perception of backwardness and inability to run their own affairs was one of the reasons why Australia wanted to impose greater control, particularly in matters of education. In 1897 a report on the conditions of the public school on Norfolk Island noted that a poor understanding of the English language hindered literacy skills. The report stated that:

Questions on the subject matter of the reading lesson are scarcely given, nor are they taught much of the meaning of words; consequently, the vocabulary of the pupils is limited . . . they find it difficult to express themselves. One teacher explained that 'it was hard to teach them because they didn't know much about the English language' (Annex A, Norfolk Island School File State Records of New South Wales).

The author of the report, S. Bent, recommended the appointment of a headmaster from New South Wales, which eventuated in 1906 when Quintal was demoted. Ever since, no Norfolk Islander has been appointed head of the school. As the teachers came from mainland Australia and did not speak N, they showed little sympathy for N and over the following years the education system became the principal means of assimilating the community to Australian English ways of speaking. The annual reports by headmasters and New South Wales school inspectors illustrate clearly the persecution of N. Thus, in 1912 Mr. Ray inspected the Norfolk Island Public School and in his report to the New South Wales Education Department made extensive comments on the problems of teaching English:

Much difficulty is experienced in teaching English. . . . This jargon is so habitual in the homes (most of them) and elsewhere that children in school are painfully slow when they try to speak good English. When a question is put, or a suggestion is made to them, it is plain their first impulse to answer in their jargon. They then have to translate their ideas into English which they deliver in a jerky stilted manner.

In written composition too, they lapse into the common faults found in their speech. A lad who was a candidate for the Pacific Cable Service failed in English composition. He passed in all other subjects.

During an address to parents on the 13th instant, I pointed out that the continuance of the use of the Norfolk Island language was likely to hinder the progress of their children and seriously hamper them when in competition with others in afterlife. I advocated the suppression of the language in their homes. The people appeared sympathetic, but it remains to be seen whether the reform will be carried out.

At any rate the use of Norfolk Island in or about the school grounds should be prohibited (Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

As a corruption of English, N would not be tolerated after the New South Wales Department of Education became responsible for the administration and curriculum of the Norfolk Island School in 1898.

8.3.7.3 The beginnings of Modern Pitcairn 1914 to the end of World War II

Maude (1964a: 95) emphasizes the importance of the opening of Panama Canal in 1914 in bringing to an end the isolation of Pitcairn Island: “Since the return from Norfolk the main connection between Pitcairn and the outside world had been with the American coast and, particularly since 1890, with Tahiti and other Pacific Islands; now it was essentially with New Zealand”.

An average of one vessel per week called on Pitcairn, many of them large boats carrying hundreds of visitors and providing ample opportunities for selling souvenir items and fresh produce to them. Between 1914 and 1937 the population grew from 165 to a peak of 233, arguably beyond the carrying capacity of the island. The regular contacts with New Zealand and the Americas offered opportunities for temporary or permanent migration and the first diaspora communities emerged in Auckland and Wellington. Whereas before 1914 the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) mission vessel provided contacts with the islands of Polynesia, these became much less important, changing the direction of culture development from repolynization to assimilation to Modern Western society. The cultural and linguistic changes in this period included:

- The emergence of a cash economy centered around the curio trade comprising baskets, wooden boxes and Hattie leaves. Terminologies for the different sizes and shapes of these curios emerged.
- The number of ‘interlopers’ residing on Pitcairn and regular visitors grew as did the number of marriages with outsiders, including the cabinet maker Laeffler, whose skills are still remembered in the expression semis Laeffler ‘being skilled at woodwork’ or ‘being very mean’. Two New Zealand sisters Agnes and Harriett Ross were skilled in various crafts. Agnes also taught at the school. Her letters (Grigore 2003) show her marginal status in the community and her very restricted knowledge of the P language. Dr. Cooze, a New Zealand dentist, settled on Pitcairn in the mid-1930s, a felicitous move considering the notoriously poor dental health of the Pitcairn Islanders. The American doctor Southworth resided on the island in 1937, leaving a detailed diary of the cultural and linguistic changes at the time (Southworth 2003). He comments on the medical effects of the

visiting vessels, in particular the outbreak of respiratory diseases after a ship's call. "They are named after the ship whose call preceded the outbreak" (Southworth 2003: 140). In June 1937 it was Rangitata fever.

- The SDA mission during this period focussed on religion rather than culture and intellectual pursuits. Having become discouraged by the limited success they had on the island, they did not send out pastors between 1928 and 1934. As the pastors were also the school teachers, this meant that education became the task of four annually chosen untrained island teachers and teaching during this period remained of a low standard. Proficiency in English appears to have declined as P was frequently used in the classroom. The colonial service deputy commissioner Neill, who visited Pitcairn for three months in 1937, wrote in his report:

The tendency to use Pitcairnese is very pronounced and it is increasing. It involves a peculiar drone with words clipped and distorted. Improved education is essential. Forty-seven children are all taught in the same room. The noise is indescribable. There is no fixed plan of instruction and no maps. The spelling on one teacher's blackboard was shocking. Class standards are appalling. The spoken English is difficult to understand . . . The school brought illegally under the direct control of the mission in 1929 . . . Cultural degeneration will be rapid. The use of Pitcairnese is now almost universal and will be hard to eradicate (quoted from Sanders 1953: 28).

Neill gave a public address on June 6th. "Mr. Niel (sic!) made a surprising remark, supported only by his own statement, that if present conditions continue, those on Pitcairn will be unable, fifty years hence, to speak or understand English" (Southworth 2003: 119). Southworth comments:

This picture of the future, that he viewed with so much horror as to repeat it, was looked upon by all those present without batting any eye. The reason for the indifference of the Pitcairners was obvious. When people are convinced that the end of the world is measured in terms of months or at least only a very few years, they will not be excited or even interested in what may happen fifty years hence. It spoke volumes for the fact of how little Niel understands Pitcairn Islanders (Southworth 2003: 119).

In 1940 the outbreak of World War II led to a dramatic decrease in the number of vessels calling but did not slow down educational or administrative reforms. In 1940 Maude went to Pitcairn for eight months to reorganise the constitution, legal code and government and to organise the issue of stamps:

We were thus in the unique position of being observers of the last days of a Pitcairn which we were in process of destroying with our stamps, thus completing the cultural revolution begun by the opening of the Panama Canal just 25 years before; for since 1940 Pitcairn has been in process of continuous transformation. It is now in constant wireless communication

with the outside world; the islanders can talk to each other by telephone, their homes are lit by electricity and altogether it is a pleasant and comfortable place in which to live (Maude 1964a: 99).

In spite of all the new amenities and contacts with the outside world, the population shrank rapidly. In 1943 it amounted to 163 and since then it has steadily declined.

Modernization during this period resulted in many changes in the natural and cultural ecology of the island, both of which had linguistic consequences.

8.3.7.4 Norfolk Island: assimilation policies and linguistic 1914 – WW2

The inability of the Pitcairners to run their own affairs was stated, in rather unflattering terms, by the Australian commissioner Hunt in 1914, the year Australia was given the authority to administer Norfolk Island:

It was thought that the people could be left to work out their own destiny, but the settlement was not a great success. In 1884, twenty-eight years after they had taken possession, the Governor of New South Wales paid them a visit, and he found that they had considerably deteriorated. As a result of injudicious marriages, they had been on the decline physically, and even more noticeably in the mental direction. The people were, instead of the pious folk who had been written about in such glowing terms, hypocritical and deceptive, and had very few good qualities to commend them. Cultivation had been very slovenly, stock had been allowed to run to seed, and the people had not shown themselves worthy of the benefits which had been conferred upon them (Hunt 1914: 26).

The report is particularly scathing about the ‘local jargon’ and comments that “its use contributes to maintain a spirit of exclusiveness amongst these folk, and for this reason, as well as because it has no merits to justify its continued existence, it is hoped that its employment may be discouraged in every possible way” (Hunt 1914: 17).

Headmasters and School Inspectors agreed that the language should be eradicated, and in 1915 Matthews introduced a school rule banning anything but the King’s English from “being spoken during school hours on pain of caning or the prospect of writing out hundreds of lines to the effect that “I must not talk gibberish at school” (Nobbs 2006: 157). The next Headmaster, Passmore,¹³ expressed his frustrations with parents who do not speak to their children in English at home (1916: 24): “The parent who hears his child speak in correct English in his own

¹³ This manuscript, probably written in 1916, was kindly lent to me by the late Ms. Merval Hoare, historian, Norfolk Island.

home will cry angrily: *Oh! you wawaha* and the child will shrink as under a curse. *Wawaha* is a Tahitian word and means ‘proud’ or ‘traitor’”. Regarding the times of Gustave Quintal’s incumbency Passmore (1916: 25) comments:

The early people came under the influence of an English teacher sent out by the Home Government but when he died his place was taken by one of his pupils.¹⁴ I knew him well, and an excellent man he was but he allowed the dialect to be used in the school to the almost total exclusion of English, hence, I think the present situation. As a concession to Island prejudice, one of the members of the staff of the school is a Norfolk and this naturally helps to foster the lingo.

In an official report to the NSW Education Department on 22nd September 1916, Passmore states:

The task seemed hopeless, but persistent effort has borne good fruit, so that in class exercises the English is scarcely to be distinguished from that on the mainland and in the playground and on the roads the ‘Norfolk’ dialect is not heard amongst the children to the same extent as formerly. The improvement in this most important branch of education has been more marked since the staff consisted entirely of Australian teachers (Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

His successor, Francis Middenway, continued with these efforts to replace N, paying particular attention to its use outside the school in his report for the quarter ending 31 December 1918:

The teaching of English receives particular attention, and more time is devoted to this subject than is usual in schools in New South Wales. Every endeavour is made to induce the children to converse with one another away from school in English, instead of using the wretched jargon which some of the Islanders call ‘the Norfolk Island language’.

The pupils are making greater use of the school library, and a taste for reading is being developed (Extract from the principal, Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

The continued use of N was perceived by educators as a major obstacle in the moral and intellectual advancement of the Norfolk Islanders. Jacob Barnes, who became head teacher in 1922, emphasised the need to remove local role models and for outsiders to be entirely in charge of education on Norfolk Island. He argued:

The school is very well staffed, but I think a trained teacher should take the place of the pupil teacher at present employed. The Islanders are naturally indolent and it is therefore a bad policy to pass the pupils through the hands of one of their relations who has not

14 Gustave Quintal.

had this trait trained out of her in our city schools. Miss Robinson, the Island pupil-teacher, should make a recommendation that another classified teacher should be seconded from our Department to take her place. The pupils seem bright and keen, but they are unable to sustain their application to set tasks. Their patois is also a handicap (Report on Norfolk Island Public School, 22 February 1927 Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

By 1932 the effects of Australian policies of linguistic and cultural assimilation had begun to be felt. A correspondent of the *Pacific Island Monthly* (26 August 1932) reported:

If the Islanders would only realise that, while they remain a race apart, living their own lives, speaking in their soft, musical voices the quaint language that is a blend of old-world English and the Tahitian of their great-grand-mothers, mixing with the newcomers as little as may be, they possess a charm and picturesqueness that will bring visitors across leagues of ocean to meet and mingle with them who would scarcely cross the road to make acquaintance with the ordinary 'outsider'.

As it is, for some mistaken reason, they seem ashamed to live as their fathers and mothers did and to speak the tongue that is a thousand times superior to the ugly English they learn in the State School. If they but knew it, they should pride themselves on their unique history, the knowledge of their ancestry for 150 years back, and their place in the Pacific, and should make no attempt to model themselves upon a passing population of mainlanders who have come from Heaven knows where and who, many of them, have no knowledge of their forefathers more than a generation or so back.

The decline of local language and culture was the result both of deliberate assimilation policies and of a significant influx of non-Pitcairn settlers from the late 1920s. In 1921 there were 81 Australians and 33 New Zealanders in the total population of 717. In 1933 there were 188 Australians and 189 New Zealanders in a population of 1,231. By 1937 about 50% of the 114 children of the Central School either had one or two mainlander parents, and the 15 children at the Anson Bay School were mainlanders; only one was of mixed origin.

Concern for the preservation of N and culture was not shared by the education system. Rather, the weakening of the language was seen as a positive development, as in the following statement made by Heath, who was headmaster between 1935 and 1937:

This language difficulty means that children here are always backward in such subjects as English, as even in the upper classes they are writing in a foreign language. As a result of the recent influx of mainlanders, English is becoming more common on the Island and the language difficulty will probably grow less after a lapse of years. Possibly a few decades will see the end of it as the dialect itself is being influenced by English, and according to people who have lived here a long time 'Norfolk' is approaching more closely to English. The influence of Mainland mothers is most marked in this respect (Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

Heath also expressed openly what many of his predecessors had only implied, i.e. that the Pitcairn descendants were racially inferior:

In some cases, where the dark blood is considerable, the children are very dull, particularly where there has been a mixing of Negro or Hebridian with the Tahitian and white. The children very often appear quite bright in their early classes when dealing with simple ideas; but as they progress through the school, and have to deal with more abstract ideas, there is a marked falling off. On the other hand, they seem to have inherited from their native progenitors, a dexterity in handwork. The school children, generally, show great ability in manual work lessons; but after about fourth class, arose miserably poor mathematicians (Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

By the mid-1930s, the strategies to eradicate the Norfolk language had become more sophisticated, particularly during the administration of Captain C. Pinney¹⁵ (Hoare 1996), who took a keen interest in language matters. In an ordinance of 1935, Pinney lowered the age of compulsory education from six and a half to five years. The importance of this step is highlighted in a report (dated 28 November 1935) by the Director of Education G.R. Thomas titled 'Norfolk Island – exchange of teachers with the mainland Prime Minister's letter of 8 July 1935' (Department of Education of New South Wales n.d.).

In both schools one of the most important problems is the education of early childhood because of the bilingual character of speech of the islanders. The intimate speech of the home is a patois which is practically a foreign speech, being probably a mixture of modified Tahitian, ungrammatical and truncated English (for the outstanding characteristic weakness of commonplace speech is the clipping of words) plus a number of probable local and borrowed words – to a newcomer it is quite unintelligible. The tiny child grows up in this atmosphere and until the new ordinance is introduced providing for compulsory schooling at five years of age, the child is not under the influence of English until he is 6 and a half years old – the loss of precious eighteen months. I am assured by His Honour the Administrator, Captain C. Pinney, that an ordinance making the compulsory age extend from five to fifteen will almost immediately be introduced.¹⁶ It is therefore essential that the teacher of the five year old child should have intimate knowledge of both forms of speech, and at the same time have training in the technique of the kindergarten and the first two classes.

15 Pinney attached to the letter a brief vocabulary of N expressions, compiled for him by Audrey and Olga Robinson.

16 This measure was unlikely to lessen 'the task of overcoming the island dialect' (Heath 1937: 11) as it ignored the established pattern of language acquisition. N was the language of small children, family and the playground, while English was acquired as an additional language at a later stage. The repertoire of adult Norfolk Islanders always included English. There was little evidence that lowering the school age would change much as long as the linguistic role models for young children remained their family and peers.

Around the same time, the question of further education for adults (suggested by Heath 1937: 2) gained wider attention, in particular his call for ‘a richer supply of good literature’. In a letter of 23 October 1937, Administrator Pinney¹⁷ comments favourably on Heath’s efforts:

When Norfolk Island children first attend either of the local State Schools they have to be taught English before their education can be proceeded with. Two local teachers are utilised for this purpose.

Education proceeds in what is to all intents and purposes a foreign language to the children, as in most cases (islanders) English is only spoken in school, and, if at all, is little used at home or after leaving school. Children of Australian parentage readily learn the lingo and use it in their intercourse with the Norfolk Islanders.

Many of the adult Norfolk Islanders who were educated at the local school have now, through neglect, a very slight knowledge of English; this causes them to readily misunderstand any instructions or observations addressed to them. Thus, handicapped they are greatly at the mercy of more educated men of little principle.

During the last few years an attempt has been made to cope with the loss of school influence, and in this regard the services of the headmaster (Mr. Heath) have been invaluable. A debating club has been formed and supervised by Mr. Heath. A school lending library has been established in an endeavour to cultivate a habit of reading among the children, and also in this way insinuate simple literature into homes in the hope that the elders will be persuaded to read occasionally and perhaps cause more English to be spoken by their families. It is hoped this will have the effect of preventing children from neglecting their English altogether after leaving school.

The addition of books to this library, suitable for Norfolk Island adults as well as children, would greatly help the movement.

The more the children are encouraged to use English in their private lives the sooner will the lingo with its demoralising handicaps disappear and permit the normal¹⁸ development of Norfolk Islanders.

The setting up of a well-equipped school library was completed by 1939. In an undated paper on sociolinguistics and education on Norfolk Island in 1960, Flint reviews the period between 1909 and 1945 and comments on the increasingly sophisticated methods adopted to suppress N. Initially, the educators subscribed to the view that N was simply a corrupt form of English, a jargon or a patois; but from the early 1930s, educators began to speak of a (transitional) bilingual program, which required a different approach and training for bilingual teachers. However, forces other than deliberate linguisticide were implicated

¹⁷ The *Pinney Papers* are located in the Australian National Archives Series A1, A518, A432/85 and A846/3/45. For details see Hoare (1996).

¹⁸ The notion of ‘normalization’ was again used in the wake of the recent recolonization of Norfolk Island by Australia.

in the decline of N. Following the great depression, many Norfolk residents abandoned the Island and relocated to Sydney, with the island population dropping from 1,231 in 1935 to 700 in 1942 (Hayward 2006: 92).

8.4 Impact of the Second World War on Norfolk Island

The second World War played an important role in ending the isolation of the Islanders, as they became enmeshed in the forces of international politics. An immediate effect was the further decline in the population as 80 men joined the forces. A more lasting impact was that of the construction of a military airfield in 1942–1943. The airfield necessitated the destruction of the Avenue of Pines, described in Michener's (1947) tale *Mutiny*, worth reading both for its literary merit and his insights into Norfolk Island society at the time. The airfield required the rerouting of the road *out Anson* 'to Anson Bay' and was replaced by two roads around the airfield and *roun'* became a new preposition in the absolute spatial orientation system of the language.

In 1942 a large New Zealand garrison of 1,400 arrived on Norfolk, outnumbering the local population two to one. The Norfolk Islanders "found that the influx of twice their number in service personnel gave an impetus and industry to their daily round such as they had never previously known, and they were soon to be linked with the outside world by a regular air service" (Gillespie 1952). Relations between the New Zealand garrison and the locals were very amicable and resulted in a number of marriages. Military presence of New Zealand lasted until mid-1948 and by the time they left the isolation of Norfolk Island had come to an end. Hitch (1992: 78) notes: "The nearness of a fearsome enemy only six years before had unexpectedly given Norfolk Island an aerodrome and air services to both Australia and New Zealand. Life was not to be the same again".

Another effect of the war was that many Norfolk Island families went to the Australian mainland, particularly Sydney. Whilst in Sydney many Norfolk Islanders frequented the Polynesian Club, where they reconnected with Polynesian culture. The choice of the Polynesian Club rather than similar Australian organizations constituted a deliberate act of identity on the part of the Norfolk Islanders (Mühlhäusler 2003) and its repercussions are still very much in evidence today. This renewed interest was sparked by two complementary factors: the international re-popularisation of the *Bounty* saga in novels and films and the experiences of islanders displaced to Sydney in the 1930s and 1940s (Hayward 2006: 85).

On return to their home, the war exiles continued to practise Polynesian singing and dancing and during the 1970s Polynesian music and dance

performance became accepted as a standard element in various public events of the island. Hayward (2006: 102) notes: “The establishment of Polynesian-style dancing (and other crafts practices) as forms of Norfolk Island culture reflected an increasing consciousness and assertion of a Polynesian-Pacific identity for Pitcairn descended Norfolk Islanders and, thence – by association – local culture in general”.

The prolonged interaction with the New Zealand garrison accounts for the addition of words such as *pukako* ‘swamphen’ and *panga* ‘tall fern’. More important was the renewed identification of the Norfolk Islanders with their Tahitian ancestors and the cultivation and revival of Tahitian expressions in N.

8.5 Developments on Pitcairn Island since 1945

WW II had been a difficult time for Pitcairn Island with few contacts to the outside world. Once the war had ended Maude’s administrative and educational reforms could be implemented. They were financed by the issue of local stamps which generated up to \$ US 1.000.000 per annum (Murray 1992: 124–125).

A secular school was opened in 1948. Its first teacher, recruited from New Zealand, was Albert W. Moverley, who was intolerant of the old ways, and who strongly discouraged the use of P, which he regarded as a dialect of English characterized by “distortions and corruptions of English and Tahitian words” (Sanders 1953: 49). Moverley’s successor Roy Sanders (1953: 51) shared the negative attitudes of his predecessor towards P: “The islanders speak with a lilting whine when addressing one another at close quarters and with a forceful head-tone shout when talking at a distance. The crudities of the English language have been incorporated into the Pitcairn dialect and few of the niceties remain. The people call their dialect ‘flat Pitkurn’”.

Källgård, who worked on P thirty years after Moverley, made suggestions to include P in the curriculum and to compile a dictionary for use in the school. He quotes a letter written to him in reply by Mr. Garth Harraway of the Pitcairn Administration in New Zealand in 1984 (Källgård 1993: 94):

I have consulted a number of past education officers about your suggestion that Pitcairnese should be taught at the school at Pulau. It was a majority view that Pitcairnese should not be included in the school curriculum; however, all agreed that the speaking of Pitcairnese should not be discouraged in the early years at school as it provides a secure basis for development. Those consulted considered Pitcairnese, like Maori, to be an oral language and likely to survive as long as there are Pitcairners to speak it, if the Norfolk experience is anything to go by. In general it was not felt a bad thing if a few ‘old’ words are lost; as has been said in the past. Pitcairners are geniuses at coming up with ‘new’ words.

This official standpoint reflects the typical colonial attitude of not consulting with local stakeholders and ignores that by 1984 P had become an endangered language. Källgård (1981: 31) notes the large number of P words in the Moverley word list that are no longer known and an equally large number of words that are only passively understood. Intergenerational transmission had become patchy, as is expressed by the title of Källgård (1991) *Fut Yoli noo bin Laane aklen* 'Why did you not teach us?'. In recent years local voices have become more influential and some P and Pitcairn culture is taught at the school by Meralda Warren.

The decline of P did not necessarily result in a higher standard of English. Rather a reduced variety of English, exhibiting properties of P such as the absence of tense and number inflections is in evidence. Examples can be found in letters written by Pitcairners (appendix 8.2) and in the two local newspapers *Pitcairn Miscellany* and *Ucklun tull and Dem Tull*.

Next to better educational facilities Pitcairn Islanders were gradually introduced to a range of new technologies and modern Western ways of life, thus becoming far less isolated than previous generations. However, actual contact with outsiders dropped because, with the advent of international air travel, the role of ocean liners dramatically declined and "by the 1960s the few ships encountering the island, most with little curio-purchasing power and with crews not allowed ashore, could almost be counted on one's fingers" (Murray 1992: 108). The absence of direct contact was compensated in part by the establishment of a radio station and telephone contacts with the outside world and, in the most recent past, internet connections, which have helped revive the trade in island curios and souvenirs.

Whatever efforts were made locally to preserve the language, such as adopting the name Pitkern by the Island Council in 1996 and plans to make it official, have been counteracted by the dramatic decline in the island's population throughout migration, mainly to New Zealand: Consider:

| | |
|------|-----|
| 1943 | 163 |
| 1981 | 126 |
| 1966 | 96 |
| 1989 | 55 |
| 2018 | 50 |

The majority of Pitcairners now live in the diaspora and only visit Pitcairn occasionally or not at all. Frazer (1970) gives a detailed account of the Pitcairners in New Zealand. At the time of writing, language and culture remained relatively strong but have since become weakened as the once dense multiplex

communication network of the New Zealand Pitcairners has given way to more open networks and an increase in out-marriages.

8.6 Developments on Norfolk Island since 1945 to 1997

8.6.1 General trends

The isolation of Norfolk Island from the outside world came to an end with the arrival of scheduled flights from Australia and New Zealand after 1946, which made it possible for the islanders to leave for visits to Australia and New Zealand and for tourists to visit for brief stays. The availability of regular air transport also made Norfolk Island a far more attractive destination for new settlers.

The impact of the mass media steadily grew in post war years. The first radio service was established in the airport in 1952, although this was limited to five- or ten-minute daily broadcasts giving basic information about ship and aircraft movements and vital notices. It was not until the 1960s that it was expanded to resemble a radio service with music, local notices and ABC programmes sent over for re-broadcast. This station – then called VL2NI and now Radio Norfolk – is still significantly controlled by officers of the island Administration and this has an effect on everything, from local notices to what music is played, and the style of sponsorship announcements. Coyle (2006: 38) notes: “While Radio Norfolk is funded to a limited extent by the Administration, the station also raises money through sponsorship and other commercial ventures. So, in terms of Australian radio station designations, the station resides between a community, public and commercial operation”.

One of the most distinct elements of the radio services is its use of N. From the earliest days, radio broadcasts were only made in English and it is only relatively recently lack of materials, no trained teachers and a chronic made in N.

Some announcers from the 1980s became aware of policies in Australia concerning multiculturalism and consciously chose to speak Norfolk on their shows. In 1983, Josie Gillett won an award as host of the ‘Young Mood’ afternoon programme presented in Norfolk. Later, David (also known as Diddles) Evans hosted evening programmes in which he made announcements in Norfolk, picturing his relative (Bubby) and other Pitcairn descendants as his listeners. Also, in a programme broadcast after school, Diddles ran quizzes for young listeners to guess the meaning of a Norfolk word or phrase, aiming to stimulate interest in the Norfolk language and its connection with lifestyle and customs. Currently, Tracey Yager uses Norfolk occasionally (for example, in an interview with an older Norfolk speaker), but Darlene Buffett is the only announcer to use Norfolk consistently in her programmes (Coyle 2006: 39).

Darlene *Dar Busy Bee* Buffett employs an idiolect that mixes English and Norfolk, often in the same sentence. Since 1992, when she commenced as a radio announcer, she has increased the proportion of Norfolk used in her shows, particularly post the Australian take-over in 2015. Her mixture of English and N has met with criticism from some older Islanders. Such criticism does not acknowledge on-going debates about a definitive ‘authentic’ form of Norfolk or, indeed, Darlene’s purpose in using the language in this manner on a radio service aiming to meet the needs of various audiences, including visitors.

8.6.2 Changes to diglossia

The period after World War two is characterized by a number of major changes in the linguistic ecology of Norfolk Island, which eroded the conditions in which stable diglossia could exist. Harrison (1985, 1986a) notes that the previously dense multiplex communication network was increasingly replaced by a more open one (Milroy 1980).

Flint (1979), drawing primarily on his fieldwork in the late 1950s and early 1960s, described the linguistic situation on Norfolk as a special type of diglossia, special in that “the H form is not a superposed variety, but that the H and L forms are found in the origin of the community” (Flint 1979: 295). A consequence is, as Flint (1961) had argued, that there has always been a fluid boundary and interaction between N and English, with factors such as topic, formality and relationship between interlocutors determining the amount of borrowing and code-blending. What is also special is that “Norfolk Islanders do not regard their H form as superior to L . . . They have a double language loyalty” (1961: 297) and that diglossic norms were not shared by all Islander families. “English only was spoken in the families of the interlopers who landed on Pitcairn and some of their descendants (in particular the Nobbs family). A predominantly English-speaking practice still persisted in the early 20th century” (Harrison 1985: 133).

Flint (1979: 298) described the linguistic situation on Norfolk Island as a stable diglossia and he notes that this stability is due to the “special relationship associated with friendship values in the childhood 6–8 years age group”. He observes that in the school ground in the 1960s, Islander and non-Islander children both follow a stable diglossic pattern. Harrison confirms (1985: 141) that “in 1970 it could be assumed that most children coming from an Island home had spoken Nf as their first language before beginning school. In 1980, however, the reverse was true since there was only one school beginner who was more proficient in Nf than in English”.

By this time, stable diglossia had been replaced by a much less well defined picture of language choices “where no hard and fast rules of behavior apply [and] where speakers are choosing to locate themselves at various points along a multi-dimensional language scale, the exact point depending on a complexity of factors” (Harrison 1985: 140).

8.6.3 Language and education

For almost a century the school had been an instrument of denigrating and suppressing N. In 1972 Australia replaced mono-cultural and assimilation policies with multiculturalism. Schools were now seen as an instrument of strengthening and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. The implementation of this new policy on Norfolk Island faced many obstacles, however. They included the lack of commitment on the part of the educational managers, the absence of syllabuses, lack of materials, no trained teachers and a chronic shortage of funds. The greatest handicap, however, was uncertainty regarding the status of N. Educators in the past had regarded it as a debased informal variety of English, a pidgin, a dialect or a patois and a long time after 1972 such views persisted. It was clearly not the function of the school to teach “funny English”.

In November 1977, the Assistant Director-General of Education in New South Wales, Dr John Vaughan, visited Norfolk Island and was interviewed. One of the questions was: “Do you think the Norfolk language should be taught?” He pointed out the problem of teaching a “fundamentally oral” language but added “I would think it certainly not inappropriate if the Norfolk school itself, in its wisdom, made a decision to devote some attention to the Norfolk language – that would be a reasonable decision to make. But I am not making it” (*Norfolk Island News*, November 1977: 9).

N began to be taught as part of Norfolk Studies from the mid-1980s. One of the earliest teachers to take on this task was Ms Fay Bataille who had taught at the school since 1945. Language was also taught with the help of community members.

8.7 Norfolk Island 1997 to the present

8.7.1 Background

This period was chosen for a very personal reason. I commenced doing field-work on Norfolk Island in 1997 and have since visited once or twice per annum.

On my first visit there was a community meeting where I was invited to explain my project. I mentioned my general interest in describing and comparing English-related contact languages in the Pacific and the specific ecolinguistic project of documenting the development of language for talking about natural kinds and ecological issues. Whilst the Islanders present expressed their willingness to help me, they also made it clear that they expected me to do something for their language, in particular help them reverse the decline of N. For my next visit I prepared a discussion paper outlining the issues to be addressed in designing and implementing a language revival strategy (see appendix 8.4). The following means of achieving greater viability were identified:

- 1) Short-term measures
 - a) setting up a central and accessible collection of language-related materials and encouraging the population to contribute to this collection;
 - b) collecting texts for older speakers using up-to-date recording equipment (video, tapes, written texts);
 - c) giving the language greater visibility by increasing its use in public signing and the use of N on postage stamps;
 - d) encouraging newspaper items in and about the N;
 - e) increasing its oral use on radio and television;
 - f) reviving the Norfolk language experience in Norfolk studies at the school concentrating on oral language in the first instance;
 - g) developing language camps where children can have an immersion experience in Norfolk language and culture;
 - h) having a competition for poetry and short stories written in N;
 - i) encouraging islanders to collect words and expressions, place names etc.;
 - j) developing an extended website on language issues and inviting public debate;
 - k) collecting names of stakeholders, relevant organizations and experts;
 - l) encouraging tourists and resident non-islanders to learn the language;
 - m) preparing a series of public meetings with the aim of setting up a permanent body
- 2) Long-term measures:
 - a) appropriate legislation determining the status of the Norfolk language;
 - b) to appoint a permanent body of stakeholders and experts (e.g. a language academy) to look after language matters; an early matter to be addressed will be that of the implementation of a writing system;
 - c) to design school syllabuses for a continued pathway of learning and teaching;
 - d) to set up a permanent physical location for all language resources and materials;

- e) to budget for the long-term implementation of a language plan;
- f) to identify outside organizations that can train teachers, language managers and planners and enter into long-term partnerships

Most of these objectives have been met. What will be said in the next section will comment on community-based initiatives as well as my personal participation in reviving N. Norfolk Island pragmatics mean that ideas can be debated for a long time before they are implemented and community members active in the revival process lead a very busy life and have to decide on priorities. There are conflicting views which, in conformity with the prevailing norms of interaction, do not get resolved and can lead to duplication or abandonment of efforts.

8.7.2 Implementation of short-term measures

I will deal with the language camp, school and public meetings separately. As regards the other initiatives, with the exception of a dedicated language website, they have all been tried, and in some instances have made a great difference to the viability of the language. There have been several initiatives to collect and archive materials in and about N and Norfolk culture, including the Living Library project <www.livinglibrary.edu.nf>, where a wealth of information can be found. With the help of the school librarian Trish Magri I collected hard copies of materials on N, which are located at the Norfolk Island Research and Genealogy Centre <www.zades.com.au/norfolk/>. The Museum has collected a large number of sound recordings and documents featuring N. A small permanent language exhibition including a listening booth has been set up on its premises.

Greater visibility of the language has been achieved both by some official signage and to a much more significant extent through private businesses creating a landscape by means of N business names and signs. There have been a number of attempts to increase official signage in N, most recently in 2019 but the unresolved issue of an official spelling has slowed down these efforts.

The annual song competition has generated an impressive number of N songs. A short story competition has not had a similar effect thus far and only one collection of short stories has appeared thus far (Nebauer-Borg 2011).

The two newspapers *Norfolk Islander* <www.norfolkislander.com> and *Norfolk On Line* <www.norfolkonlinenews.com> have both increased their N content over the last twenty years.

In 2018 the museum organised a place name exhibition for which Islanders were given the opportunity to add new information. An exhibition on cattle

planned for 2019 will offer opportunities to elicit hitherto undocumented words from the important domain of the cattle industry.

A brief introduction to N has become part of the cultural tours offered by a number of tourism businesses and in the last five years a number of Islanders have begun to give language classes to residents from Australia and New Zealand. An introductory online course *Learning the Norfolk language* can be found in Norfolk Online News: <www.norfolkonlinenews.com/speak-norfolk.html>.

8.7.2.1 The language camp

In the absence of immersion N teaching at the school I raised the possibility of running short language immersion camps with a number of stakeholders. The idea was taken up by the local poet Archie Bigg and Girl Guides leader Colleen Crane, who began to run an annual language and culture camp around 2,000. The camp required a great deal of preparation and volunteer help from other community members and teaching staff from the school. It was very well received by the Year 9 students who claimed to have learnt as much N in three days of immersion than they did in a semester's formal classes at the school.

This language camp has run for almost 20 years and has become a major factor in promoting N language use and positive attitudes among younger people. At the end of each camp the participants present their experiences at a special community meeting.

A DVD titled *It-et* 'Look at it' and featuring the 2013 Year Nine Norfolk language camp was made by the Islander Jodie Williams. It has been screened repeatedly at the Ferny Lane Theatre. The DVD is on sale at several Norfolk Island Outlets or direct from <www.jodiewilliams.com>.

8.7.2.2 Norfolk teaching at the Norfolk Island Central School (NICS)

I have written two papers which provide details of the progress made in teaching N both before and after 1997 (Mühlhäusler 2007 and 2015). Up to date information can be found on the web pages of NICS, such as the following one:

Norfolk Island has its very own language which is a mixture of Polynesian and Old English, handed down from the descendents (sic!) of the mutineers from the Bounty and their Tahitian consorts. Norfolk Language lessons were introduced into the school some years ago in an endeavour to help preserve the language for future generations. This program was made possible with the generous assistance of Adelaide University under the direction of Professor Peter Mulhauser (sic!), our local elders and community language experts and the support of the Norfolk Island Government.

Students from Kinder to Year 7 have weekly language lessons delivered by some of our local language experts. Year 9 students have an annual language camp where they

are immersed in Norfolk language and cultural pursuits over several days, under the guidance of local elders and teaching staff (<<https://norfolkisl-c.schools.nsw.gov.au/learning-at-our-school/languages/norfolk-language-camp.html>>).

Teaching N is part of the subject Norfolk studies whose rationale is given as:

For Norfolk students the course reaffirms identity, builds pride in their cultural and historical heritage and raises self-esteem. For all students, it provides an understanding of the cultural and historical heritage and a sense of national identity. Norfolk Studies recognises the importance and value of the study of the Norfolk language and its unique heritage. The study of the Norfolk language will increase its standing and status, revitalise the language and will in turn impact positively on its long term survival. <<https://norfolkisl-c.schools.nsw.gov.au/learning-at-our-school/languages.html>>.

The first teacher with a qualification in applied linguistics is Mrs. Suzanne Evans. For her degree from the University of Adelaide in 2002 she developed a teaching syllabus for years 7–10. She has developed an impressive body of teaching resources and is currently researching the plan to set up a language nest for pre-school children. The older children have been taught N by a number of teachers, some of them from Australia who share their classes with a community member who is a fluent N speaker. The success of this very modestly funded part-time teaching has been extraordinary because:

- it has created awareness of the endangerment of the language;
- it has strengthened good will towards the language;
- it has created a foundation for future mainstreaming of the language.

In 2007 the school carried out a survey of how parents felt about languages to be offered in years 7 and 8. 22 out of 23 parents wanted to see N taught and promoted in school and 19 parents wanted the language to be taught in years 7 and 8.

The views of the students are even more favourable. Of the 104 year 3–6 students who in 2010 were given a simple questionnaire by Mrs. Evans, 87 answered that they spoke N and 93 that they understood it. The children have developed a very positive attitude towards the language. Their responses to the question “Why is it good to study N?” include:

- It’s our culture – we should know our culture;
- Because we don’t want to lose the language and it is interesting;
- Because we live here;
- So you’re an islander;
- Something fun at school;
- So you can talk to your parents.

The quality of the written work produced by the children keeps improving. In 2010, for the first time after more than a decade, small groups of children started speaking N to one another.

8.7.2.3 Public meetings

As milestone publications on and in N are published, they are presented to the public at official launches that can attract large numbers of Islanders. Examples are Archie Bigg's 2003 launch of his nursery rhymes at the Golden Orb Café and Bookshop, Rachel Nebauer-Borg's short stories (2011) at the museum and Josh Nash's placename book (2012) in the gardens of Music Valley.

Between 2009 and 2012 I held a cooperative grant with the Norfolk Island Government to strengthen language teaching at the school, to build up a permanent language display at the museum and to develop public signage and language events. At the end of the grant period a three-day conference titled *Future of Norfolk Language and Culture* was held in 2012 under the auspices of both the Council of Elders and Youth Assembly. As the programme (see appendix 8.5) stated:

The Council of Elders and the Youth Assembly consider that it is important to reflect on the past, current and future place of language and culture in Norfolk Island society. They propose to discuss and consider its future in the context of a changing world through the voices of local stakeholders, keynote speeches by outstanding scholars, and through sharing the experience of local and overseas activists in their field of language, culture and education.

One result was enhanced community awareness about the need for long-term measures to preserve language and culture.

8.7.3 Implementation of long-term measures

8.7.3.1 Obstacles and achievements

Between 1997 and 2019 a number of events have occurred that bode well for the continued use and further revival of N. The abolition of the Legislative Assembly by Australia in 2016 and the ongoing uncertainties regarding the provision of education services and funding has shifted responsibility for language matters to community organizations, in particular the Council of Elders and Norfolk Island People for Democracy. There have been several attempts to set up a language society but ongoing conflict about the writing system and differences between individuals and families on a number of other matters continue to create problems.

The design of school syllabuses for a continued pathway of learning and teaching has suffered from lack of funding, a high turn-over of school principals and a lack of professionally trained N teaching staff.

It had been hoped to set up a permanent Culture Centre with dedicated space for language resources and a qualified language officer but lack of funding and political uncertainties have temporarily halted this project. There have, however, been a number of major achievements in the policy domain.

8.7.3.2 Recognition of N as an official language

N was made an official language on Norfolk Island in 2004 through the Norfolk Island Language Language Act. This act was assented to by the Australian Administrator (see appendix 8.6).

Whilst there were few immediate effects of this legislation, its importance for future action is difficult to overestimate. Norfolk Island is the only territory of Australia where a language other than English is officially recognized and the Norfolk Language Act is seen as a model by speakers of larger Aboriginal languages.

8.7.3.3 UNESCO listing

Norfolk Island is a small speck in the Pacific and the outside world, including Australia, knows little or nothing about its language. One of the best ways of creating international awareness is to get recognition from UNESCO that one's language is in danger of disappearing. In 2005 I helped the Norfolk Island Government with the tedious process of preparing an application, addressing the many requirements of this body. After a two-year period of silence Norfolk finally got recognized in 2007 (see appendix 8.7).

The fact that the language of the Bounty mutineers was recognized by UNESCO spread around the world. The Chief Minister was inundated with phone calls from the international press and more than 100 newspapers eventually informed their readers that N had received UNESCO listing. This international attention, far more than the language act of 2004, created great excitement on Norfolk Island.

Following the UNESCO recognition in 2007, the Islanders were approached in 2008 to carry out a viability and diversity survey for their language. A community meeting agreed to the response communicated to UNESCO by the Norfolk Island Government included the following:

- The language is endangered in its full traditional form;
- There are considerable differences between households, such that in some families N is never spoken;
- Children mostly get their N from their grandparents' generation as the language was often not transmitted in its full form to their parents;

- There are about 750 speakers;
- The domains of use are dwindling but the language is sometimes used in new domains (e.g. advertising, public signage);
- Traditional knowledge is still frequently communicated in N;
- Policies for the use of N in the public domain exist but are not fully implemented.

8.7.3.4 Year of the Norf'k language

A consequence of the UNESCO listing was the declaration of the Year 2008/2009 as the Year of the Norf'k language with a number of language-centered activities and the setting up of official bodies to promote language and culture.

8.7.3.5 Norfolk Island Cultural Strategic Plan: 2014–2018

In 2014 the government drafted an ambitious strategic plan to promote Norf'k language and culture. The political turmoil that followed in 2015 and the ongoing political and financial uncertainties have meant that many of the initiatives contained therein could not be realized. In the draft plan the following factors were considered critical to the future of the Norfolk Island culture.

- Preservation of the Norfolk Language and culture
- Education – Norfolk Studies and Norf'k Language
- External funding
- Council of Elders
- Tourism

Details are given in appendix 8.8.

8.8 Outlook

The decline of P is due both to attitudes and practices of school teachers post WW2 and the gradual erosion of the ecological factors that have sustained the language in the past and increasing dependence on imported goods and services. There are some efforts to arrest this decline, in particular those of Meralda Warren, who teaches language, local crafts and culture.

The decline of N illustrates how deliberate linguicide combined with neglect and linguistic and social assimilation has led to the decrease of power of an already powerless language.

The revival of N in recent years illustrates how the situation has begun to be redressed. Past corpus planning, such as the production of dictionaries and

grammars, has helped preserve N but the reversal of its decline began with appropriate status planning, in particular the Language Act and UNESCO listing. This revival is due to a range of factors. As more and more Norfolk Islanders went to study or work on the Australian mainland, and as the number of tourists and temporary residents from Australia increased, a new pride and sense of identity developed, combined at times with antagonism against Australian policies. Language occupies a central place in this attitude. In the late 1980s two publications appeared (Nobbs-Palmer 1986 and Buffet and Laycock 1988) designed not only to document the language but to preserve it and to increase its use. Around the same time community members began to give lessons in N at the Central School and the status of the language has since been enhanced through:

- its use in the Assembly and for official government functions;
- its mainstream position in the education system;
- its use in song writing, poetry reading and other cultural events;
- its use in meetings of community members to discuss questions of language revival.

The extent to which these developments will lead to a further revival of the language remains to be seen. Positive feelings and the sense of identity alone are unlikely to reverse the decline of N and the availability of materials may help preserve but not necessarily revive the language. Moreover, the recent positive attitudes towards N are fragile. In the wake of two much publicised murder cases on the island, the language has been labelled a “dialect for murder” (*The Australian* June 2, 2004: 3). Such stereotyping highlights the continuing powerlessness of N vis-à-vis English, a major reason why the shift to English continues.

The abolition of self-government by Australia, against the wishes of the Island’s residents 70% of whom voted for its continuation of self-government, has brought with it new threats to language and culture, as the explicit aim of the Australian administration is to ‘normalize’ the Islanders and to weaken a separate Pitcairner identity.

The codificatory and systematizing impulses of modern linguistics have been so powerful as to render the idea of a language as a system and a code – in essence a species-wide and species-specific complex mental program to be progressively deciphered by linguists via slow but steady advances in technical modeling – utterly standard and barely questionable common sense. (Toolan 1996: 11)

9 History of research

9.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the opportunities missed by past researchers, followed by a survey of past and present studies on the language.

The history of research on P-N can be compared to a whodunit. At times, the solution of a whodunit requires evidence why, for instance, a murder waiting to happen did not occur, why a fail-safe method of performing the deed was not chosen or why, as Sherlock Holmes observed in *Silver Blaze*, the dog did not bark in the night.

Gregory: “Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?”

Holmes “To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.”

Gregory “The dog did nothing in the night-time.”

Holmes “That was the curious incident.” (Doyle 1894)

Structuralism teaches that the absence of a sign is as meaningful as its presence. This section is concerned with the absence of linguistic accounts of the mixed language spoken by the descendants of the Bounty mutineers.

In US criminal law, a jury can find an accused guilty if the prosecution can prove motive, means and opportunity. I shall apply these criteria to the question: Why did P-N not get described by linguists for about 150 years after its formation, in spite of their having the means, the motive and the opportunity? Mention needs to be made of red herrings. P-N has been characterized by different investigators as a dialect of English, a debased form of English, a cant, a Pidgin, a Creole and a mixed language. Such labels may have discouraged linguists from investigating the language. More importantly, the language was an esoteric in-group language, which outsiders were not encouraged to understand or use.

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9.2 The motives

Why a particular topic is chosen by a linguist is at times a matter of astonishment. Ash and Lake's collection of *Bizarre Books* (1989) contains a chapter titled "We have a book about it", which features a number of linguistic works, which to outsiders indeed must seem bizarre. They include a book written by Norrmann and Haarberg (1980) on the topic of cucurbits in literature, Laufer's *Loanwords in Tibetan* (1917), Hammarström's *The problem of nonsense linguistics* (1971) and the Revd. James Spear's *The Proverbs of British Guiana* (1902), which deals with proverbs such as *Rum done, fun done*.

Reasons for wishing to describe contact languages are numerous and coincide with the preoccupations linguists had from time to time (Mühlhäusler 1997a, Baker and Mühlhäusler 2007). A widespread motive was to document a Creole for use as a language of religion. In the case of P-N this was not a motive as this language has never been used in the religious domain, ever since Edward Young and John Adams initiated English Bible reading on Pitcairn Island in 1798.

A second motive was showing the moral inferiority of speakers of Pidgin and Creole languages. There have been numerous statements by educationists to the effect that P-N is indeed a disabling language and a cause of mental inferiority (documented in Mühlhäusler 2002), as well as officials such as Hunt (1914a, 1914b).

In Mühlhäusler (1997a: 31) I commented on a range of reasons why Pidgins, Creoles and mixed languages are generally ignored by 19th century philologists, including their preference for written languages. There are, however, a number of questions that philologists should have been interested in:

- Whether languages can have more than one parent language;
- The question of *Urschöpfung*, the development of languages from scratch. Creoles would appear to be *prima facie* examples of this;
- The question of which language was the simplest and/or the most primitive.

9.3 The means

The epigraph to this chapter refers to the received view of how linguists should go about their task. The integrational linguist Toolan (1996) critiques this common sense understanding and I share his concerns. However, this chapter is not a critique of the linguistic enterprise but an examination of how different players and experts have approached the task of providing linguistic accounts of P-N. Expertise in this field was anything but rare. Missionary linguists and professional philologists were numerous. The description and comparison of

vernaculars made considerable progress from the early 19th century; and the study of mixed languages, Pidgins and Creoles became sophisticated around 1880. Dialectology, too, had come of age by then. Travel to Norfolk Island from Australia and New Zealand was not particularly difficult, and Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders could be found in Australia and many Pacific Islands.

9.4 Opportunity

The story of the Bounty mutineers and their descendants was widely known throughout the 19th and most of the 20th century. Some 19th century accounts feature examples of P-N. There was a dense network of correspondence between linguists at European universities and missionaries and administrators in the colonies (Wendt ed. 2001). Thus, Max Müller, Oxford, corresponded with missionary linguists in the Pacific and there was a close intellectual connection between missionary linguistics and the development of American and European descriptivism. Schuchardt corresponded with hundreds of missionaries and administrators residing in parts of the world where contact languages were spoken, as did Reinecke.

Pitcairn Island was one of the most visited ports in the Pacific in the first half of the 19th century, and the Pitcairners that had resettled on Norfolk Island in 1856 were watched closely by social scientists and theologians to determine whether a small, devout community transported to an isolated “desert island” would achieve perfection. Language was regarded as one measure and the apparent increasing use of the mixed language of the Pitcairners was cause for concern.

The lack of linguistic interest is quite astonishing in view of the fact that by 1860 there had been a number of reports concerning the development of a new form of speech among the Pitcairners.

9.5 The usual suspects

I shall restrict myself to linguists who had the means and at least one of the two other criteria. Some of them may have been misled by red herrings, in particular by reports commenting on the excellent quality of English spoken on Pitcairn. This myth was generated by a number of factors, including:

- On the part of the Islanders there was the practice of not speaking P in the presence of outside visitors;
- On the part of the visitors, it may have been motivated by the wish to prevent another colonial power (particularly France) from claiming Pitcairn

Island as theirs. But it also reflects the ideology that the reestablishment of an orderly Christian society on Pitcairn was enabled by the suppression of Tahitian and the adoption of English language and customs.

9.5.1 Max Müller

While Müller was a professor of Philology in the University of Oxford, he regularly exchanged letters about language with John Coleridge Patteson, Bishop of Melanesia residing on Norfolk Island. Müller's interests included the evolution of primitive languages, the question of linguistic simplicity, and the impossibility of a mixed language (Müller 1861). While he obtained a great deal of information about the primitive nature of Polynesian languages from Patteson, he neither inquired about the language of the Pitcairners nor was given any information about it. That Müller was interested in the question "how languages change, particularly languages adopted by a less from a more civilized race" (1861: 75) is illustrated by his detailed discussion of "The Negro Dialect" spoken in the Deep South of the USA (1875: 75–81). A study of P-N could have complemented this discussion.

9.5.2 Frederick W. Farrar

The Rev. Farrar (1831–1903) received his early education on the Isle of Man, a place with strong connections to the Bounty Saga. His university studies at Cambridge included classics and philology. In his philological writings, he appealed to Darwin's ideas of branching descent to explain the relationships between languages and engaged in a protracted debate on this matter with the anti-Darwinian philologist Max Müller. Farrar (1873) addresses the question of whether all languages were capable of expressing the truth of the Scriptures. In discussing the "jargons of the Bastards of Africa, the Canadian half-breds" and other mixed languages, Farrar expresses the view that "the structure of these corrupt dialects is a most fruitful field for the philologist and suggests many of the primitive expedients and tendencies of language" (1873: 274). Earlier, Farrar comments, with special reference to Negro English and Chinese Pidgin English, that "every lingua franca presents a picture of what the primitive languages must have been, by reducing language to its simplest elements and by the almost complete elimination of grammar" (1873: 113).

Farrar became Dean of Canterbury and Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Victoria, who had a lasting interest in the Pitcairners and who gave Norfolk

Island to them. Given Farrar's interest in the consequences of sin, his view that fall from grace is reflected in grammatical and lexical degeneration, his special relationship with Queen Victoria and his undoubted knowledge of the conversion of the Pitcairners and the experiment on Norfolk Island, it is surprising that he does not comment on their language.

9.5.3 Sidney Herbert Ray

Sydney Ray (1858–1939) was a philologist from Cambridge University who specialized in the languages of Melanesia. In 1895, he proposed that there was a group of mixed languages, which he called Melano-Papuan, in addition to the (Austronesian) Melanesian group and the non-Melanesian languages. Ray commented on Müller's and Codrington's views on mixing and substratum (Ray 1926) and had first-hand experience with the Pidgin/Creole English of the Torres Straits (Ray 1907). In spite of motive and, in all likelihood, the means, he lacked the opportunity.

9.5.4 Hermann Paul

Hermann Paul taught Philology at the Universities of Freiburg and Munich and is the author of one of the standard works in this field, *Principles of Language History* (1880), whose interests included *Urschöpfung* and desert island languages. Paul (1880: 175) mentions a hypothetical “desert island” experiment. He also devotes a whole chapter of his *Principles* to the question of mixed languages, which includes references to the impact of colonization. Paul had the motive, the means, but probably no opportunity.

9.5.5 Hugo Schuchardt

Hugo Schuchardt was concerned with overcoming the limitations of the family model of language relationships by investigating empirically three extreme instances of human languages:

- linguistic isolates such as Basque;
- invented artificial languages such as Volapük;
- mixed languages.

Schuchardt was already an established, distinguished academic based at Graz when he began to publish on Creoles and other contact languages. Over the

years he published more than 700 pages on a large number of Creoles. Of these, 10% were concerned with English-related Pidgins and Creoles. Schuchardt, in spite of his disagreements with the Junggrammatiker and other philologists, shared their scriptism. He privileged languages for which printed documents were available such as Saramaccan and Negerhollands, whilst during travels to North Africa he did not bother to collect samples of spoken *Linguae Francae* (Baker and Mühlhäusler 2007).

Schuchardt was an armchair linguist *par excellence*. In just a few years, he is known to have written to more than 300 people living in places where contact languages were spoken (Wolf 1993), including Codrington. Although Schuchardt would have been familiar with the story of the Pitcairners, he made no inquiries about their language and in reply to his inquiry to Codrington about Pidgin English (see Mühlhäusler 2002a) was not given any information about P-N (see appendix 9.1.).

Schuchardt certainly had the means and the motive but he missed his opportunity.

9.5.6 Robert Henry Codrington

The first linguistically trained scholar who could have studied the language of the Pitcairners in situ was Codrington (1830–1922). He was the head of the training school and resident Melanesian Mission linguist on Norfolk Island for more than a decade and had compiled grammars of 27 Melanesian languages on Norfolk Island (Codrington 1885). It is ironic that the Melanesian languages have featured prominently in the mixed language and pidgin origin debate, following Ray's (1926) comparative studies. Codrington held strong views on linguistic purity and was a key figure in developing a purified Mota as the lingua franca of the Mission. His disdain for the “dog-Mota” spoken by some missionaries and for Pidgin English is evident throughout his personal and professional writings (see Mühlhäusler 2010). His views are expressed in an undated letter to his brother Tom (appendix 9.2).

Codrington had regular contacts with the Pitcairners on Norfolk Island. He could certainly have produced a professional account of the language and had he done so, many of the questions I have tried to answer in this book would not have been necessary.

Codrington of all the scholars discussed thus far had ample means, superb opportunities but he lacked the motive to study the language of the Pitcairners. Our knowledge of the history of P-N would be infinitely better, had Codrington left us with an account of N as it was spoken during his long residence on Norfolk Island.

9.5.7 John F. Reinecke

Reinecke's vast Ph.D. on *Marginal Languages* had as its aim to “refine, widen and deepen the survey undertaken more than 50 years ago by Coelho” (1937: 8). His information was the result of extensive correspondence with scholars from all over the world and the thesis at the time was the most comprehensive discussion of contact languages resulting from European colonization. Surprisingly, Reinecke makes no mention of P-N, although by that time a number of published materials were available, including Shapiro's (1936) detailed account of P and numerous reports on N from the Education Department of NSW (Mühlhäusler 2007b, 2015). Reinecke had the motive, the means and the opportunity but somehow, he missed his chance.

9.5.8 Robert A. Hall jr

Hall (1911–1997) was a descriptivist scholar and expert in pidgin and creole languages. He summarized his research in his survey *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (1966). Somewhat surprisingly, this book lacks any reference to P-N, in spite of the fact that by the date of its publication, Ross and Moverley's comprehensive account had appeared in print (1964). Hall wrote a brief review, in which he opines that “it has clearly grown out of a pidginized language” (Hall 1965: 137), a view that has haunted P-N studies ever since. Hall also observes that “for various reasons – especially the diffidence of the islanders – it has been difficult to obtain adequate attestations of Pitcairnese and Norfolkese” (Hall 1965: 138).

Hall had the motive and the means and as he also traveled to Australia (where numerous Norfolk Islanders resided) and, moreover, as he was of the view that one informant is sufficient to describe a language, he also had the opportunity.

9.5.9 Albert Henry (Bert) Pelham

Pelham, born in Sidney in 1906 was appointed Inspector of Schools in 1949 and in 1956 became Staff Inspector in the NSW Education Department, the body responsible for education on Norfolk Island. In 1953, he applied for funds to carry out a study of N. Such a study was timely, as by that time the Education Department was considering a transitional bilingual approach to teaching English on the island. His application was rejected (see appendix 9.3) and nothing has ever become of the proposal. Pelham had the means and the motive but was denied the opportunity to carry out his study.

9.5.10 Ross Clark and Chris Corne

In *Carrier Pidgin* (6 February 1976) it was announced that Dr. Ross Clark of the University of Auckland had applied “for a research grant to start a project on Pitcairnese, beginning with the considerable expatriate community in N.Z.”. Nothing appears to have become of this project, though his colleague Chris Corne, in a letter of 27 August in 1979 to Shirley Harrison, indicated he intended to collaborate with Clark. Clark certainly had an excellent academic background (the means), and he had the opportunity, i.e. access to the large Pitcairner community of Auckland. Having done a comparative study of Pacific Pidgin English (Clark 1979), which makes reference to P-N, he had a strong motive to examine the language firsthand.

In 1978, Chris Corne (1942–1999) of the University of Auckland obtained a small grant to study the literature on P-N and to contact the Norfolk community in Auckland. In a letter to Shirley Harrison (n.d.), he writes that “the next project step would have been dependent on various factors but would probably have been a survey of language use, code switching, continuum etc.”. Because of his work on Indian Ocean French he never continued with his Norfolk studies: “In short I haven’t yet done anything remotely approaching original work”. Thus, in spite of means, motive and opportunity, Corne did not carry out what would have been the first study of language use among the Norfolk Island diaspora.

9.5.11 Björn Jernudd

Jernudd (b. 1942) is best known for his extensive work on language planning. One of his Swedish colleagues was Professor Arne Zettersten, who had visited Norfolk Island, shared his impressions with Jernudd in a number of letters. Upon Jernudd’s comment that Norfolk Island looked like an ideal test case for language planning he provided him with copies of his texts and other materials he had collected on Norfolk Island. Jernudd proposed to develop a plan to rescue the language by making it compulsory in education. Zettersten gave him three bits of advice. One was to talk to Shirley Harrison to whom he had mentioned Jernudd. The second advice was to be careful to say too much about language planning, before having talked to her, and finally he reminded Jernudd that “everything to do with policy on Norfolk Island can be touchy”.

I have not located any evidence of Jernudd having corresponded or met with Shirley Harrison and I believe he never visited Norfolk Island and his intentions seem not to have come to the awareness of Norfolk Islanders. Jernudd had the means, the opportunity and a motive but never followed up on his intentions.

9.6 Non-research: Conclusions

Much of the history of research on P and N is a history of missed opportunities. More than 150 years after the language had come into being, Shirley Harrison (1972: 3) wrote, “until recently the amount of research available on the languages of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands was extremely small”. Painstaking reconstruction and extensive archival research are necessary today to produce an account of the history and development of P-N, a task that would have been simple if linguists of past generations had availed themselves of the ample opportunities to study it.

9.7 Studies of Pitkern and Norf'k

9.7.1 Overview

Flint (1964b) compiled a brief paper on earlier work on P-N. His list comprises just seven entries, with only one of them (Shapiro 1936) concerned with P. He notes that “in quantity, this is small indeed, and it happens that the linguistic work of the best quality is undoubtedly to be found in a milieu entirely non-linguist: I refer to the excellent botanical and zoological literature about Norfolk Island” (115). He fails to mention the large amount of information compiled by Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders that represents the insiders’ perspective and augments, and relativises the technical descriptions of professional linguists.

There have been two types of study of the language of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. One refers to the academic investigations of the sounds, grammar and lexicon; the other includes the various collections of words and phrases which have been published by lay people interested in the language.

In a talk I gave at the Symposium on Colonial Linguistics at Bremen University (Mühlhäusler 2013a), I raised an issue that is of concern: how colonial language descriptions and language policies came into being. I reminded my audience that the American poet John Godfrey Saxe (*Daily Cleveland Herald* 29th March 1869) once observed: “Laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made”. I argued that very much the same applies to most colonial language descriptions and language policies.

The metaphor of sausage making is very much applicable to most of the accounts of P-N. They are anything but neutral, objective representations but rather the outcome of a large range of contingencies, including disciplinary practices and pressures, the relationship between researchers and speakers, the degree of

competition and cooperation between researchers, the investigators' implicit and explicit assumptions, the impact of financial limitations as well as time pressure.

The best records of the language are those of insiders. Unfortunately, there are no consolidated accounts for P. For N, I have been given some excellent unpublished materials by a number of Islanders. Those who produced printed publications, Shirley Harrison, Beryl Nobbs-Palmer and Alice Buffett lived away from the Island for extended periods of their lives, and their accounts are somewhat affected by this.

The majority of studies surveyed were produced by visitors, none of whom was aware of the institutionalised scrupulous lying to outsiders. An exception is Anders Källgård, who became a friend of many Pitcairn Islanders.

In my own case it took many years for me to become accepted as a friend and, more importantly, be given access to the notes and writings on N by people who were born on the island and followed a traditional way of life, such as Greg Quintal, Mary Cooper, Colleen Crane or Rachel Nebauer. My acceptance as *one o' ucklun* 'one of us' occurred after 15 years of work with the community, when I was invited by Puss Anderson to join the Grumpy Men's Table on Saturday afternoons. It appears that I had demonstrated my acceptance of their values. It has been a long journey and I am grateful to the many friends I have made, and for being allowed to work with the Council of Elders and Norfolk Island People for Democracy on two major submissions to the UN concerned with regaining self-determination for Norfolk Island.

My former doctoral student Josh Nash combined fieldwork with part-time work as a landscape-gardener. By becoming a friend of a number of islanders, particularly Bev McCoy, a traditional fisherman, he was given details of the closely guarded names of fishing grounds (Nash 2009, 2011) and other insider information.

9.7.2 Non-academic studies: P

Apart from scattered comments on the language, neither visitors nor residents have produced much significant work. There are a few P words in Rosalind Young's, account (1894) of Pitcairn's and as a leading community member and teacher would have been eminently qualified to provide an account of the language. Charles Hall, famous as the co-author of Nordhoff and Hall's "Pitcairn's Island" (1932), visited Pitcairn for two days in 1933. He coined the term Pitcairnese after his visit and characterized it as "a kind of vocal shorthand, seems to be composed mainly of English, but I have little doubt that many ancient Tahitian words and expressions, altered by time and use, would be found embedded in it. A

traveler with several months to spend on the island would find an interesting subject for study” (1934: 62).

In 1932, Charles Edward and Elsa Chauvel spent three months on Pitcairn shooting material for their film *In the Wake of the Bounty* (released March 1933). Their daughter Suzanne grew up with tales of their adventures on Pitcairn and, in 1984, joined a group of Norfolk Islanders for a three-month visit to Pitcairn. Her well-researched book (Chauvel Carlsson 2000) contains an informative chapter on “Speaking Pitkern”.

9.7.3 Non-academic studies: N

Flint (1964b) provided a brief survey of Montgomery (1896), Hunt (1914a, 1914b), Brazier (1920), Wiltshire (1939), Holland (1946) and Batty (1957). His overview is based on a detailed (unpublished) study, in which he tested the 250+ expressions listed by these six authors in formal interviews with three Norfolk Islander informants. His aim was to ascertain their reliability and to identify expressions that had gone out of use. His findings were rather startling. He noted a great deal of uncritical copying and occasionally errors were simply passed on such as Bishop Montgomery’s translation of *utlan*, *uclun* ‘people of the island’ instead of ‘we Islanders’ or his misspelling *wa-oo-loo* ‘dropping to pieces’ for *ma-oo-lo*. Sometimes later writers corrected earlier ones as when the Revd. Batty (1957) corrects nine of the words of the journalist Holland’s list (1946). On other occasions new errors were introduced such as when Montgomery’s *sem-is-ways* ‘very odd’ becomes ‘very good’ in Chaplain Brazier’s vocabulary (1920) and subsequently in Wiltshire’s account (1939).

There are a number of other brief studies undertaken by Australian administrators on Norfolk Island that have come to light during my archival research.

9.7.3.1 Charles Robert Pinney

Pinney served as the Administrator of Norfolk Island from 1933 to 1937. He was not popular with the Norfolk Islanders and showed little respect for their language and culture (Hoare 1996). Towards the end of his incumbency he commissioned two local girls, Audrey and Olga Robinson, to make a list of N words. He was supplied with a neatly written document featuring about 200 words, which was rediscovered by Maev O’Collins, who gave me a copy of this list.

The fact that his informants had only compiled a very short wordlist was taken by Pinney as proof of the inferiority of the language, as can be seen from his correspondence (see appendix 9.4).

9.7.3.2 Sir Charles Rosenthal

Rosenthal, who was the administrator from December 1937 to December 1945, appears to have had a particular interest in N. He was popular among the Islanders and continued to live on Norfolk subsequent to his retirement.

Rosenthal collected a brief list of words, which was sent to Colonel A.R.L. Wiltshire, who published a paper titled “The local dialect of Norfolk and Pitcairn Islands” (Wiltshire 1939). There is considerable overlap between Rosenthal’s list (see appendix 9.5) and the longer list published by Wiltshire.

9.7.3.3 Beryl Nobbs-Palmer

Beryl Nobbs-Palmer was born on Norfolk Island in 1922 but left in 1939, only to return to settle in 1976, having spent the intermediate years in various Pacific territories. This meant that she had not experienced the day-to-day politics, though she had a deep attachment to Norfolk Island and N. In 1986, she produced a dictionary with the objective “of preserving an historic patois which we are proud to claim as part of our heritage” (1986: ii). It contains about 800 entries with naturalistic sentences illustrating their use. There is a tape with all examples up to the letter “S” spoken by her not long before her death in 1998.

Apart from compiling a largely accurate and comprehensive list of N words, Nobbs-Palmer also devised a way of representing them in writing. Whilst not entirely consistent, her solution to spelling the language has many followers as it is based on the traditional way of writing N.

9.7.3.4 Alice Buffett

Alice Buffett (1931–2017) has been portrayed as follows:

Alice Buffett, a Norfolk Island parliamentarian and Australian-trained linguist, developed a codified grammar and orthography for the language in the 1980s, assisted by Dr Donald Laycock, an Australian National University academic. Their book, *Speak Norfolk Today*, was published in 1988. This orthography has won the endorsement of the Norfolk Island government, and its use is becoming prevalent (The source provided for this statement allegedly is David Buffett, *An Encyclopedia of the Norfolk Island Language*, 1999, whose real author is Alice Buffett).¹

This Wikipedia account is far from accurate. The endeavours made by Alice Buffett need to be understood in the context of complex political, family and

¹ <[wikipedia.org/wiki/Norfolk_language](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norfolk_language)>.

interpersonal relations on Norfolk Island as well as her sense of frustration with having had to terminate her teacher training for family reasons. Nobbs-Palmer's publication of a dictionary in 1986 and its endorsement of the Society of Pitcairn Islanders must have been a source of annoyance, and Nobbs-Palmer's work is only grudgingly acknowledged in her *Encyclopedia*: "Tribute is herewith paid to the late Beryl Nobbs for the valuable cultural information contained in her interesting book" (1999: xi). This is a rather bland statement considering the amount of this information that ended up in Buffett's *Encyclopedia*.

Community views about Alice Buffett as a person are divided, as are the views about her language work. It is difficult to see why she single-handedly hired Laycock to help her devise an orthography at a time when the traditional norms of writing N had become crystallized.

Alice Buffett portrayed her work on N as the definitive truth and consequently there never was an informed debate about its worth during her lifetime. To outsiders who wanted to do research on N she set herself up as the authority and at the same time discouraged them to seek information from others she did not approve of. Having said this, there can be no doubt that Alice Buffett has played an important role in keeping N alive and that she inspired a number of community members to write in it.

Alice Buffett was not a linguist. Her attending a short introductory course to linguistics hardly warrants the descriptor "an Australian-trained linguist". Her "Encyclopedia" of 1999 bears this out. It actually is a revised and enlarged version of Buffett and Laycock (1988), though Laycock is no longer listed as co-author or copyright holder. Part 1, Orthography, was largely the work of Laycock. As regards part 2, Grammar, Buffett later acknowledged: "The grammatical analysis section of the book, Part 2, was grammatically analysed by Dr. Laycock, totally funded by me" (Buffett 2012: 1).

Part 3 of the "Encyclopedia" is a 116-page dictionary, begun in 1991. It received some help from linguists at the Australian National University but there is little evidence of collaboration with other Islanders. The dictionary draws on the work by Harrison and Nobbs-Palmer, but also includes many ad hoc loans from English. It violates some of the basic principles of dictionary making, including:

- representing allegro pronunciations of word groups as single words²
- grouping homophones under a single entry

² For example, several lexical or grammatical words can, in fast pronunciation become a single phonetic word. Instead of spelling *saf el du* 'the ocean is calm' Buffett has a single entry *safeldu*.

- improbable etymologies
- inaccurate information about word class

In spite of much promotion the dictionary is far less useful than Nobbs-Palmer's and continues to be accused by many older speakers of not representing their language.

Alice Buffett's contribution to the orthography began with a Churchill Fellowship spent at the Australian National University, where she developed a standard writing system for N with major input from Don Laycock, as is evidenced in the theoretical discussion paper (Laycock and Buffett n.d.) and acknowledged by Buffett (1999: 73): "After over twenty years of thinking about it, here the system is for everyone, along with my love and my gratitude to Don Laycock for showing me how to go about it". Given Laycock's overwhelming influence on its design, I prefer to refer to it as the Laycock-Buffett rather than Buffett-Laycock orthography. Incidentally, contra Wikipedia, this system was not officially endorsed by the Norfolk Island Government. In Buffett (2012), we are informed of Buffett's own view that "it would take probably the best part of 30 years for the written system to be fully accepted by relevant educational and governmental authorities officially recognise and adopt (sic)". There are many indications that the "system" is not becoming prevalent.

There remains a strange tension between the perceived and actual importance of Alice Buffett's work. Because her 1999 Encyclopedia remains readily available, it continues to be used by both students and established linguists as a major source of information, in spite of its questionable quality.

9.7.3.5 Rachel Nebauer (also Nebaur, Nebauer-Borg, Nebaur-Borg, Borg)

Rachel Nebauer is Alice Buffett's niece and has spent a great deal of time with her as a carer. This, of course, means that she is affected by the complex family politics of the island and her work remains underappreciated. She has a passionate interest in the language and culture of Norfolk Island and has collected extensive notes on the lexicon of N, which she has kindly shared with me. She has been teaching N at the school and collaborated with Trish Magri's *Living Library* project,³ which features numerous interviews (often in N) with Norfolk Islanders. Many of her valuable observations on Norfolk culture and language have featured in Norfolk Online News).⁴

³ <<http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-awas-salan/page/19/>>.

⁴ An example is <<http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/non-a-P-norfk-perspective/page/14/>>.

Rachel Nebauer has published a collection of short stories in N (2011), which contains a highly informative glossary. She is also one of the co-authors of a booklet on old words of N (Mühlhäusler, Nebauer-Borg and Coleman 2012).

9.7.3.6 Greg Quintal

Gregory Gilbert Francis was born in 1918 and died in 2015. Greg Quintal was passionate about Norfolk culture and language and during his life compiled a large collection of notes on the language, both individual lexical items and anecdotes. His knowledge of the language was immense as was his interest in it. I was fortunate to have been one of his friends and spent many afternoons on his *randa* ‘veranda’ and in his garden. He gave me full access to his large filing cabinets of notes and has helped me get information about expressions I did not fully understand. I have prepared an edited vocabulary and a collection of his many wisecracks, as yet not published. All his notes were in traditional writing and he rarely failed to remind me to burn Alice Buffett’s book, which in his view, did not represent the language. Many of Greg Quintal’s expressions have found their way into *Uckun’s Norfolk* (Mühlhäusler, Nebauer-Borg and Coleman 2012).

9.7.4 Academic studies of P

9.7.4.1 Harry Lionel Shapiro

Shapiro (1902–1990) was awarded a graduate fellowship from Yale in 1923 to pursue a genetic study of the descendants of the mutineers of *HMS Bounty*. Although the official website of the Columbia University of New York⁵ states that “In 1923, at the age of 21, he spent a year on Pitcairn Island studying the descendants of the Mutineers of the HMS Bounty, which resulted in his first publication”, Shapiro himself (1936: xiv) reports that his plan to conduct fieldwork on Pitcairn Island came to naught when he failed to get permission to land there. His vessel then proceeded to New Zealand from where he went to Norfolk Island. During five months there, he managed to obtain sufficient information for his thesis to establish his reputation as a physical anthropologist and expert on questions of race and racial mixture. Shapiro felt that Norfolk was not the real thing and that “the Norfolk Islanders were not Pitcairn Islanders” (xv). He finally made it to Pitcairn on 24th December 1934 and after a very busy time making anthropometric studies he left on 1st January 1935. Shapiro had discovered on Norfolk Island that (1936: 186) “a dialect was in use among the descendants of the

5 <<https://anthropology.columbia.edu/department-history/harry-l-shapiro>>.

mutineers when I found that traces of it were still preserved on Norfolk Island among the older inhabitants. But I could recover only very little of it there". This probably reflects that a Harvard and Yale educated American Jew was not the kind of person in whose presence or to whom the Norfolk Islanders would have spoken their language. P on Pitcairn Island, by contrast, was far more visible. In a separate chapter of his 1936 book titled "Another Language", he notes that the children hardly spoke anything else and that the adults preferred to use it among themselves when no strangers were about. Shapiro complains, "It is a matter for regret that no previous visitor left any accurate notes on Pitcairnese, to distinguish it from its mother tongues, or bothered to record the impressions of its character" (184). He made his own impressions clear: "But whatever its precise origin, the Pitcairn dialect today consists of mispronounced English and Tahitian words with a spattering of coined words, the whole employed in a degenerate English syntax" (186).

During "intervals between other more pressing work" (1936: 136) Shapiro compiled a list of about 50 P words and expressions but "not having special linguistic knowledge, I was unable to record what I heard in the approved phonetic symbols".

9.7.4.2 Henry Evans (Harry) Maude

Maude (1906–2006) read anthropology at the University of Cambridge before entering the colonial service. He spent a year on Pitcairn Island charged with the re-organization of the system of government (1940). This included a reform of the education system, which was implemented after the end of the War. He is indirectly responsible for the appointment of Moverley as the first secular teacher.

Maude produced a short list of P expressions located in the special collection of the Barr Smith Library (University of Adelaide) and he contributed a chapter on the "History of Pitcairn Island" to Ross and Moverley (1964a). He also contributed a much shorter chapter titled "Some quotations about the Pitcairnese language", which has been widely used by subsequent researchers and given much more kudos than is warranted by Maude's own modest characterization as "a few selected early quotations that may be of interest" (Maude 1964b: 118).

9.7.4.3 Albert W. Moverley

The dustjacket of the first and still very influential book concerned with P, *The Pitcairnese Language* (1964), lists Ross and Moverley as its authors though on the hard binding only Ross's name appears. On the title page inside, Ross and Moverley with Schubert, Maude, Flint and Gimson are listed as authors. The chapter on

“History of the Pitcairnese language” does not mention an author but in all likelihood draws on the notes Moverley made whilst preparing his Ph.D.

Albert W. Moverley was born in New Zealand in 1908 and obtained a degree in Maori history in 1928 and therefore had a good knowledge of this language. His Master’s degree was followed by a diploma in education which also included some phonetics (Ross and Moverley 1964: 7). In 1948, he went to Pitcairn Island as education officer until 1951.

In 1950, Alan Ross of the University of Birmingham had read a news item in the Times (April 2nd) regarding “a form of spoken shorthand” that had developed on Pitcairn. The author of this article referred him to Moverley, and Ross discovered that Moverley had done some work on the language and was interested in pursuing the topic further. In 1952, Ross accepted him as a Ph.D. student. In his first year of candidature, he made a lot of progress but he unfortunately died in 1953. His plans to publish a joint book on the language with Ross thus had come to a sudden end. Ross notes that the only two contributions to the 1964 volume are the text, recorded on his return from Pitcairn with a 15-year-old girl in New Zealand and the glossary (Ross and Moverley 1964: 9). Whatever else Moverley had drafted for his thesis has never been published. Though given much praise, the two contributions by Moverley are flawed by his methodology, resulting from the fact that he was regarded by most Pitcairn Islanders as a hostile outsider. Those who worked with him again were at the periphery of island society, the kind of informants Labov (1973) categorized as “lames”.

Ross’s preface to Ross and Moverley (1964: 12) mentions the long and happy evenings Moverley and his wife spent in the company of two Pitcairners, Hyacinth May Clarke and Floyd McCoy, “discussing the Island language”. Young (2016: 241) comments that Moverley associated with “a set of Pitcairners who had stronger ties to the outside world including the unpopular police inspector Floyd McCoy, who had been away from the island for decades and had married an American and Hyacinth (née Warren), who was married to the American Roy Clark. This group of people like the Moverleys lived in superior houses and employed modern technology. They were regarded as *‘making big’*”.

Relations with most of the remainder of the community were fraught. Moverley’s insensitive ravings against the Seventh Day Adventist Church, his burning their school materials and his banning the use of P at the school made him an unpopular outsider. The scant collection of materials on P he managed to obtain reflect this. His word list is full of entries translated as ‘kind of fish’ or ‘kind of tree’. There are names of common objects but no trace of emotion words, sensitive words or culturally important eponyms. The text on his tape is staged: a schoolmaster asking his pupil to name fish, shellfish, food, basket weaving, cooking and housework.

Moverley compiled a list of about 450 P words. About half of them are in ordinary English spelling, the other half in his version of phonetics. The words are included in the somewhat larger (706 entries) glossary of Ross and Moverley (1964) but the phonetic transcriptions differ considerably. It would seem that Ross and Gimson did not always agree with Moverley's interpretation of P pronunciation. Moverley's word list was examined by Ross, who comments that (1964: 10) "A. W. certainly . . . bowdlerized the material". The list was further examined by Flint, who noted that Moverley incorporated Shapiro's list. Källgård (1993: 87) notes that the list contains no abusive or comparative expressions. Källgård also provides additional information for 274 items of the Ross and Moverley glossary, e.g. [lo:li:] 'wrinkled like an old orange' rather than just 'wrinkled'. Colleen Crane, a Norfolk Islander with whom I have collaborated for many years, visited Pitcairn Island for three months in 2013 to gather information on language and culture. She confirms that the wordlist compiled by Moverley contains numerous errors and omissions, reflecting the unwillingness of the Pitcairners to share their knowledge with him.

9.7.4.4 Alan Strode Campbell Ross

Alan Ross (1907–1980) was appointed to the chair of linguistics at the University of Birmingham in 1951. He had been trained in Germanic philology and worked in phonemics, theoretical linguistics and sociolinguistics. He's regarded as the first scholar to describe class differences in British English (U and non-U) and was particularly interested in varieties that deviated from proper English. This explains his initial interest in "Pitcairnese" (Ross 1960).

Upon Moverley's death in 1953, Ross felt that "the possibility of any serious linguistic work on the Island in the foreseeable future seems rather remote" (10) and decided to go ahead with the book he had planned to co-author with Moverley "solely on the basis of the material which Moverley had collected so assiduously and carefully". The fact that Flint was able to identify many of Moverley's words in N was seen as confirmation that the materials were "accurate and trustworthy", an opinion I cannot share.

To make up for the many gaps in his own knowledge, Ross approached a number of others (the historians Henry Evans Maude and Alaric Maude, Ernest Schubert, who was teacher on Pitcairn from 1958 to 1964, the phonetician Gimson and the linguist Flint) to write chapters on the history of Pitcairn and Norfolk, the social conditions on Pitcairn and the linguistics of Norfolk Island. Ross also undertook some studies of Tahitian in Paris in 1953 and corresponded with Mr R.G. White, a resident of Tahiti who was interested in the language.

Ross published his first paper on the language in 1958, dealing with the “pristine placenames of Pitcairn Island”. His findings were later included in Ross and Moverley (1964) as a separate chapter (170–188).

Ross's chapter on language' history (1964: 136–169) attempts to “describe and explain the philology of Pitcairnese by ascertaining how the linguistic features of these two very different languages (i.e. English and Tahitian) intermingled to give those of Pitcairnese” (1964: 136). Whilst containing a number of interesting details, it is a rather problematic chapter. Ross's philological approach lacked methods for handling language mixing. His appeal to contemporary contrastive linguistics and his views on the loss of features of educated English in informal vernacular speech do not compensate for the limitations of his approach. Notable is Ross's readiness to take perceived similarities between Tahitian and 'Pitcairnese' as evidence of Tahitian influence.

The reception of the volume was lukewarm. Buse (1965) accepts Ross's remarks on substratum influence but deplores the rather meagre text and the lack of syntactic analysis. This criticism is repeated in a review by Hall (1965) who, in addition, draws attention to the presence of features found in English-based creoles, among them the possessive genitive construction. Similar criticism is also in evidence in Turner (1968).

With all its shortcomings, Ross's publication is fascinating and was eagerly studied by the emerging sub-discipline of creolistics, including myself, who bought the book in 1971, whilst preparing an M.Phil. thesis on pidginization and simplification of languages at the University of Reading.

9.7.4.5 Ray Sanders

Ray Sanders succeeded Moverley as schoolteacher on Pitcairn, (1951 to 1953). During his incumbency he collected materials for a Master's thesis (1957). It contains a wealth of sociological and educational information. A brief appendix on language features a small number of compositions by school children, a list of about 40 expressions and some comments on language. Sanders appears to have been unsympathetic toward P and he approvingly quotes its characterization by Moverley in a public statement:

Because English is the predominant influence on the language, it is preferable to call it a dialect rather than a new language. Nevertheless, there is a leavening of Tahitian and possibly French, and other languages. Pitcairn has its own distinctive syntax; its tenses are almost the same as those of English, but its verb inflections are very different. You would not be able to understand it. I was amazed at the distortions and corruptions of English and Tahitian words. Some can be interpreted after close listening, others are recognizable even when set down in phonetic script (Sanders 1957: 49–50)

Sanders adopts a deficit view and notes that “the crudities of the English language have been incorporated into the Pitcairn dialect and few of its niceties remain” (51). In the introduction to his word list he characterises P as “a lilting baby talk” (288). Sanders makes no reference to any previous work on the language and his list of expression contain some items that had not been noted by other observers.

9.7.4.6 Anders Källgård

Källgård’s interest in Pitcairn Island and the Bounty saga was awakened by his philatelic interests. By the time he began to study for a degree in English he had read a great deal of what had been written about the island and he begun to correspond with its inhabitants. In a reflection on his research (2010: 3), Källgård quotes Ross in his introduction to Ross and Moverley (1964: 9) that the ideal person to adding to Moverley’s material would be “a member of the survey of English dialects who knew Tahitian very well”. Källgård’s own qualifications were “a Swedish student with limited linguistic knowledge and none whatsoever on Tahitian” (1964: 9). However, he had read Ross and Moverley’s volume in depth as well as Zettersten’s review (1966). Zettersten encouraged him to go to Pitcairn and provided him with advice on how to go about this. Källgård sailed to Australia for archival research in 1980 and from there went to Norfolk Island for six days. There he met Alice Buffett and acquired a copy of Shirley Harrison’s *Glossary* (1979). He then proceeded to Pitcairn where he spent three months recording the language. He appears to have had an excellent time in the field and was, unlike Moverley, popular with the Pitcairners:

Pitcairn was an exceptional experience. The 60 islanders were tremendously hospitable and I was given full support in my linguistic work. For example, a Pitcairnese wordlist was put up on the public noticeboard, and as soon as somebody came to think of a local word that was not on the list, he or she added it. I had on numerous occasions, extremely rewarding discussions on matters of linguistic interest with the islanders. Especially one of my main informants, Andrew Young, had an impressive knowledge of “the old days” and of “the old words” (Källgård 2010: 4)

Källgård became actively involved in helping Pitcairners appreciate and preserve their language and over the years his advice was sought on both medical matters and personal ones. Källgård spent another few months on Pitcairn with his family in 1996, this time as a medical doctor, though he managed to add to his collection of P words. His final visit in 2008 lasted only six days, leading a small party of Swedish travellers. He found a very different island, traumatized by the sex scandal of the late 1990s.

Though Källgård did not pursue an academic career in linguistics after his first visit, he continued to research and publish on P. The texts he had collected were to

join Zettersten's and Shirley Harrison's N recordings in a joint volume, but there were many issues the contributors were unable to agree on. In spite of his problematic approach to orthography, Källgård's work remains of great value. His publications are few, but they contribute to the limited body of information about P during a crucial period of its development. Unfortunately, like Ross and Moverley before him, he pays little attention to syntactic phenomena. Nevertheless, his writings:

- not only add more than 200 new lexical items to Ross and Moverley's list of around 600 but are supplemented by significant lexicological observations about lexical growth and attrition, semantic fields and etymology. Källgård was the first to recognize the importance of eponyms (1983: 83–85);
- provide a detailed account of the social and educational context in which P continues to change.

Perhaps most importantly, Källgård set an example of how to carry out ethical fieldwork by sharing his expertise with his informants, by acknowledging their contribution and by becoming an advocate for the community on many matters: using P language on stamps (1988: 5–7), making P a subject in the school (1993: 90–91, making it an official language with the official name Pitkern in 1996 and helping make the language a tool for reconciliation (2010).

9.7.4.7 Tony Liddicoat

Liddicoat obtained a Ph.D. on Norman French *d* from the University of Melbourne and is best known for his work in language teaching and planning. His sole foray into the linguistics of P was an unpublished undated paper on glottal stops in Pitcairn English. It is an analysis of Gimson's transcript of the Moverley tape, and information culled from Buffett and Laycock (1988). His only source of information on Tahitian was Krupa's (1982) rather superficial survey of the Polynesian languages. Liddicoat is not aware of Flint's transcriptions, which differ considerably from those made by Laycock, and he is unaware of the many pitfalls encountered by those who have investigated the glottal stop in Tahitian. These have been spelled out in great detail by White's letter to Flint, dated 30th July 1961. White noted that older sources variably ignore its existence or represent it with a number of symbols. White also noted⁶ that:

For many Polynesianists the glottal stop has been a philological concept rather than a phonological entity and has been inserted in texts by philological reconstruction rather

6 Uncatalogued letter to Flint located in Fryer Collection University of Queensland.

than by actual observation. Probably the resulting product is often more accurate than if they had tried to really observe. The general point of view seems to have been that it represented a lost consonant rather than that it represents a consonant that actually occurs.

Liddicoat makes no mention of Harrison's (1972) extensive comments on the glottal stop in P and N and her findings on the glottal stop in English dialects likely to have been spoken by the mutineers. Liddicoat's paper illustrates the dangers of working with a non-representative body of secondary phonetic representations and both his statistics and conclusions have little to tell us about the language.

9.7.4.8 Lars Ake Göthesson

Lars Ake Göthesson is a Swedish biologist who worked with the Centre for South Pacific Studies, Sydney. His main contribution to Pitcairn Island studies lies in his having provided an exhaustive account of the lifeforms found on the Pitcairn Islands. It appears that he never visited these islands but compiled all existing studies and extracted a systematic compilation. Of interest to linguists is that he provides the local names, their variants, history and etymology of Pitcairn flora and fauna. In this he was helped by Källgård, as he acknowledges in the introduction to *Plants of the Pitcairn Islands* (1997: 1). The thoroughness of his research is exemplary and confirms Flint's view of the value of such studies to linguistics.

Moverley's list contains an item [bu:rau] 'kind of tree'. This, in Ross's glossary becomes [pulaeu] *hibiscus tiliaceus* with the variant forms, *porou*, *parau*, *booroa* and [burau], derived from the Tahitian name of the same plant *purau*. Gothesson (1997: 249) adds a number of variant names and their sources, including [boo-rau], [borou], [brou] and [turau]. He also provides a range of English glosses such as 'beach hibiscus' and 'seacoast mallow' and the names of this plant in about 15 Oceanic languages, including Tahitian [purau]. His unpublished manuscript on fishes (2000) and insects (2001) are equally valuable sources for linguists. Of particular interest are the large number of lifeforms that have remained unnamed on Pitcairn (see Mühlhäusler 2003).

9.7.4.9 Markus Klingel

In 1999 Markus Klingel of the University of Freiburg produced a paper dealing with what Ross (1964: 164) had called "quite the most mysterious work in Pitcairnese", the first-person non-singular pronoun *ucklun/ aklan*. Klingel argues that this word came into being as an act of identity. He proposes the logical argument that it *ucklun* is etymologically derived from Scots 'our clan'. Flint had made this suggestion about 40 years earlier in his "Form-Meaning Reference List" (n.d.). Klingel argues that this pronoun can be traced to William

McCoy and his adoptive daughter Sully, the oldest of the first generation of children. ‘Our clan’ then became the label for Pitcairn-born children who used it as a marker of identity to distinguish themselves from the Tahitian women and the British interlopers. The question when this act of identity occurred remains disputed. Whilst Klingel would seem to date it around 1800, Laycock (1989) proposed that it occurred in 1831 in the wake of the Pitcairners’ temporary relocation to Tahiti.

9.7.4.10 David Mautz

David Mautz studied music, film and English linguistics at the University of Bremen, where he is a researcher and lecturer. In 2008, he submitted a Staatsexamen thesis on the topic of *Pitcairnese: When languages merge*. It is an ambitious project meant to show “when two or even more languages are ‘set out’ on a remote island, without being subject to noteworthy interferences from the outside world and given the chance to merge” (2018: 2).

Given the time at his disposal and the limited resources, he restricts himself to an analysis of the glossary in Ross and Moverley (1964), dismissing Källgård’s more comprehensive glossaries as possibly reflecting a later stage of development. He further limits his corpus to every fifth word in this glossary and proceeds to carry out a quantitative analysis to determine properties such as etymology, phonology, morphophonemic, morphological properties, and semantic classes. His findings are then subjected to a qualitative analysis with the aim to establish the relative importance of “creolization, language change and word formation” (46). Like Ross before him, he regards reduplication and zero-derivation as an index of Tahitian influence (51).

Some of Mautz’s methods are innovative and the thesis reads well, but it is marred by its heavy reliance on problematic data.

9.7.4.11 Josh Nash

After completing his Ph.D. on the toponyms of N in 2011 and subsequent research on this language at Adelaide, Josh Nash obtained a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of New England in 2014. Nash spent some time exploring P in the Australian and New Zealand diaspora. His main project, however, was a three-month fieldtrip to Pitcairn from May to August 2016. During this time, he collected a large number of language recordings as well as a photographic, ethnographic, and cultural landscapes database. He has now relocated to the University of Aarhus, where he hopes to analyse his copious data and do more extensive research on Pitcairn spoken in the diaspora.

As yet Nash has only published a small number of papers on P, including one on fishing ground names (Nash 2017). A particularly interesting paper (Nash 2016) deals with the question of the role of outsider linguists in a society that has a long tradition of being suspicious of outsiders. He writes that “I was required to carry out this documentation-cum-linguistic recovery within a situation where some people were not willing to talk to me because I was an outsider-writer-academic” (2016: 207).

A chapter jointly authored with Gibbs (Nash and Gibbs 2018) contains an interesting critique of the obsession of researchers with “ruin porn”, a fetishization of decaying objects, including languages. The authors contrast this with their own critical distance. Some of their observations have been discussed in much greater detail by Young (2016).

9.7.5 Academic studies of N

9.7.5.1 Sidney Baker

According to Ramson (1993),⁷ Sidney John Baker was born on 17th October 1912 in Wellington, New Zealand. He attended Victoria University College from 1930 to 1932, but did not graduate. He is described by Ramson as a philologist, and his love for language is manifested in a number of publications on New Zealand and Australian popular language. His best known *The Australian Language*, was first published in 1945. The revised 1966 edition includes a section on Norfolk Island Patois (1966: 338–341). He characterises it as “a form of pidgin or beach-la-mar” (1966: 338). His account is based on the “valuable research” of Wiltshire (1939) and includes a reproduction of Holland’s (1946) word list. Neither accounts receive a critical analysis and, given their limitations, Baker’s account remains equally problematic. However, as an internet search will show, it continues to be used as a source by a number of researchers.

9.7.5.2 Elwyn Flint

Elwyn Flint (1910–1983) left a small number of book chapters and papers and a large, mainly unpublished legacy of research notes on N, which are now housed in the Fryer collection of the University of Queensland.⁸

Flint obtained an M.A. in 1936 in learning and teaching foreign languages. He attended St. Francis’s Theological College and served as curate and army

⁷ <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/baker-sidney-john-sid-9411>>.

⁸ <https://www.library.uq.edu.au/fryerlibrary/ms/Flint/flint_cat_preface.html>.

chaplain. He was appointed a junior lecturer in English at the University of Queensland in 1946 and promoted to senior lecturer in 1958. He was known for his interest in contact varieties of English and a number of researchers documented varieties such as Palm Island Aboriginal English, under the auspices of his Dialect Survey of Queensland. In 1955, Flint visited Britain, where he became fascinated by Ross's Pitcairnese project. Ross invited him to contribute a chapter to his projected book on the language of Pitcairn Island.

Flint was able to visit Norfolk Island in 1957 and in the early 1960s. He arrived with a large amount of very cumbersome recording equipment. Jodie Williams, editor of *Traditions*,⁹ interviewed Ralph Holloway, the taxi driver who took Flint to his recording sessions. He comments on the enormous size of his apparatus and the need for an electric power supply, something which was not widely available on the island in those days. As a consequence, any hope to make surreptitious recordings (a practice considered unethical today) was unrealistic and recordings could only be made in houses that sported electricity, i.e. those of more affluent islanders. An unintended consequence was that given the complex family dynamics on Norfolk, the choice of informants was dictated by factors other than linguistic ones.

Flint's methodology was that which had become institutionalized in Australia by Capell (1965) and Wurm (1967) and codified in Nida (1947) and Samarin (1967). Among other assumptions, it was held that

- there is a clear distinction between language as a system and language as use;
- there is a natural progression from phonetic to phonemic, morphemic and syntactic analysis;
- the sentence is the largest unit of analysis, text and discourse properties were not investigated;
- linguistic description is a purely synchronic exercise.

In common with structuralist approaches to linguistics, field linguistics was not based on any explicit theory, though the implicit belief that by applying mechanical procedures one could arrive at an adequate description of any language was widespread. It also appears to be implicit in Flint's published work (1964: 202–204), where he spells out his indebtedness to the methods developed by dialect geographers.

Flint produced 17 tape recordings, involving 31 informants and amounting to a total of 75 minutes of audible texts. These have been freely shared with a

⁹ <norfolkislandmagazine.com/norfolk-language> (accessed 17/03/2017).

number of other scholars, including Ross, Harrison, Ingram, Nash and myself, and they are still played regularly on Radio Norfolk.

Flint got on well with the Islanders whom he regarded as cooperative and intelligent, but he remained an outsider. At the time outsider objectivity was regarded as a virtue. In getting his recordings, Flint ran into a problem. As long as he was present at the recording sessions the Islanders switched to English following their norms of interaction in the presence of mainlanders. He therefore left his apparatus with groups of Islanders and gave them instructions as to the topics he expected to have given him conservative Broad N. The conversations thus were “partly scripted, but largely spontaneous” (Frazer and Ingram 1993: 3). Flint (1964: 192) was well aware of the limitations of tape recordings and he supplemented this method with free observation, questionnaires and testing of the records of Ross, Moverley and a range of previous observers.

Flint produced detailed narrow phonetic transcripts with the help of his informants, an English translation and a version in an ad hoc orthography suited to English readers. Subsequently he compiled a comprehensive “Form-Meaning Reference List” of all the word types which include words and phrases that are arguably English, such as *money-making*.

Whilst glosses are provided with each entry in his reference list, they are often vague. Thus, [ap kantri] is glossed as ‘up-country’ rather than a specific area of Norfolk Island and [fr i:di] as ‘hostile’, ignoring the numerous other meanings of this word. Etymological or cultural information is provided for some words and incorporated in his surprisingly small list (about 90) of specifically N words in Ross and Moverley (1964). Subsequently, in collaboration with Ross and with the help of a paid informant (Mr. R. Gardner White, resident of Tahiti), Flint endeavoured to obtain etymological information on words of possible Tahitian origin, though his inquiries had only limited success.

Flint never progressed to morphological or syntactic analysis of his data. He took, however, an interest in some sociolinguistic aspects of the language, in particular the bilingualism he encountered and the role of English education at the school. Flint’s paper on diglossia (1979) is rendered problematic by the fact that his recordings were designed to elicit stable Broad N rather than the Modified N that was also in use in the late 1950s. Whilst the separation of functions between N and E is portrayed as having been relatively clear-cut in his recordings, this may not have been the social norm. In this paper Flint uses Wurm and Laycock’s (1961) well-known approach for determining intelligibility between varieties. His results suggest a range for English–N intelligibility between 32% and 80% depending on topic, grammar and other factors. Had he chosen topics that require insider knowledge, intelligibility would have dropped considerably.

With all its limitations, Flint's work remains a valuable source for researchers interested in the lexicon and phonetics of N. Much can be learnt from his expansive notes, manuscripts and correspondence with scholars in Britain, Australia and the Pacific.

9.7.5.3 Shirley Harrison

Shirley Harrison was born on Norfolk Island in 1930 as the daughter of Moresby "Moss" Buffett and Lilian Porter, who was an assistant teacher. Shirley grew up in Norfolk's isolated wooded interior (*up in ar stick*) and was home-taught. The family moved to NSW in 1942. Whereas her father was a fluent speaker of traditional N and very much interested in the language her mother insisted that the only language spoken in the household was to be English. Shirley never became an active user of the language, a matter of great regret to her. She studied linguistics at Macquarie University, where she completed her M.A. thesis on *The Language of Norfolk Island* in 1972, followed by Ph.D. thesis on *Variation in Present Day Norfolk Island Speech* in 1986.

Her M.A. thesis is concerned with traditional Broad N and consists of a detailed phonetic (articulatory and instrumental), phonological and morphosyntactic analysis. This is accompanied by a less detailed account of the external and internal development of the language and a glossary of core lexical items. Like other analysts, Harrison fails to see the central role of Edward Young in the formative years of the language. As Harrison points out in her Ph.D. thesis (1986: 4), her 1972 account is based almost exclusively on texts spoken by her father Moresby, a broad Norfolk speaker. Thus, "my study embraced the concept of an ideal speaker-hearer". Her method of analysis is traditional structuralist, in particular tagmemic, which was the dominant approach in early 1970s Australia. Three parts of her thesis have been published separately through Macquarie University and are available online.¹⁰ The glossary was published commercially on Norfolk Island in 1979, where it was criticized for its use of phonetic script. "It is a technical alphabet in which the characters indicate particular sounds, and looks like gibberish to anyone unfamiliar with it" (*The Norfolk Island News* Jan 21, 1980: 9). Much of the grammar of the language found its way into Buffett and Laycock (1988), though to Harrison's chagrin largely unacknowledged and in some instances distorted.

Harrison's extensive correspondence with other scholars was at first initiated by her, but by the mid-1970s she had made a name for herself and her advice

¹⁰ <<http://ndl.handle.net/1959.14/153187>>.

was sought. The bibliographical entries for P and N in Reinecke (et.al. 1975) were compiled by Harrison and a set of N sentences feature in Ian Hancock's (1987) survey.

A project that never came to fruition was a text volume for Manfred Görlach's *Varieties of English Around the World* text series. In an extensive correspondence between Harrison, Görlach and other potential contributors the reasons for the difficulties of this project become clear. In 1979, Görlach informed her that a second proposal for a N text volume had been submitted by Zettersten. After having corresponded with Zettersten and after having seen his draft, Harrison diplomatically informs Görlach (letter from 27th September 1979) that "our backgrounds and interest in Norfolk are completely different".

Harrison's 1986 Ph.D. reflects a conceptual reorientation, as it is underpinned by the progress made in the 1970s by sociolinguists and creolistics in dealing with code-mixing and variation. Instead of an ideal speaker-hearer, Harrison tries to focus on "the subject of variation in the linguistic practice of Norfolk Islanders" (1986: 4). Her analysis is based on 20+ naturalistic texts featuring speakers ranging from Broad N to anglicized varieties of Modified N to Norfolk English. All in all, she identifies five distinct types of speech behaviour. The once stable diglossic behaviour has given way, not to a continuum as postulated for a number of creoles, but to a complex array of processes labelled "simple code-merging", "complex code-merging" and "code-blending". Some findings were summarized in Harrison (1985: 132). Here, Harrison takes issue with the notion of "speech community", which is used in dozens of different meanings in sociolinguistic literature: "on the basis of such variable speech and attitudes as have developed in recent times, it seems that the notion of speech community has ceased to be a satisfactory means of characterizing the speech habits of present-day Norfolk Islanders" (1985: 142).

Shirley Harrison's long illness and death in the late 1990s prevented her from making her findings known to a wider public. She left a large body of notes, recordings, and letters, now located at the Norfolk Island Museums. Young (2016a) has analysed some of Harrison's letters in his dissertation. Harrison's work, together with that of Flint's, remains the most reliable 20th century account of N, though most researchers have underutilized them.

9.7.5.4 Arne Zettersten

Zettersten (1934–2015) graduated from the University of Lund in 1956 and was appointed lecturer in English phonetics in 1958. Though trained in philology, he subsequently turned his attention to the study of insular varieties of English. His best-known publication on this topic is *The English of Tristan da Cunha* (1969).

Zettersten had become fascinated with Ross and Moverley's (1964) account of "Pitcairnese". In 1966, he published a paper in which he surveyed their work. He deemed available records insufficient and suggests (1966: 398) "that much could no doubt be gained from new recordings". He therefore went to Norfolk Island in 1970 to make his own recordings. The quality of Zettersten's recordings and his interpretation of them is mixed. As a total outsider he was given a variety of Norfolk English with some N expressions thrown in rather than either Broad or Modified N. However, Zettersten managed to obtain Flint's 17 recordings in exchange for his *Tristan da Cunha* tapes (letter from Flint to Harrison dated 2nd April 1981). Zettersten transcribed them in a "modified standard orthography" (Zettersten 1981: 3).

An analysis of his own and Flint's tapes was published as "Studies in the Norfolkese language Part I" in 1981. There never was a Part II. Apart from the transcripts there is a brief morphological analysis and a word list of 85 items. Both are singularly disappointing. Zettersten manages to misrepresent the difference between the *-s* and *fer* "genitive", and the pronoun system. He ignores the difference between tense and aspect (53–55), including the important distinction between *ser* and *ess* with predicative adjectives (53). No mention is made of syntactic properties of N. His brief wordlist includes English loan words such as *billy-can* and *lantana* and provides incomplete or wrong translations as in *tarler* 'swamphen' instead of 'taro'.

Unaware of the limitations of his work, in 1979 he approaches Görlach, who in his reply (dated 12th September 1979) expresses his astonishment that Zettersten had remained unaware of Shirley Harrison's writings and in diplomatic language expresses his concern with Zettersten's transcriptions: "Your transcription adds quite a lot of information to the normal transcription of Flint's dialogues. But I sometimes wonder how the alphabetised version is arrived at, since there do not appear to be fixed rules for a phonetic nor an etymological rendering".

As regards Zettersten's own texts, Görlach (1979) notes: "The two interviews made by yourself are of course quite different from Flint's showing as they do very little Broad Norfolk, lexically and syntactically, and only traces of Norfolk phonology".

Görlach points out that "Mrs. Harrison now has Professor Flint's consent to use his material" and he urges Zettersten to agree to producing a jointly authored text collection with her. There is a long and fraught correspondence between Harrison and Zettersten. Attached to a letter from Zettersten dated 25th May 1981 is a draft contract for Harrison to sign that she agreed "to cooperate on an edition of Norfolkese and Pitcairnese texts". The letter offers Harrison access to Zettersten's materials "only if we agree on a joint publication of texts for the series edited by Manfred Görlach". Shirley Harrison was not inclined to

sign. Meanwhile, Zettersten had begun to work with Anders Källgård, a student from the University of Gothenburg, who went to Pitcairn in 1980 to record more texts. In a letter dated 21st May 1984, Källgård mails Harrison the spelling conventions he and Zettersten proposed, i.e. adopting English spellings where possible, limiting IPA transcriptions and providing as few translations as possible. Harrison replied that “I do not favour the use of your spelling conventions for the transcription of the Norfolk texts. I feel that it misinterprets the character of the language . . . I assume that the transcription adopted should indicate as clearly as possible the characteristics which distinguish Norfolk from English”. The correspondence between Harrison and Zettersten petered out around 1986 and the project of a text volume was abandoned.

9.7.5.5 Donald C. Laycock

Don Laycock was born in 1936. He obtained his first degree from the University of Newcastle (NSW). He enrolled for a Ph.D. in Stephen Wurm’s newly established department of Pacific Linguistics at the Australian National University in 1959 and graduated in 1962. He remained there until his premature death in 1988. Laycock is best known for his descriptive and comparative work on the languages of Papua New Guinea, but as Wurm pointed out in his obituary:¹¹

His immediate linguistic interests comprised sociolinguistics; the description and classification of languages of the New Guinea area and Australia as well as of pidgin languages; lexicography; language contacts; linguistic change; semantics; language use and many related areas, such as deliberate interference in their own languages by speakers in the New Guinea area and Australia; artificial languages, linguistic games and many others. In many of these fields of study he contributed materially to theoretical knowledge as well as extending the concept of linguistic theory into areas which have largely been neglected by linguistic theoreticians over the past 30 years.

When it came to description, Laycock remained a conservative structuralist, drawing on tagmemic approaches, in particular phonemics. It is because of his interest in pidgins that in 1972 he became one of my supervisors for my thesis on the history and development of Tok Pisin. My position as student and friend on the one hand makes me a privileged observer, as I am very familiar with Don’s strengths and limitations.

Laycock’s interest in N is accidental rather than a consequence of his research interests. In 1985, Alice Buffett visited Wurm’s department and Laycock played a major role in bringing her Churchill fellowship project of a standard writing system to completion. The proposed broad phonetic/quasi phonemic

¹¹ <oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/laycock-donald-clarence>.

writing system draws on Laycock's experience with writing systems for Pacific languages, European national languages and Tok Pisin. Buffett employed Laycock to come to Norfolk Island in October 1986 to help her finalize the writing system and to complement it with a grammatical description. Don initially was reluctant to go, suggesting Shirley Harrison to be a more suitable candidate, but eventually was convinced that in the circumstances, he should do the job. He sensed that, because the invitation came from Alice Buffett and not from the Island government, he was about to enter into a contentious position and he certainly did "not wish to get embroiled in Island politics" (Young 2016: 285). Whereas he had managed to avoid local politics during his numerous fieldtrips to Papua New Guinea, this was not possible on Norfolk Island. Alice Buffett was not universally liked on Norfolk Island both for her politics and for other reasons. She had employed Laycock without consulting with any islanders other than Shirley Harrison. Harrison, in a letter to Laycock (dated 17th May 1987) complains that "I found it surprising when, at the beginning of her project, she did not contact me". Alice Buffett probably provided Laycock, with only such information as was useful for her project and withheld other information as she saw fit. After all, this is the Polynesian way of dealing with outsiders.

Laycock was hired to do a technical job and he assumed that a 1950s phonemic approach was adequate. Importantly, he did not consider the complexities of a highly variable phonetology as described by Harrison (1972, 1986) and ignored Flint's studies on this topic. In her private correspondence, Harrison critiqued many of Laycock's choices:

The orthography was becoming standardized in a form beyond her control, the product of a collaboration between scientists and islanders other than her own. Laycock acknowledged her criticisms and suggested that he had his own qualms about some of Alice Buffett's ideas, too. But 'an orthography doesn't have to be absolutely perfect, just workable, and this one is,' he wrote. 'We will see how it settles down in usage' (Young 2016: 288).

Ignoring Harrison's work on orthography and phonetics was one thing, ignoring the longstanding informal norms of writing N had far more consequences than scholarly disagreements. Fay Bataille had taught N at the school since 1972, using her own adaptation of traditional writing, Ena Ette Christian had published her poetry in 1986 and Nobb-Palmer's dictionary had appeared in the same year. Laycock drafted a scathing review of this dictionary, which fortunately was never published. It strengthened Alice Buffett's determination to push ahead with "her" orthography. Harrison objected to "the very derisive tone that you adopt" (draft of letter to Laycock, dated 30th June 1987).

Finally, Laycock did not consider other linguists' proposals for a workable writing system, in particular those of Flint (n.d.) and Shirley Harrison who, as a

trained linguist and Norfolk Islander felt poorly treated. She had emphasized the advantages of her own approach in her correspondence with Zettersten and Källgård. “Harrison, of course, was devoted to her own system, and stood to lose if another one was adopted” (Young 2016: 286).

Whereas the orthography was the result of close collaboration with Alice Buffett, Laycock’s grammatical description of the language combined Harrison’s (1972) account with his own generalizations. In a number of letters, Harrison not only indicates that she would like an acknowledgement of her work, but also expresses her misgivings that Laycock had not represented traditional Broad N, the variety that most Norfolk Islanders wished to see preserved. She also objected to the method used. Much of Laycock’s work consisted of “looking at your [her] sentences, then composing sentences of the same type (taking wild guesses that they might be acceptable in Norfolk), then checking them with Alice” (letter dated 15th April 1987). “Thus, Norfolk was translated from field interview into recording, from recording into transcription, and from transcription into field interview, and then again into another orthography” (Young 2016: 286).

Harrison objected to this approach in her correspondence with Laycock and she comments that “many of your examples suggest an idiolect, which employs many unacceptable forms and provides incorrect meaning of given expressions” and “a whole range of items are not illustrated satisfactorily” (draft letter, dated 30th June 1987). Laycock largely ignored her criticism and Buffett remained silent. “I haven’t heard from Alice”, Harrison told Laycock after he sent her a draft of the book, explaining that it “may have a lot to do with the parochial rivalry that you may have noticed exists between Norfolk Islanders” (draft letter, dated 14th May, 1987).

But Laycock kept up his interest in the language until he became seriously ill in 1987. He wrote a couple of socio-historical articles, based primarily on the sources mentioned in Maude’s (1964) brief survey of previous work and the contributors to Ross and Moverley (1964). He wrote a journal article on the “Status of Norfolk” (1989) and a *Festschrift* chapter on variation (1990), which repeats some of the arguments of his earlier article. His principal concern was the contentious issue of the language’s ontology and categorization.

Laycock argues that the early records suggest that the languages of Pitcairn were English, Tahitian Pidgin English and Tahitian (1990: 622), ignoring the important St. Kitts connection. He further claims that 90% of its grammar and lexicon is English, a claim to which Harrison strongly objected. Problematically, he denies N the status as a full language:

The lexical deficiencies of P-N are such, in fact, that the language can hardly be said to have advanced much beyond the jargon stage. The many texts given by Harrison (1984)

show how difficult it is for even fluent speakers of P-N to carry on a conversation without the use of words that the speakers acknowledge to be 'English.' I think the lexicon of PN has always been parasitic on English, since PN speakers have always been, in my view, bilingual (Laycock 1989: 617).

Laycock argues that N is not a creole but "a mixed language which has been constantly parasitic on English" (1989: 617). Because of its putative grammatical dependence on English and its putative lexical impoverishment N thus does not qualify as a full language. Laycock consequently characterized N as a kind of 'code' or 'jargon', a language whose purpose was to separate insiders from outsiders. In his view it was, "a deliberate creation of adults, a secret language, designed to exclude non-Islanders. The technical term for such a language is 'cant'" (1989: 625).

Laycock distinguishes traditional N from the variety labelled "modified Norfolk" by Harrison (1986), which, in his view "is, in fact, not 'modified Norfolk' but modified English." He sent a draft of his status paper to Harrison, who disagreed with both his methods and his conclusions. As Young (2016: 290) observes:

Such was the rough-and-tumble language of academic disagreement. Harrison wrote back in kind, deploying her expertise and the language of linguistic science to counter Laycock's assertions. She, too, had read the same historical sources, and argued from them that outsider contact with the island during its first decades was far too infrequent to merit the construction of a private jargon. Moreover, while she was the first to argue that expressions of Norfolk were fluid, giving rise to the "modified" forms she had spent a half decade recording, "Broad" Norfolk had remained remarkably consistent over the past six generations – it was, in her words, "an exceptionally stable language which has maintained as many Tahitian and English dialect features from the time of its origin". Moreover, she said, Laycock's assertion that her doctoral work described an easily acquired modification of English was misplaced. "I think it unfortunate and misleading to apply 'instant Norfolk' to modified Norfolk patterns," she wrote. "It completely ignores the interesting and difficult question of explaining how the modified patterns (and they are various) have come about." Rather, she implied that Laycock and Buffett were delegitimizing the language. By classifying P-N as a cant, by calling "modified Norfolk" "instant Norfolk," and even by choosing to call their book *Speak Norfolk Today*, they were discounting the legitimacy of the island's language as a unique, sophisticated, and autochthonous form. "Your approach almost seems to give support to the old view that pidgins and creoles are such simple, inferior forms of language that they are not worth much attention".

Laycock at that stage was too ill to reply. His correspondence and notes on N regrettably were cleared out of his office out after his death.

9.7.5.6 Andrea Gleißner

Andrea Gleißner studied at the University of Regensburg, one of the centres of creole studies in Germany and presented an ambitious M.A. thesis on *The*

Dialect of Norfolk Island in 1997. Her work with Manfred Görlach and Edgar Schneider on the *Englishes around the World* project had familiarised her with the main issues of creole linguistics and the focus of her thesis was a comparison with other English-based Creoles to ascertain shared typological properties and history. Her thesis surveys a large amount of sources. Unfortunately, Gleißner, in spite of her qualities as a researcher, never had the opportunity to do fieldwork and she no longer works in academic linguistics. Comments on specific aspects of her work can be found in chapters 5 and 6.

9.7.5.7 John Ingram

John Ingram lectures in phonetics and linguistics at the University of Queensland and is known for his efforts to preserve and make user-friendly the Flint papers held by his university and his extensive research into the phonetics of a range of languages. He co-authored two papers on the phonetics of N, one with Carolyn Frazer (1993) which examines the acoustic qualities of N vowels and their possible historical provenance. The other is a chapter with Mühlhäusler on Norfolk Island-Pitcairn English phonetics and phonology in which he provides an instrumental analysis with data collected by Flint and data collected by Mühlhäusler 45 years later (Ingram and Mühlhäusler 2004).

9.7.5.8 Peter Mühlhäusler

Although I am known for once having reviewed a book of mine (Mühlhäusler 1992), this section was not written to evaluate my work on N nor do I wish to be the fox that praises its own tail, as a Dutch proverb has it. Rather, I want to make explicit some of my background, assumptions and methods. I was born in Freiburg (Black Forest) and spent much of my childhood in the mountains of the Black Forest. I identify as Alemannic, which is one of the reasons why I am passionate about the preservation of small languages and cultures. I was educated in a number of linguistic traditions.

During my four years at Stellenbosch (1966–1969) I was taught Dutch structuralism, transformationalism and historical linguistics of Afrikaans. The latter exposed me to the field of contact linguistics and creolistics, though students of Afrikaans were strongly discouraged from reading Valkhoff's book (1966) on the creole character of Afrikaans. A major influence on my approach to linguistics was Rudie Botha's critique of transformationalism from the perspective of philosophy of science. During my studies for an M.Phil. at the University of Reading (1970–1972) I specialized in advanced grammatical theory and sociolinguistics. I was taught by eminent scholars such as Peter Matthews, Frank Palmer and David Crystal. The young Peter Trudgill taught me Labovian

sociolinguistics and became the supervisor of my thesis on *Pidginization and Simplification of Language*. From 1972 to 1976, I worked for a doctorate on Tok Pisin at the Australian National University under the guidance of Stephen Wurm, Don Laycock, Tom Dutton, Bert Voorhoeve and Darrell Tryon. My research included 15 months of fieldwork in rural and remote Papua New Guinea and a couple of weeks with old Melanesian plantation workers in Western Samoa. My supervisory team was an ideal combination of fieldwork experience and knowledge of Pacific pidgins and all of them were academically very demanding. My Ph.D. on the *Growth and structure of the lexicon of New Guinea Pidgin* combines a socio-historical account with the linguistics of a complexity changing derivational morphology. At this point, I kept historical and structural development separate, something I subsequently abandoned. In 1976 I was appointed by C.-J. N. Bailey, known for his variationist/quantum linguistics, to the position of “creolist” at the Technical University of Berlin. Bailey’s contention was that all linguistic variation can be accounted for by language internal structural factors alone. However, my own experience, as was that of other researchers, has been that languages are a lot messier and that implicational scaling can never account for the full range of variants. My conclusion was that structural and other parameters need to be integrated. My time with my integrational linguistics colleagues and students in Oxford enabled me to see how this could be done.

From 1979 to 1992, I was the University Lecturer in General Linguistics in the University of Oxford and Fellow of Linacre College. Roy Harris introduced me to integrational linguistics, which treats all meaningful human activity as an integrated system and emphasises that verbal messages are processed contemporaneously with other meaning-making processes. I developed an approach to ecolinguistics, which considers both the ecology of speaking and speaking about ecological matters, the latter together with my college colleague Rom Harré, the University Lecturer in the Philosophy of Science.

I became Foundation Professor of Linguistics at the University of Adelaide in 1993, where I set up a programme for the maintenance and revival of Aboriginal languages. I started to work on N in 1995 and have since carried out 28 field trips to Norfolk Island. As I was working in integrational and eco-linguistics, I felt that a slow approach was necessary. This feeling was reinforced by the realization that N, unlike some modern national languages, was intertwined with the cultural and natural ecology of the island. Such integration is usually very difficult to see for an outsider, and over many years I made an effort to understand enough of the history, genealogy, natural life forms and cultural practices to see things from an insider’s perspective. My aim has been to change from a participant observer to a participant which, after more than 20 years, I trust to have partially achieved.

My initial interest was to develop an empirical ecolinguistic approach to the lexicon, which focuses on the question how languages lexically adapt to new cultural and natural environments. Using the example of names for natural kinds, I argued that the absence of names in the early history of the language created a mismatch between what people had to talk about and manage and what they actually could talk about (Mühlhäusler 1996, Mühlhäusler and Stratford 1999). An empirical study of plant names on Pitcairn (Mühlhäusler 2003) suggested a strong correlation between plant species remaining unnamed and their extinction. Subsequently I came to similar conclusions after examining Norfolk Island bird species and their names (Mühlhäusler 2008b).

A second theme in my research has been to document the development of N's structural properties (Mühlhäusler 2004, 2013a) and in particular, derivational morphology. To date, I have published a preliminary study on lexical reduplication (Mühlhäusler 2003b) and an exhaustive paper on zero derivation (Mühlhäusler 2008a). The importance of eponyms in P and N has only come to my awareness in the last three years and I have since been collecting material and discussing it with my Norfolk Island friends.

A third theme, to be developed further, has been the examination of lexical fields, for instance the somewhat surprising fact that most words of Tahitian origin express marked, abnormal or taboo concepts such as 'unripe', 'soiled', 'dandruff', 'slime', 'maligner' or 'bad smell'.

Ever since giving joint lectures and co-authoring a book on pronouns with Rom Harré (Mühlhäusler and Harré 1996) I have collected observations on the role of pronouns in carving up people space. To date I have published two papers on N pronouns (Mühlhäusler 2012, 2014), which highlight the interdependency of grammar and social ecology.

The study of pristine placenames on previously uninhabited islands was pioneered in Ross (1958) for Pitcairn and I followed up their ideas for Norfolk (Mühlhäusler 2002b). Having realized the vastness of the topic I passed on this task to my Ph.D. student Josh Nash, who has since established a reputation in this field.

At my first meeting with N speakers, I was reminded that I was not expected just to produce a scholarly account of the language but to become involved in its revival. About two thirds of my work on N has been dedicated to this, and it has been the most meaningful part. I believe my efforts have helped strengthen the language and, more importantly, motivate a number of Norfolk Islanders to get involved in the revival process.

I plan to continue working on N for many more years, as there remains much to learn, think about and discuss. I am currently collecting observations

on metaphors and emotion words and I am compiling an introductory guide to its grammar for the school and preparing a workshop on Norf'k orthography

9.7.5.9 Andrei A. Avram

Avram obtained a Ph.D. from the University of Lancaster in 2004 *On the syllable structure of English Pidgins and Creoles*. He currently is an Associate Professor at the University of Bucharest. Avram has published on a topic that has dominated creolistic research since the late 1970: diagnostic features of pidgin and creole languages. What features should be chosen as diagnostic is a difficult question. Features diagnostic of a natural “bioprogramme” of the type developed by Bickerton (1981) need to be distinguished from others that have been brought into being by historical contingencies and subsequently diffused in a number of ways. Avram takes as his point of departure the 302 diagnostic features of Baker and Huber (2001), which are an expanded and modified version of the set of features of English-related contact languages Philip Baker and I developed for the *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication* (Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon 1996). Avram (2003) reclassified a number of Atlantic and Pacific features as world features.

The data used by him for P and N are Buffett and Laycock (1988) and Ross and Moverley (1964) and Källgård (1993, 1998), which are far from exhaustive for the lexicon and problematic for their grammatical information. Like Hancock (1977) and Baker and Huber (2001), he concludes that the language is both an Atlantic and a Pacific Creole and thus a very special case.

9.7.5.10 Josh Nash

Nash describes himself as a linguist and an environmentalist. His research intersects ethnography, the anthropology of religion, architecture, pilgrimage studies, and language documentation.

Josh Nash's entry to linguistics was via Mühlhäusler's graduate course in ecolinguistics at the University of Adelaide. After completing an MA in environmental studies, he undertook a Ph.D. investigating the pristine placenames of Norfolk Island and Dudley Peninsula Kangaroo Island (Nash 2013). A booklet for the use of Norfolk Islanders and visitors discusses some of the most important Norfolk Island placenames (Nash 2012a). He also worked as a researcher on a number of Mühlhäusler's projects and we have co-authored a number of papers (Mühlhäusler and Nash 2012; Hendery, Mühlhäusler and Nash 2015). Josh obtained a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of New England,

which enabled him to carry out extended fieldwork on Pitcairn Island and is currently working on his recorded materials at the University of Odense.

Nash has become a prolific fieldworker and has made his name in the toponymy of small islands (Nash 2012b, c, d, 2014, 2017), empirical ecolinguistics (e.g. Nash 2011) and, as the first linguist with a higher degree to carry out fieldwork on Pitcairn Island and among the diaspora of Pitcairners in New Zealand and Australia promises to make many more contributions to the field of P and N studies.

9.7.5.11 Mitchell Low

Mitch Low spent extended periods of time on Norfolk Island before submitting his social anthropological thesis dealing with the notion of belonging and the politics of settlement. Unlike Shapiro, who did not make the connection between language, culture and identity, this is one of the central concerns of Low. Chapter 6 is devoted to “language practices as a way of conceptualising the formation, management and recognition of relationships between Islanders and Mainlanders on Norfolk Island” (2012: 175). He provides an excellent account of the complex social rules that determine who has the right to speak the language and the links between locality, culture and language. Low also makes a number of important observations about the spelling dispute on Norfolk Island. As it is based both on extensive study of published and unpublished sources and on participant-observation over a prolonged period, it constitutes a particularly valuable contribution to the study of N.

9.7.5.12 Adrian Michael Young

In 2016, Adrian Young submitted a thesis dealing with how both material and intangible culture was gifted, traded and stolen from Pitcairn and how such objects sustained the Bounty saga for over two centuries. It is based on a visit each to Pitcairn and Norfolk Island, extensive archival research and conversations with researchers and stakeholders.

Chapter 5 of Young (2016a) deals with the history of research on P and N and bears the subtitle “Linguistics, entangled tapes, and the languages of fieldwork”. Language in this chapter is framed as yet another object (especially the tapes) collected by researchers hoping to gain insights from a natural laboratory. However, instead of finding sterile laboratory conditions, the linguists and language collectors became embroiled in many social issues as well as conflicts among themselves.

Young has presented a highly readable account of the methods employed by many of the researchers as well as a critique of the standard methods of data collecting.¹² A summary of his findings can be found in Young (2016b).

9.8 Some conclusions

The history of research into the P and N language illustrates that scholarly inquiry is anything but a rational progression. The motivation to inquire into P-N had been rather attenuated until the second half of the twentieth century. As my observations on individual contributors show, those who actually worked on the language often lacked the disciplinary tools to make an adequate job of it. The publications most frequently used by a growing number of secondary researchers on the language are Ross and Moverley (1964) and Laycock and Buffett (1988), both of which could have done with better quality control. The far more sophisticated writings by Flint and Harrison, by contrast, are far less frequently used.

There are probably far fewer opportunities to study P and N than assumed by some of the blitzkrieg linguists like Zettersten, as we are dealing with a language community that does not readily share their knowledge with outsiders. Codrington, to my great regret, wasted his opportunity. Shirley Harrison, by contrast, made maximum use of hers and I hope not to have wasted my own opportunity. I trust that Josh Nash, who has spent extended periods of time on both Pitcairn and Norfolk, will continue to make good use of his opportunity.

In my view, the causes of a rather unsatisfactory body of writings on P and N include:

- The failure to appreciate the degree to which the grammar and lexicon of the language are integrated with culture, history and society. Without taking these into account as prerequisites one is unlikely to capture its nature;
- Neglect of important historical information, such as the crucial role played by Ned Young;
- The confusion between representation and what is represented. Speaking is an activity integrated with other social processes. Linguistic representations take the form of units and rules for the combination of units. As I have tried to show linguists notoriously disagree what the units are and what rules govern their combinations. Linguists' views, in turn, typically disagree with those of the speakers they study.

¹² His thesis is available at <<https://dataspace.princeton.edu/jspui/handle/88435/dsp013r074x43j>>.

- Linguists have failed to realize that the fact that their informants are bilingual in English does not preclude far-reaching differences in the ways Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders construct and interpret meaning. Thus, the fact that Alice Buffett agreed with Don Laycock that a certain construction was grammatical in N reflects the widespread practice among Pacific Islanders of “gratuitous concurrence”. A fair bit of information was deliberately withheld from both Moverley on Pitcairn and Flint on Norfolk, both of whom appear not to have realized that withholding information is normal in many small traditional societies.

Linguistic theories and paradigms come and go, a process that is governed more by fashion than anything else. Theories imply a criterion of falsifiability, but few linguists have ever seriously asked: “What sort of evidence could falsify this claim?” It is the methods that matter most. Lucky accidental insights and immaculate perception are welcome. However, they do not liberate researchers from the time-consuming task of following rigorous methods when attempting to answer their research questions. It is clear that there are limits if one abandons the notion of languages as coherent structured systems and if one admits, as integrational linguistics does, an indefinitely large number of parameters.

Almost every detail of the formation, nature and function of the marginal languages is a subject of disagreement. Many baseless or outworn ideas are still current about these forms of speech. (Reinecke 1937: 40)

10 Conclusions and findings

10.1 Context of my research

In this concluding chapter I would like to reflect both on why, how and what I have been doing and on the implications of this for the study of contact languages and for linguistics in general.

I have been interested in small islands and languages as far back as I can remember. As a 14 year old, I read both my first account of the Mutiny on the Bounty (Sachse 1959) and my first book in linguistics, a German translation (1963) of Benjamin Lee Whorf's *Language Thought and Reality*. I know of two other linguists for whom this was their first encounter with linguistics, Michael Halliday and Roy Harris, and there are probably many more linguists in my generation with the same experience.

Whorf's collection contains a paper on *Linguistics and Science*, which at the time very much impressed me and made me include linguistics in my undergraduate studies. After three years of studies in Dutch and Afrikaans literature and linguistics I had to make a decision what I wanted to specialize in for my Honours degree. My reasoning for choosing linguistics was that it was a science that could eventually give me precise answers, unlike literature where everything seemed to be a matter of opinion. I duly included philosophy of science, taught by Rudie Botha, into my subject choice. The notion of linguistics as a science was reinforced when I studied for an M.Phil. in the Department of Linguistic Science at the University of Reading, I was confident that my training in advanced phonology, morphology and syntax together with my thesis on *Pidginization and Simplification of Language* (published as Mühlhäusler 1972) had prepared me for my proposed fieldwork on Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. After my first month in the field, a long distance away from a university and indeed any European settlement, I realized that the questionnaires I had carefully designed (following Samarin 1967) to elicit structural information, were of no use other than as a source of dry kindling when it came to lighting a fire in the damp tropical Sepik District. I also realized that to make any progress with my enquiry I had to take on board numerous socio-cultural, historical and contextual parameters and to be of some use to my informants. By paying attention to the numerous

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non-structural dimensions of Tok Pisin, notions such as ‘language as a system’ or ‘fixed code’ where ‘tout se tient’, ‘linguistic rules’ and boundaries between language and non-language became increasingly difficult to maintain. Like the sociolinguists at the time, I believed that an approach in which structural descriptions were correlated with social parameters was the answer and that a distinction between grammatical and communicative competence could be made. However, correlating time-full variation grammars with a-chronic social categories, as C.-J. Bailey pointed out to me, leads to little more than ‘galloping glottometry’. To make things more difficult, the number of correlates is indefinitely large and correlations are non-explanatory, as they may have nothing to do with causation. Labov (1971: 463) seems to have had doubts about the correlational approach himself: “To my way of thinking, sociolinguistics as a descriptive discipline is a hopeless task; there is no limit to the number of correlations between linguistic and social factors which may be described”.

My own reservations about linguistics as a descriptive discipline is that there is no self-contained body of ‘linguistic factors’ and no reliable criteria to determine whether a proposed representation is descriptively adequate because:

- A fixed code is a representational construct. It is not legitimate to use the notion of grammar with “systematic ambiguity, both for a representation and what is represented” (Chomsky 1965: 25). I often illustrate this point to the Aboriginal communities with whom I work on language revival by showing them Magritte’s famous painting *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*, which represents a pipe. I point out that its title (‘this is not a pipe’) is not a joke but makes an important point. I then take my pipe out of my pocket, saying ‘this is a pipe, I can actually smoke it’. Language revival does not mean more dictionaries, grammars and other representations but getting real people to use language.
- Linguists’ practices and opinions as to how best to represent grammar vary widely. There are no criteria, in principle, to determine whether a representation is true. It can be useful, easy to read, elegant, economical, whatever, but not ‘explanatorily adequate’. Criteria such as simplicity or naturalness have a long history of unreliability.
- There is no complete grammar for any language and observational adequacy is rarely attained. As Pittenger et al. (1960) have shown there are few limits to the delicacy of grammatical analysis. Again, there can be no level of delicacy that is true. In this book I provided a greater level of analytic delicacy for some phenomena that appeared of particular interest, such as the pronominal grammar. One of the reasons why the various phonetic representations of P and N are incommensurable is that they range from more delicate narrow to less delicate broad transcription.

10.2 The object of enquiry

One of my informants expressed the view that to speak and understand N one must have been born into a Pitcairner family, gone to school on Norfolk Island and lived all one's life connected to the place and its people. This obviously is not the case with me, and I do not claim to have fully come to grips with all the socio-cultural details that often are pre-requisites to structural analysis. Her point is that one cannot look at N as an objective outsider as there is no object 'Norf'k language' that can be disconnected from the world of its speakers.

Rom Harré in *Varieties of Realism* (1986) argues for a distinction between objects that exist without there being observers such as galaxies or atoms and discursively constructed entities such as religions and philosophies. A third intermediate category is an amalgam of both natural and discursive factors. Examples would be emotions, cultural practices and language. Having this status makes language a particularly difficult object of inquiry and it is understandable that linguists have attempted to minimise the resulting difficulties.

For generations linguists have operated with a highly constrained notion of language, not as an activity embedded in the process of communication but as a self-contained object, brought into being by a reification metaphor, which turns abstraction of a process into a concrete object. As Saussure (1983: 8) stated for the discipline of linguistics: "Other sciences are provided with objects of study given in advance, which are and then examined from different points of view. Nothing like that is the case in linguistics". A 'science of language' defined by such abstractions remains 'the obscure object of desire' (Crowley 1990) rather than an instrument for probing the nature of human communication.

Saussure (1983: 9) was of the view that all the difficulties observers of languages experienced could be resolved: "The linguist must take the study of linguistic structure as his primary concern and relate all other manifestations of language to it". Modern linguistics after this pronouncement subscribed to the characteristics of Saussure's decontextualized object, *la langue*, in particular the exclusion of time and development, individual and social variation and system-external parameters, all of which were relegated to *la parole*. It was also assumed that the arbitrary rather than indexical and iconic function of linguistic signs was the dominant one.¹

¹ For P and N this means that a large number of phenomena relating to social indexicality are excluded. It also means that the metalinguistic views of speakers concerning the non-arbitrary relationship between many referents and their names are ignored.

The notion of grammar as a self-contained formal structure was further removed from empirical testability when Chomsky (1965: 25) began to apply the term 'grammar' to native speakers' internally represented theory of their language as well as to the linguist's account of it.

The principal differences between students of creoles and other contact languages and the Saussurean approach include: the incorporation of time and variation and an emphasis on biological factors in creole genesis. Some creolists also differ from Saussure in their views as to the locus of language. DeCamp (1974) located different aspects of grammar in individual minds, in communal subconscious or in a complex communication network. In spite of promising early insights that creolistics constituted a potential alternative to the mainstream, the majority of its practitioners have remained closely associated with the decontextualized linguistic mainstream, and what Hymes argued 40 years ago (1980: 389–390) has lost little of its relevance: "The inescapable embedding of pidgin and creole languages in social history remains a theme to be argued for, a topic to be rediscovered".

My concern, when I started to investigate Pitkern and Norf'k was to capture how Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders communicate in their language and how they see this activity themselves, not an imaginary abstract system of an ideal speaker-hearer of P-N.

Another of my concerns has been how language relates to its speakers' world. I have argued that linguists (including creolists) overemphasize the formal and general properties of languages to the neglect of their substantive and singular lexical properties (Mühlhäusler 2011).

As I pointed out in the chapter on phonetics and phonology, linguists have not at their disposal the theories, methods and techniques that would enable them to ascertain what the sound segments or phonemes of a language might be, nor do they have any agreed way of determining what the atoms of sounds or meaning might be – unlike chemists who have no problems in establishing the atoms making up a molecule.

10.3 Theory

The first aim of scientific research cannot be the mere accumulation of knowledge. It must try to uncover the general principles behind the masses of particular findings, and eventually come up with a "theory". One of the first things I used to tell my supervisees was that the aim of doing scholarly inquiry is to search for the truth in the etymological sense of Greek *a-letheia* 'that which is not hidden'. This means that one should employ devices that remove whatever

conceals it: Ideology, error, misrepresentation, sloppy thinking and acceptance of agreed views in a scientific paradigm. In the case of linguistics these include the conduit metaphor of communication (Reddy 1979) that underpins the majority of linguistic theories. The devices for removing what conceals truth are theories, methods and techniques.

I define a theory as ‘an explicit, structured, falsifiable bunch of prejudices’. Like methods and techniques, theories are research tools – not iconic images of the nature of the subject matter. As such they are not true or false but useful or not useful. As someone who has more than 150 different screw drivers in his workshop, I maintain that one often needs to have a large number of tools to get a job done. I also note that the best tool for one job may be useless for another one. I have never found any of my screwdrivers particularly useful for opening beer bottles. Therefore, the first stage of any inquiry is to understand what the research questions are and select the tools accordingly. For my own research I have identified both a number of scholarly questions and a number of applied ones.

My scholarly research topics include those addressed by the ‘father’ of modern creolistics, Hugo Schuchardt, though I do not subscribe to his views on what a language is:

- How do languages come into existence and decline? – his studies of pidgins and creoles
- How do languages develop and change over time? – his studies in historical linguistics
- What is the nature of linguistic isolates – his Basque Studies
- What are the characteristics of deliberate language making – his study of Volapük

I theorised that to answer the first question requires attention to a large number of historical contingencies rather than a universalist approach. I have found integrational linguistics a useful tool for this. I also have found Philip Baker’s (1990: 111) views on this matter inspiring: “that participants created a new language suited to their immediate interethnic needs and that they subsequently expanded and adapted this as their growing and changing needs demanded”.

Regarding development over time I again employed an integrational perspective combined with the ecolinguistic notion that languages develop as tools to manage the social and natural ecologies their speakers find themselves in (Mühlhäusler 1996a). I also employed the metaphor of grammar and lexicon being a memory of the past.

As regards the question of decline I used the ecolinguistic notion that it is caused by the weakening of the ecological support system required to sustain P and N (Mühlhäusler 1996b, 2018). P and N are endangered languages, in spite

of the wishes of both communities to maintain them because their speakers are not fully aware of and unable to control the numerous changes in the language ecology of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island.

The practical and applied questions I wanted to explore were:

- How can one best represent a predominantly oral P-N in a written form?
- How can one (re)learn P and N?
- How can one revive P and N?
- What can one learn about the past history of the language community by studying grammar and lexicon of P-N and how can these insights be used to strengthen their speakers' sense of identity and wellbeing?

Developing an acceptable orthography is not a technical linguistic problem of 'reducing languages to writings' (Mühlhäusler 1990, 1996f) but a social one, which requires attention to actual practices and attitudes.

Language acquisition and learning is an enormously complex process and, as Klein (1989) has pointed out, one cannot separate the acquisition of language from the acquisition of a vast amount of parallel information that needs to be processed co-temporaneously. Available theories of first and second language acquisition and learning do not cater for this. There are some theories that can be useful when developing teaching materials:

- the pidgin/creole hypothesis of an implicational ordered internal learning programme reflecting progression from more natural to less natural sounds and constructions (Schuman 1976) or Bailey's *quantum linguistics* (Mühlhäusler 1996c);
- the communicative competence view (Hymes 1972) that acquisition and learning occurs in meaningful communication and thus needs to be accompanied by contextual information;
- the view that becoming a speaker of a language requires both pre-conscious acquisition and deliberate learning and teaching;
- the formulaic approach that argues that a significant proportion of what is said consists of prefabricated formulae or holophrases (Pawley 1985).

Language revival is enabled by insights such as:

- A number of types of motivation are crucially involved in achieving the aim of reviving a language: instrumental, integrative, identity and social healing motivation;
- All revival needs to be driven by the community of speakers and not imposed from above. What counts as revival needs to be determined by the speakers;
- Social conflict and dysfunctionality are powerful impediments to revival.

Aspects of the past history of the language community can be discovered by:

- not relying heavily on conventional approaches of etymologizing, comparative linguistics and internal reconstruction;
- following ecolinguistic theory that sees language change adaptation to the cultural and natural ecology (Mühlhäusler 1996a);
- a detailed understanding of social history, genealogy and physical geography of both islands;
- attention to the importance of multiple etymologies in the development of mixed languages (Mühlhäusler 1982);
- paying attention to the social practices that promote deliberate language making.

In all of the above it is important to take seriously that theories consist of falsifiable empirical claims. For any statement made one needs to ask: What sort of evidence can falsify this claim? This requires hard empirical rather than normalized abstract or anecdotal evidence of the kind that have been dominant in studies of P and N.

10.4 Research methods

What goes for theories also goes for methods: They are research tools, systematic procedures for solving a problem. Methodology is the justification of selecting appropriate methods. One chooses methods because they are useful to provide insights into the nature of a phenomenon. One excludes others, because they are useless. With a phenomenon as complex as language, it is unlikely that a single method will suffice to produce all the evidence required to answer the research problem.

All research should be ethical and guided by the speech community. Helping to revive a language is preferable than mining its structure for diagnostic features. At least 50% of my fieldwork has been devoted to activities I was asked to do on behalf of the community.

It is necessary to ask which methods used in previous research have been useful. With some exceptions, the research methods applied in the past to the study and description of P-N have not been particularly well suited to the task of capturing a highly variable, changing and ecologically embedded mixed language. They have ranged from random butterfly collecting to more structured methods. Ross and Moverley combined the former with a philological approach, which is notoriously inadequate for dealing with contact-induced phenomena. Ross, who did most of the comparative work, tends to ascribe anything that cannot be explained as originating from English or English dialects as due to Tahitian substrate.

To obtain their descriptive accounts, both Flint and Harrison used the classical field method of making recordings from one or several informants and subsequently analysing them with the help of these. Initially, Harrison analysed the speech of a single informant but subsequently obtained her data from a selected sample of speakers of different varieties of the language. Flint supplemented this approach with formal elicitation sessions, using tightly structured questionnaires. Laycock, by contrast, used a method that had become standard practice in Transformational Generative Grammar, i.e. to test the grammaticality of decontextualized sentences with a single informant.

Only Harrison approached the language as a quasi-insider, which allowed her to get more naturalistic texts and sensitive information. Her focus on formal aspects of N meant, however, that much of the information in her texts and notes were not used in her publications.²

My own methods are the outcome of about 50 years of experience as a linguistic field worker. The choice of methods is motivated by the aim of gaining emic understanding of how speakers use language together with other meaning-creating devices to make sense of the environment they are part of. Given that there are no mechanical discovery procedures in any domain of knowledge to achieve this, I have found it essential:

- to use Hymes' (1964) ethnography of speaking approach as a guide to the components of speech events to be observed;
- to remain informed about the methods used in creolistics and language contact studies (see Ludwig et al. 2019);
- to pay more attention to the overall speech situation than is done by most practitioners of the ethnography of speaking method;
- to do slow field work combined with slow archival work³
- to pay particular attention to the metalinguistic beliefs and practices of the speakers;
- to participate in as many events as possible, not just speech events. To remain a detached 'objective' outside observer is counter-productive when working with a tightly knit esoteric society;
- to adhere to the social norms for requesting information. In the case of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders this meant that neither questionnaires nor formal recording of speech are appropriate;

² I would like to thank the Harrison family for having made all of Shirley's notes and letters available to me.

³ The quality of the data obtained improves over time. I noted a dramatic qualitative difference in what Norfolk Islanders were willing to share with me after 10 years of engaging with them, and the friendships and trust I have experienced since have made a huge difference to my research.

- building interdisciplinary networks, particularly with historians and anthropologists concerned with the Bounty Saga and biologists with expertise in the life forms on Pitcairn and Norfolk;
- to set up events that increase language awareness and public debate;
- to avoid ever telling the community what is best for them.

Finally, I have learnt to check whatever information I obtained with at least three other Islanders, having learnt that for almost everything on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island there are at least three stories.

10.5 Techniques

Getting access to a naturalistic samples of an esoteric language such as P-N and to its speakers' views about it can be a challenge. As noted with regard to research history, the data obtained by subsequent investigators were bowdlerized and requests for information met with gratuitous concurrence.

Participant observation is a very effective technique as long as one is allowed to participate. Introducing recording devices should always be a measure of last resort and to avoid the observer's paradox they should be operated by community members. Transcription and interpretation of recorded materials requires the help of several local informants.

Milroy's (1980: 47) technique of "It is the 'friend of a friend' who helps you to get the things you want". Milroy worked in Belfast, but my own experience of Norfolk Island has been different. There are many disagreements and rivalries within families and it is not easy to know who somebody's friends really are. Not being seen to be someone's friend is equally important in some instances.

When involved in public events about language I always inform the audience how they can see me individually. Some of my best (and often sensitive) information was given to me in this manner. I have found it very effective to meet on a one-to-one basis in quiet restaurants and coffee houses.

10.6 Some findings

My research has demonstrated the need to revise a number of assumptions and statements made by previous researchers, in particular:

- The notion of Pitcairn and Norfolk Island being research laboratories is untenable. There were no laboratory observers when P came into being whilst Pitcairn was cut off from the rest of the world. When Norfolk Island was set

up as ‘The experiment’, language was not one of the concerns of the observers of this experiment.

- At least three, not two, languages were in contact during the formative years of P. The impact of St. Kitts Creole was particularly strong. The creole character of P-N reflects inheritance (history) rather than independent creolization (nature). This problematizes the use of P-N in universalist and typological research.
- The Tahitian influence is manifested in a number of lexical domains and in pragmatics. Tahitian influence on grammar is far less than claimed by some previous researchers.
- The dialect of English spoken by the longest surviving mutineer John Adams in all likelihood was Scots rather than Cockney, which accounts for the lack of Cockney features in P-N. With the exception of Ned Young’s St. Kitts contribution, it is near impossible to trace lexical or grammatical influence to individual mutineers.
- Whilst much of the grammar of P and N are shared, there has been significant lexical divergence since the two varieties split in the 1860s.
- The lexical and grammatical evidence examined suggests that P-N is a full language rather than a pidgin or a cant “constantly parasitic on English” (Laycock 1989: 617).
- From the perspective of structural linguistic typology P-N does not fit labels such as Pidgin, Creole, Dialect, Intertwined language, etc. and the many attempts to fit it into one of these categories have remained unsuccessful. Significant parts of its structure are singular developments that require considerations of cultural and historical prerequisites. The grammar of object anaphoric pronouns appears to be a linguistic counter-universal and constructions such as *give one I cup-a-tea* ‘give me a cup of tea’ have no equivalent in other English contact languages.
- From the perspective of social typology, P-N is best characterized as a beach community language, comparable to other English-related Pacific languages such as Bonin English (Long 2007), Palmerston English (Hendery and Ehrhart 2012), Ngatikese men’s language (Tryon 2001) and Cape Barren English (Sutton: 1975). All of these languages developed when British and American sailors, whalers or beachcombers intermarried with Pacific islanders and founded permanent settlements, typically in remote locations (Mühlhäusler 1996d). Like the other beach community languages, P-N is an esoteric language, not meant to be understood or used by outsiders.
- P-N is an unfocussed language with a great deal of variation in pronunciation, lexicon and grammar. There are no single role models and a significant amount of overt disagreements in language matters. There is no

shared core as far as linguistic signals are concerned. Communication is enabled by shared memory and knowledge as well as shared by conventions for negotiating meanings.

- P-N is an ecologically linked language in the sense that there are functional links between the language and its social and natural environment. Naming, nicknaming, metaphor and eponyms are important mechanisms in creating these links. To be able to talk about location and movement speakers have to have a mental map of the territory, and to use pronouns correctly one needs to know one's interlocutors' genealogy.
- The boundary between English and P-N is ill-defined, which makes the notion of distinct codes highly problematic. The linguistic repertoire of Pitcairn and Norfolk Islanders has always comprised at least two languages.
- Both P and N have undergone numerous complexity-maintaining changes since P-N came into being subsequent to 1790. During the first 150 years of development these changes were brought about not so much by influence from English but by unconscious restructuring and deliberate innovation.
- Since the 1930s there has been increased influence from English with accompanying structural and lexical attrition. This loss of viability has been brought about by deliberate official policies and practices and the weakening of the ecological support system required to sustain P and N. Without deliberate intervention both varieties are likely to become extinct.
- The revival of P and N is dependent on the creation of a new ecological support system that can compensate for the loss of domains and functions brought about by colonisation, globalization and out-migration.

10.7 The Future of Pitkern and Norf'k

In addressing Schuchardt's question "How and why do languages decline?", let me simply repeat a central claim I have made in a book dealing with the disappearance of the languages of Australia and the Pacific (Mühlhäusler 1996b). Languages disappear when the ecological support system that sustains them becomes weakened or disappears. In Ehrhardt and Mühlhäusler (2007) we noted that in the 21st century the rate of extinction of Pidgins, Creoles and languages that arose out of contact between Pacific Islanders and Europeans is greater than that of the vernaculars. We noted that in most cases the education system has been the principal reason for loss of vitality.

As regards P, its future is crucially dependent on continued human occupation of Pitcairn Island. The current population of fewer than 50 is rapidly

ageing and plans to shut down the island are circulating. Pitcairn is heavily dependent on funds from the UK and the EU. Once Brexit has occurred some of its sources of income will no longer be available. Attempts to increase Pitcairn's population have been unsuccessful thus far. The principal hope is to develop Pitcairn as a tourism destination.

Out-migration has been a long-standing problem. The majority of Pitcairners live in the diaspora and it is far from certain that P can be maintained in places like Auckland or Wellington, as the Pitcairners gradually integrate with the mainstream.

The future of N looks a great deal more positive. In 2002 I was interviewed by Tom Lloyd, editor of the *Norfolk Islander*, who published the interview under the heading "What would you like the Norfolk language and culture to be like in 50 years' time?" (*Norfolk Islander* Vol.8, 8 2002). Many of the factors identified as sustaining the language were put in place during the years of self-government (1979–2016):

- The attitude of the Pitcairners toward their language has become very positive and being a fluent speaker is prestigious;
- The education system, once an instrument of linguicide, has become very supportive of N and encourages children to speak it in the school grounds;
- The language was made co-official with English;
- There are numerous cultural events at which N features prominently;
- A growing number of Norfolk Islanders give their time and money for activities strengthening N;
- N is becoming the language of young people;
- N is no longer for the exclusive use of Pitcairn descendants but is now taught to others residing on Norfolk. Providing language classes is becoming a source of income;
- N has become visible in public signage;
- Importantly, there is a long-term strategic plan for strengthening Norfolk culture and language.

There remains a lot to be done, particularly for getting young children to speak it and to devise ways of adding instrumental value to the language, for instance, by reserving certain jobs in age care, education or counselling for individuals proficient in both official languages. There are plans to set up a language nest for pre-school children and to build a cultural centre with special provision for language revival resources.

To what extent this is possible depends on the political future of Norfolk. The Act that granted Norfolk Island self-government in 1979 had a preamble acknowledging the special status of the Pitcairn descendants, which was repealed after its abolition: In 2018 the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (DIRDC), provided the following briefing to the federal Minister responsible for Norfolk Island, Sussan Ley MP in 2018:

“The preamble was repealed from the Norfolk Island Act by the Australian Government in 2015 as it was considered to be a necessary step for cultural inclusion, and disengagement of the Pitcairn stronghold and cultural exclusion that had previously occurred” <<http://www.norfolkschoice.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FINALLY-THE-TRUTH-31JAN19.pdf>>.

DIRDC has put in place a number of measures and policies that have severely impacted on the ecological support system of Norfolk and Norfolk Island culture, including:

- For language to be spoken and maintained it requires places where people can meet and enjoy speaking their language. One such place was the old Post Office where people used to come and sit down for a chat when collecting their mail. The new Post Office is no such meeting place and, moreover, is located at a bend in Taylor’s Road that makes parking hazardous (it is referred to as *Fraedy Corner* ‘Dangerous Corner’ by some locals).
- Norfolk Islanders can no longer be born on Norfolk. Mothers have to give birth on the Australian mainland and the children are registered as Australians, not Norfolk Islanders.
- The long tradition of direct democracy, dating back to 1838, has been replaced by a system where elected community leaders have been replaced by executive bureaucrats.
- The life-style of gardening, agriculture, the naming of numerous local varieties and seasonal eating are under threat by allowing the import of fresh fruit and vegetables to Norfolk Island.

The Norfolk Islanders have lodged two submissions, one to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization and one to the UN Commission on Human Rights, in order to regain self-government and cultural independence.

Being a small community, having to resist new attempts by the ruling colonial power to normalize and assimilate the Norfolk Islanders, being exposed to globalization and continuing economic uncertainty are factors that may ultimately neutralize the many efforts that have been made to keep the language going. I hope this book will be one of the growing number of resources that will prevent this from happening.

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