SYLLABLE RESTRUCTURING IN EARLY SOLOMON ISLANDS PIDGIN ENGLISH*

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Abstract: The present paper looks at the various syllable restructuring strategies used in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English. These depend on the phonological shape of the etyma and consist of epenthesis, paragoge and consonant deletion. Also examined is the quality of the epenthetic and of the paragogic vowels. Contrary to claims recently put forth in the literature, vowel harmony appears to play no part in the selection of these intrusive vowels. Finally, syllable restructuring in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English is shown to be strikingly similar to that attested in other early varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English.

1. Introduction

Solomon Islands Pidgin English[1] is one of the varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English whose earlier stages are hardly documented. Samples of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English are presented and analyzed by Mühlhäusler (1987), Keesing (1991a), and by Tryon and Charpentier (2004). They provide valuable information about e.g. the syntax and the lexicon of the language at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, but only little insight into the phonology, given the faulty transcriptions or the normalizing orthography frequently restoring English-like forms[2] in many of the samples in Keesing (1991a) and Tryon and Charpentier (2004: 236-40 and 367-382).

Except for a small number of early attestations, the data examined in this article consist of forms used by older speakers or of fossilized forms, taken from Keesing (1988 and 1991b), Jourdan and Keesing (1997), Lee (1999), and Jourdan (2003 and 2007). It is assumed that such forms reflect, faithfully enough, the phonology of the so-called "bush" pidgin, which is close to that of earlier Solomon Islands Pidgin English. Theoretically and methodologically, this is in accordance with what Rickford (1986: 162) calls "feed-back from current usage". Empirically, as noted by Goulden (1990: 54), ""bush" varieties of [Solomon Islands] Pidgin English conserve archaic material and thus provide insights into the history and development of MPE [= Melanesian Pidgin English]".

All examples are rendered in the orthography or the system of transcription used in the sources mentioned. If known, the date of the early attestations is mentioned. Intrusive vowels appear in boldface. The etymon is indicated between brackets.

The article is structured as follows. In **2** I analyze the adjustment of onset clusters in the etyma. Section **3** focuses on the treatment of complex codas. The reflexes of etyma with simple codas are examined in **4**. The findings are summarized and discussed in section **5**.

2. The treatment of onset clusters

Jourdan and Keesing (1997: 409) note the "use of interconsonantal […] vowels" to break up illicit three- or two-consonant onset clusters with /s/ followed by an oral stop. Consider the following examples:

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[1] For a general presentation see Jourdan (1988 and 2007). Some characteristics of the Anglicized variety of Solomon Islands Pidgin English are discussed by Jourdan (1989), and by Jourdan and Keesing (1997).

[2] See Hancock (1977) and (Avram 2000) for a discussion of this problem.

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(1) a. /skr-/
*s**i**karapu* (< E *scrub*) ‘bush’
b. /st-/
*s**i**toa* (< E *store*) ‘store’
c. /sk-/
1916 *s**e**kool* (< E *school*) ‘school’

Two other strategies appear to have been only sporadically used. Thus, deletion of /s/ is attested only in one form (Tryon and Charpentier 2004: 368):

(2) 1920s *tarch* (< E *starch*) ‘starch’

Similarly, vowel prothesis occurs once in a sample of “bush” pidgin (Jourdan 2007: 80):

(3) ***i**steret* (< E *straight*) ‘good’

Interestingly, a fact gone unnoticed by Jourdan and Keesing (1997: 409), one form listed by them illustrates both vowel prothesis and vowel epenthesis:

(4) /st-/
*i**s**i**t**apu* (< E *stop*) ‘to stay’

The examples under (1) suggest that [i] or [e] are the default epenthetic vowels. However, /s/ + oral stop onset clusters are also broken up by an epenthetic [u], if the vowel after the cluster in the etymon is /u/:

(5) a. /sp-/
*s**u**pun* (< E *spoon*) ‘spoon’
b. /sk-/
*s**u**kulu* (< E *school*) ‘school’

Jourdan (2003) writes that “speakers will tend to insert epenthetic vowels in Pijin words in order to avoid [such] clusters” and that “the choice of the vowel is directed by a rule of vowel harmony”[3]. In fact, the phenomenon illustrated by such forms is that of vowel copying.

The onset cluster made up of /s/ and a nasal stop, which obeys the sonority sequencing generalization, is also broken up by epenthesizing [i]:

(6) /sm-/
1940s *s**i**masim* (< E *smash*) ‘to smash’

Consider next the reflexes of the /sl-/ cluster. Although no relevant items occur in my corpus of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English, modern forms indicate what must have been the fate of the /sl-/ cluster in onset position:

(7) /sl-/
*s**i**lip* (< E *sleep*) ‘to sleep’

[3] See also Jourdan (2007: 110), and Jourdan and Selbach (2004: 707).

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As can be seen, the onset cluster /sl/ does not surface, even though it would not violate the sonority sequencing generalization. Moreover, note that [i] is again the default epenthetic vowel.

Additional evidence can be adduced from partial reduplication in the verbal morphology of Solomon Islands Pidgin English. The basic pattern, consisting in the reduplication of the first syllable of the verbal root[4], is illustrated below:

(8) /silip/ (< E *sleep*) 'to sleep' → [s**isi**lip] 'to be sleeping'

Given the shape of the reduplicant [si], the base can only be /silip/, i.e. it includes the epenthetic vowel. As shown by Lynch (1998), Lynch et al. (2002), Jourdan (2004 and 2007), reduplication is quite productive in the substrate languages of Solomon Islands Pidgin English. Given the lexical meaning of *sleep*, the reduplicated form must have existed for quite a long time in the language. It therefore constitutes evidence that the /sl-/ onset clusters are broken up by vowel epenthesis in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English.

The records of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English at my disposal do not include any reflexes of /s/ + glide onset clusters. However, what must have been the treatment of these onset clusters can be safely inferred from contemporary forms. Consider the examples below:

(9) /sw-/
a. *s**u**ea* (< E *swear*) 'to swear'
b. *s**u**im* (< E *swim*) 'to swim'
c. *s**u**it* / *swit* (< E *sweet*) 'delicious'

First, the different spellings with <u> or <w> reflect variation between [u] and [w] in the modern variety. Second, they suggest that the glide /w/ undergoes vocalization, even though the cluster /sw-/ does not violate the sonority sequencing generalization. Finally, they indicate that /w/ retention characterizes the more recent, possibly Anglicized pronunciation.

Here again, additional evidence is provided by partially reduplicated verbal forms:

(10) /suim/ (< E *swim*) 'to swim' → [s**u**suim] 'to be swimming'

The fact that the reduplicant is [su] clearly shows that the vowel /u/ is part of the lexical representation of the base. Given the high productivity of partial reduplication in verbs and given the lexical meaning of *suim*, one can safely assume the reduplicated form has existed for quite a long time in the language. In other words, this suggests that the glide /w/ must have undergone vocalization in the early stages of Solomon Islands Pidgin English.

Stop + glide onset clusters do not violate the sonority sequencing generalization either. Unfortunately, the corpus of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English at my disposal contains no forms relevant for the fate of such onset clusters. However, an examination of data from the modern variety indicates that the glide /w/ must have undergone vocalization.

(11) /tw-/
*t**u**entifala* (< E *twenty*, *fellow*) 'twenty'
(12) /kw-/
a. *k**u**aet* (< E *quite*) 'quite'
b. *k**u**ik taem* / *kwiktaem* (< E *quick*, *time*) 'quickly'

[4] See Jourdan (2004: 710), and Jourdan and Selbach (2004: 708).

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Here again the occasionally different spellings, with <u> or <w>, reflect variation between [w] and [u] in the modern variety, and suggest that retention of /w/ characterizes the more recent, possibly Anglicized pronunciation, whereas vocalization of /w/ represents a prior stage.

The treatment of stop + liquid onset clusters in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English is far better documented. Although this onset cluster does not violate sonority requirements, it is disallowed, as illustrated by the examples below:

(13) /pl-/
a. ***bi***lai (< E *play*) 'play'
b. ***pe***let (< E *plate*) 'plate'
c. ***pi***les (< E *place*) 'place'
d. 1930s ***pi***lenty (< E *plenty*) 'lots'
e. ***pu***lande (< E *plenty*) 'lots'

(14) /pr-/
parapela (< E *propeller*) 'propellor'

(15) /br-/
a. ***ba***rata (< E *brother*) 'brother'
b. ***bi***rek (< E *break*) 'to break'

(16) /tr-/
a. ***ta***rae (< E *try*) 'to try'
b. ***ta***rake (< E *truck*) 'truck'
c. ***tu***ru (< E *true*) 'true'

(17) /dr-/
dorop-em (< E *drop*, *him*) 'to drop'

(18) /kl-/
kalaem (< E *climb*) 'to climb'

(19) /kr-/
a. ***ka***rae (< E *cry*) 'to cry'
b. ***ko***ros-im (< E *cross*) 'to cross'

As can be seen, onset clusters consisting of a stop and a liquid are invariably broken up by an epenthetic vowel.

Consider next the issue of the nature of the intrusive vowel. First, in nine of the 15 forms in (13)-(19) epenthesis involves vowel copying. Here again vowel harmony plays no part in the selection of the intrusive vowel, contra Jourdan (2003 and 2007). Second, while copy-vowel epenthesis is the preferred strategy for the resolution of these illicit stop + liquid onset clusters, it is not the only one. In four of the forms, (13a, c, d) and (15b), [i] is the epenthetic vowel. Third, the form in (13b) illustrates either copy-vowel epenthesis or the epenthesis of [e] as a default vowel. Finally, the form in (13e) is an instance of labial attraction: the labial consonant /p/ enforces the occurrence of [u] as the epenthetic vowel. I have claimed above that [i] and [e] are the two default epenthetic vowels in Solomon Islands Pidgin English. This is supported by the existence of forms with epenthetic [i] or [e]. Compare e.g. ***ba***rata (13a), with a copy of the vowel to the right inserted between /b/ and /r/, to ***bi***rek (13b), with [i] in the same phonological environment. Compare also ***pu***lande (13e), with [u] via labial attraction, with ***pi***lenty (13d), with [e] in the same phonological environment, *i.e*. between /p/ and /l/.

My corpus of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English includes two examples illustrating the treatment of fricative + liquid onset clusters:

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(20) /fr-/
*f**o**rom* (< E *from*) ‘from’
(21) /θr-/
*t**o**rou-em* (< E *throw*, *him*) ‘to throw’

The illicit cluster in the etymon is resolved via copy-vowel epenthesis.

3. The treatment of coda clusters

The corpus at my disposal contains only an extremely small number of forms illustrating the treatment of complex codas.

Two examples in the corpus illustrate the treatment of oral stop + fricative coda clusters:

(22) /-ks/
a. 1909 *bokk**i**s* (< E *box*) ‘box’
b. 1937 *bokk**u**s* (< E *box*) ‘box’

The epenthetic [u] in example (22b) is most probably a faulty transcription. Consequently, it is the form *bokkis*, in (22a), which illustrates the reduction of the etymological coda cluster /-ks/. The same form is attested in the modern variety. Consider also the following examples:

(23) a. *ak**i**s* (< E *axe*) ‘axe’
b. *fok**i**s* (< E *fox*) ‘fox’
c. *nek**e**s* (< E *next*) ‘next’
d. *nek**i**stumoro* (< E *next*, *tomorrow*) ‘the day after tomorrow’
e. *sik**i**s* (< E *six*) ‘six’

The illicit coda cluster /-ks/ is resolved through the insertion of the default epenthetic vowels [i], in most cases, or [e]. This is further proof that [i] and [e] are the default epenthetic vowels in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English. Particularly relevant in this regard is the epenthesis of either [i] or [e] in reflexes of one and the same etymon, e.g. of *next* in the forms in (23c, d).

Reflexes of fricative + coronal stop clusters are extremely poorly attested in my corpus of early Solomon Islands Pidgin English:

(24) /-st/
tas/*tes*/*das*/*des* (< E *just*) ‘just’

However, similar forms occur in the modern variety (Jourdan 2002, Beimers 2006):

(25) a. *jes* (< E *just*) ‘just’
b. *mas* (< E *must*) ‘must’
c. *pos* (< E *post*) ‘post’

The illicit coda cluster /-st/ is normally reduced via deletion of /t/. There is only one exception in my corpus:

(26) *prist**i*** (< E *priest*) ‘priest’

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The form above preserves both consonants in the coda cluster of the etymon, but evinces the paragogic vowel [i]. Consequently, the two consonants of the etymological cluster are distributed over two syllables.

Reflexes of coda clusters consisting of a nasal stop and a fricative or an affricate are represented by just two examples in my corpus:

(27) /-nθ/
*man**i**s* (< E *month*) 'month'
(28) /-ns/
*Pran**i**s* (< E *France*) 'French'

However, the treatment of these clusters in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English may also be inferred from descriptions of the modern variety (Jourdan 2003, Jourdan and Selbach 2004) as well as from forms attested in Jourdan (2003) and in Beimers (2006). Some relevant examples are listed below:

(29) /-ns/
*fen**i**s* (< E *fence*) 'fence'
(30) /-ntʃ/
branis[5](< E *branch*) 'branch'

(31) /-ndʒ/
a. *band**e**s*[6] (< E *bandage*) 'bandage'
b. *oran**i**s* (< E *orange*) 'orange'

As can be seen, the reflexes of nasal stop + fricative / affricate contain the default epenthetic vowels [i] or [e].

Consider next reflexes of coda clusters consisting of a nasal and an oral stop, all of them from the so-called "bush" varieties. Typically, if the oral stop in the etymon is a coronal one it is deleted and the etymological cluster is thereby reduced:

(32) /-nt/
difiren (< E *different*) 'different'
(33) /-nd/
han (< E *hand*) 'hand'

Clusters made up of a nasal and an oral stop are occasionally resolved via paragoge:

(34) /-mp/
*siamb**u*** (< E *jump*) 'to jump'
(35) /-nt/
*wand**e*** (< E *want*) 'to want'
(36) /-nd/
*end**i*** (< E *and*) 'and'

[5] The reflex of E /tʃ/ is /s/.
[6] The reflex of E /dʒ/ in coda position is /s/.

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Now, on the basis of the description of the phonetics and phonology of modern Solomon Islands Pidgin English, *e.g*. Lee (1999), Jourdan (2003 and 2007: 107-112), Jourdan and Selbach (2004), it can be assumed that sequences made up of a nasal and an oral stop may have been realized phonetically either as such, [mp], [nt], [nd], or they may have been reinterpreted as homorganic prenasalized stops, [^{m}b], [^{n}d][7]. Accordingly, the syllabification of the forms in (34)-(36) differs, as shown below:

(37) a. [sia.am.b**u**] or [sia.^{m}b**u**]
b. [wan.d**e**] or [wa.^{n}d**e**]
c. [en.d**i**] or [e.^{n}d**i**]

Note that if the reflexes of English oral stops are prenasalized stops, the resulting forms also do away with closed syllables and a CV syllable structure obtains. However, the exact phonetic realization of the clusters in the etyma is irrelevant since, whatever the syllabification, the early Solomon Islands Pidgin English forms display paragoge.

Let me now turn to the issue of the quality of the paragogic vowel. The forms in (35) and (36) demonstrate once again that [i] and [e] are the default paragogic vowels. This accords well with the claim that they are the default epenthetic vowels. In other words, the relevant generalization is that [i] and [e] are the default intrusive vowels in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English. Finally, the occurrence of in the form in (34) of the paragogic vowel [u] is triggered by the /p/ in the etymon. This is an instance of labial attraction, which has already been shown, in section **2**, to play a role in the selection of the epenthetic vowel breaking up illicit onset clusters.

Reflexes of the /-lt/ and /-ld/ clusters in coda position do not occur in the corpus. Consider, however, currently attested forms such as the ones below:

(38) /-lt/
solwata (< E *salt*, *water*) ‘sea’
(39) /-ld/
kolwan (< E *cold*, *one*) ‘cold’

These forms, and other similar ones, suggest that the clusters at issue must have been reduced by deleting the /t/ or the /d/.

The data examined in this section indicate that in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English complex coda clusters are reduced, even if they do not violate sonority requirements.

4. The treatment of simple codas

The way in which etyma with simple codas are adjusted in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English is relatively amply documented in my corpus[8]. The strategies applied are epenthesis, in the case of word-internal codas, and respectively paragoge, in the case of word-final codas.

Consider first the reflexes of oral stops. If the stop in the etymon is labial, the paragogic vowel is mostly [u] due to labial attraction, as in (40a, b), or [i], as in (40c):

(40) /-p/
a. *antaf**u*** (< E *on top*) ‘up there’
b. *rob**u*** (< E *rope*) ‘rope’
c. *silif**i*** (< E *sleep*) ‘sleep’

[7] Prenasalized stops occur in the substrate languages, see Lee (1999: 57) and Jourdan (2003 and 2007: 110).
[8] For other examples see Avram (2005: 290-91).

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(41) /-b/
*sikarap**u*** (< E *scrub*) ‘bush’

If the coda consonant in the etymon is a coronal stop, early Solomon Islands Pidgin English resorts either to copy-vowel paragoge, as in (42a), or to the default intrusive vowels [i] or [e], as in (42b, c) and (43):

(42) /-t/
a. *bat**a*** (< E *but*) ‘but’
b. *waet**e**mane-* (< E *white man*) ‘white’
c. *wokabot**i*** (< E *walk*, *about*) ‘to walk’
(43) /-d/
*lot**i*** (< E *road*) ‘road’

The same strategies account for the adjustment of etyma with a dorsal stop in the coda. Thus the forms in (44a, b) illustrate the selection of the default paragogic vowels [i] and [e] respectively, while the form in (44c) is a case of copy-vowel paragoge:

(44) /-k/
a. 1937 *cook**ie*** (< E *cook*) ‘to cook’
b. *tarak**e*** (< E *truck*) ‘truck’
c. *wawak**a***[9] (< E *work*) ‘to work’
(45) /-g/
*bik**i**bik**i***[10](< E *pig*) ‘pig’

Note that the two instances of [i] in the form in (45) can be either the default intrusive vowel or the outcome of copy-vowel epenthesis and respectively of copy-vowel paragoge.

In the case of etyma with an affricate in coda position the paragogic vowel is always [i], one of the two default paragogic vowels:

(46) /-ʧ/
*sios**i*** (< E *church*) ‘church’
(47) /-ʤ/
*kabis**i*** (< E *cabbage*) ‘leafy greens’

Consider next the treatment of fricatives in the coda. The forms below are derived from an etymon ending in a labial consonant:

(48) /-f/
*laf**u*** (< E *laugh*) ‘laugh’

(49) /-v/
*muv**u*** (< E *move*) ‘to move’

Note that in the form in (49) the occurrence of paragogic [u] may be due to either labial attraction or to vowel copying since the preceding vowel is also /u/.

[9] With partial reduplication.
[10] With total reduplication.

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In the case of coronal fricatives in coda position in the etyma, their reflexes always evince [i] as the epenthetic or paragogic vowel:

(50) /-s/
*bisinis**i*** (< E *business*) 'business'
(51) /-z/
*bis**i**nisi* (< E *business*) 'business'
(52) /-ʃ/
*finis**i**taemu* (< E *finish*, *time*) 'worker whose indenture has elapsed'

Reflexes of nasal stops in coda position illustrate the same strategies that operate in the case of oral stops. Thus, if the etymon ends in a labial stop, this triggers the selection of [u] as the paragogic vowel:

(53) /-m/
*kam**u*** (< E *come*) 'come'

If the coda in the etymon is coronal, the preferred strategy is to resort to the intrusive vowels [i] or [e], as in (54b, c, d), but vowel copying is also attested, as in (54a):

(54) /-n/
a. *an**a*** (< E *and*) 'and'
b. 1940s *lan**i*** (< E *land*) 'land'
c. *taon**e*** (< E *town*) 'town'
d. *wan**e**kaen**i*** (< E *one kind*) 'indefinite article'

A few remarks are in order with respect to the examples under (54). First, the occurrence of [e] and [i] as intrusive vowels in one and the same form, *wan**e**kaen**i*** in (54c), clearly demonstrates, once again, that both function as default intrusive vowels. Second, *ana* (54a), *land* (54b) and *wanekaeni* (54c) appear to have been derived from etyma lacking the final /d/. As is well known, /t/ and /d/ are frequently deleted in coda clusters in nonstandard English. If the etyma had included /d/, as in standard English, the reflex of the coda cluster /-nd/ would have been either [n], with no paragogic vowel, or [nd]/[^{n}d], followed by a paragogic vowel, as shown in section **3**. Accordingly, the expected reflex of e.g. English *and* should have been either [an][11] or [anda]/[a^{n}da], rather than *ana* the form actually recorded. In fact, there is further empirical evidence in support of this claim. Thus, there is a competing form *endi* 'and', already analyzed in section **3**, which clearly derives from an etymon including the final /d/.

Reflexes of etyma ending in a dorsal stop usually display paragoge with vowel copying:

(55) /-ŋ/
a. *bang**a*** (< E *bang*) 'to bang'
b. *long**o*** (< E *along*) 'in'

Finally, reflexes of codas consisting of a liquid contain an epenthetic or paragogic vowel, default [i] or [e], as in (56a), or a copy-vowel as in (56b, c) and (57):

[11] Cf. the form *an* 'and' in modern Solomon Islands Pidgin English.

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(56) /-l/
a. *all**e** same* (< E *all*, *same*) ‘like, as’
b. *sol**o**dia* (< E *soldier*) ‘policeman’
c. *sukul**u*** (< E *school*) ‘school’
(57) /-r/
*got bager**e*** (< E *got*, *bugger*) ‘forget about it’

As seen in this section, the simple codas in the etyma include a variety of classes of consonants: oral stops /p, b, t, d, k, g/, fricatives /v, s, z, ʃ/, affricates /ʧ, ʤ/, nasal stops /m, n, ŋ/, and liquids /l, r/. Usually, none of these simple codas surfaces in the early Solomon Islands Pidgin English forms. This is true of both word-internal and word-final codas in the etyma: a vowel, whether epenthetic or paragogic, is always added to permit syllabification.

5. Conclusions

The data analyzed in the present paper show that early Solomon Islands Pidgin English disallows complex syllable margins. Both complex onsets and complex codas are prohibited, as seen in section **2** and **3** respectively.

In addition, the evidence presented also points to a strong tendency towards a CV syllable structure in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English. This is due to the influence of the substrate languages[12], which is mentioned by other authors as well (Lee 1999, Jourdan and Keesing 1997, Jourdan 2004, Jourdan and Selbach 2004, Jourdan 2007).

On the other hand, simple codas are not excluded altogether. First, as shown in section **3**, the reduction of the coda clusters /-nt/ and /-nd/ via deletion of the coronal oral stop leads to the occurrence of /n/ in coda position. Second, as seen in section **3**, /m/ and /n/ may occur in word-internal codas, with speakers who have /b/, /t/ and /d/, whereas with those speakers who realize them as prenasalized stops, i.e. as [^{m}b] and [^{n}d] respectively, nasal codas are excluded even word-internally. Third, word-final /-s/ is attested in the reflexes of stop + fricative / affricate or of fricative + oral stop coda clusters, as discussed in section **3**. Fourth, simple codas appear sometimes even in reflexes of simple codas. For instance, as shown in section **4**, reflexes of simple codas normally display an intrusive vowel. However, the simple coda in the etymon does occasionally surface as such, including in forms mentioned in this paper such as *piles* (< E *place*) ‘place’, *pellet* (< E *plate*) ‘plate’, *forom* (< E *from*) ‘from’. Actually, etyma ending in an identical consonant may have reflexes with or without an intrusive vowel. Compare e.g. *birek* (< E *break*) ‘to break’, where /k/ appears in coda position, with *seke* (< E *check*) ‘to check’, with a paragogic vowel after /k/. This variability has been reported for the earlier stages of other English-based pidgins and creoles as well (Avram 2005).

This article has also analyzed the various strategies used by early Solomon Islands Pidgin English for the restructuring of illicit syllables in the etyma. The preferred strategies are epenthesis or paragoge of the default vowels [i] or [e], with vowel copying, or with labial attraction. One other strategy, discussed in section **3**, is consonant deletion, which appears to have been restricted to the resolution of the /-st/, /-nt/, and /-nd/ coda clusters in the etyma. Finally, I have also shown, contra Jourdan (2002, 2004 and 2007), that vowel harmony plays no part in determining the quality of the intrusive vowel[13].

[12] For an outline of the phonology of the substrate languages see Lynch (1998) and Lynch et al. (2002).
[13] See also Avram (to appear).

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Identical illicit onsets or codas are occasionally subject to different adjustment strategies in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English[14]. For instance, I have shown in section **2** that /s/ + oral stop clusters are normally simplified by means of epenthesis, but occasionally via deletion of /s/ or via both vowel prothesis and epenthesis. As seen in **3**, the coda clusters /-nt/ and /-nd/ are reduced either through deletion of the oral stop or, more rarely, by means of paragoge. Similarly, the /-st/ cluster in coda position in the etyma is simplified either by deleting the /t/ or, occasionally, through paragoge. These findings too accord well with the variability typical of early pidgins.

Further evidence in support of the analysis of syllable restructuring in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English outlined in the present paper comes from early records of Tok Pisin (Hall 1943, Murphy 1966, Mühlhäusler et al. 2003)[15] and of Bislama (Crowley 190, 1993 and 1998, Tryon and Charpentier 2004: 139-141 and 228-236). The strategies employed by early Solomon Islands Pidgin English present striking similarities with those attested in these closely related varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English. This is hardly surprising given the historical-linguistic circumstances in which all three varieties emerged[16]. The similarities extend to the different vowels selected for epenthesis or paragoge. Thus, early Tok Pisin and early Bislama also have two default intrusive vowels. According to Hall (1943: 16) [i] and [ə] function as default intrusive vowels in early Tok Pisin, while early Bislama has [i] and [e] (Avram 2005: 90, 153 and 198-199). Both varieties also resort to vowel copying (Avram 2005: 90, 153 and 198-200). Finally, in both early Tok Pisin (Avram 2005: 150) and early Bislama (Avram 2005: 153) a labial intrusive vowel occurs, due to labial attraction, but the vowel at issue is [o] in both these varieties.

Moreover, similar strategies are attested in early records of other (unspecified) varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English. For instance, epenthetic vowels breaking up onset clusters occur in forms recorded by Churchill (1911). Even the strategies more rarely employed to reduce /s/-initial onset clusters are attested in early records of other (unspecified) varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English. Thus, Schuchardt (1883/1980: 22) lists forms in which both a prothetic vowel and an epenthetic one are used to break up /s/ + oral stop onset clusters. Finally, /s/ is occasionally deleted in these clusters, as shown by Mühlhäusler (1997: 134).

It is hoped that this analysis of syllable restructuring in early Solomon Islands Pidgin English will contribute to a better understanding of the syllable structure of the early varieties of Pacific English-based pidgins and creoles.

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[14] Cf. Mühlhäusler (1997: 134).
[15] Murphy (1966) was originally published in 1943. It therefore reflects the Tok Pisin of the 1940s.
[16] For a summary see Holm (1989: 526-29). A detailed account is found in Tryon and Charpentier (2004).

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