PIGS AND DOGS IN ISLAND MELANESIA

John Lynch
University of Papua New Guinea

This paper examines terms for “pig” and “dog” in the languages of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. After noting the distribution of reflexes of established Proto-Austronesian (PAN) and Proto-Oceanic (POC) reconstructions, and of words deriving from Proto-Polynesian (PPN) reconstructions and from English, I draw attention to cognate sets pointing to other reconstructions of some antiquity, and suggest some culture-historical inferences. I will refer to the region comprising the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia as “Central Melanesia”.

DISTRIBUTION
Terms for “Pig”

(a) PAN and POC Reconstructions

Forms reconstructed with the meaning “pig” in PAN and/or POC are given below. POC forms here and later are given in the orthography proposed by Ross (1988). A dash indicates that no cognate has been reconstructed.

PAN:
*babuy

POC:
*beRek

PAN:
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POC:
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No reflexes of PAN *babuy appear to occur in Central Melanesia, or in any Oceanic language. The distribution of the reflexes of POC *beRek and *bwo(e) is shown on Maps 1-4. In these and other maps in this paper, the names of Polynesian Outliers are boxed, while the names of islands which are wholly or predominantly Papuan-speaking are underlined.

An examination of these maps shows that both POC *beRek and *bwo(e) are spread almost equally throughout the northern part of the region, but neither is found south of Epi in Central Vanuatu. No language has a reflex of both *beRek and *bwo(e). On each of the islands of Guadalcanal, Santo and Malakula, however, some languages have a reflex of *beRek while others have a reflex of *bwo(e). Note that the Polynesian outliers Pileni and Tikopia unexpectedly show reflexes of POC *bwo(e), rather than its PPN replacement *puaka (see (b)).

(b) PPN *puaka

Maps 1-4 also show the distribution of forms related to PPN *puaka “pig”. There are two points of interest here. First, a reflex of PPN *puaka is found only in one of the Polynesian Outliers - Emwae. Second, the *puaka form has been borrowed into all the languages of New Caledonia and the Loyalties, but into no other Melanesian languages in the region.

(c) Other Reconstructions

One other reconstruction for “pig” may be of some antiquity. This is *bukasi, attested by reflexes in a number of Vanuatu languages, e.g. Letemboi nbuas, Dixon Reef mbuas, nampukai, Vinvais nambuah, Axamb nampuas, nambuas, Paamese fias, Biera-Vowa mbukah, Namakura nambukah, Sie nompayahi, Lenakel p-’kas, Anejom pikab, all meaning “pig”. Reflexes of *bukasi are also found in two Polynesian Outliers in Vanuatu: Mele-Fila pokasi, West Futuna pakasi. The distribution of reflexes of *bukasi can be seen on Map 3.

(d) Borrowings from English

The English word pig has been borrowed (as piki) by the Polynesian Outliers Rennell-Bellona, Luangiuia (Ontong Java), and Sikaiana.

(e) Semantic Crossover

A few languages show probable reflexes of *bwo(e) but with the meaning “dog”: Luangiuia poi, Wusi woi and Navut fbe (West Santo).

Terms for Dog

(a) PAN and POC Reconstructions

Forms reconstructed with the meaning “dog” in PAN and POC are given below.

PAN:
*asu

POC:
*gaun

Reflexes of these terms are charted on Maps 5-8. It will be seen that neither term has widely distributed reflexes in Central Melanesia: reflexes of POC *gaun are found in parts of the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia, while possible reflexes of PAN *asu are found in Guadalcanal, Malaita and Makira (e.g., Longgu,
Map 1. Solomon Islands (minus Eastern Outer Islands): “pig”
Map 2. Eastern Outer Islands, Torres and Banks Islands: “pig”
Map 3. Vanuatu: “pig”
Map 4. New Caledonia and the Loyalties: "pig"
Sa’a, Ulawa ‘usu, Santa Catalina ausu).

(b) PPN *kulii

Maps 5-8 also show the distribution of forms related to PPN *kulii “dog”. This form is found in most of the Polynesian Outliers (Sikaliaina, Pileni, Anuta, Tikopia and the Vanuatu Outliers), but it is also widespread in the non-Polynesian languages of Central Melanesia – some languages of Guadalcanal, the Papuan languages of Santa Cruz and the Reef Islands, Utupua, Vanikoro, most of Vanuatu (especially the east and south),5 and parts of the Loyalties.

(c) Other Reconstructions

Two other forms for “dog” which may be of some antiquity can be reconstructed, and their distribution is also shown on Maps 5-8.

One is *siga, reconstructable on the basis of probable reflexes in Choiseul (e.g., Ghone, Varisi sika), New Georgia (e.g., Nduke, Hoava siki, Ghanongga, Simbo sie) and the Torres Islands (Toga sike). The other is *pasī, reconstructable on the basis of probable reflexes in Choiseul (e.g., Bambatana vasi) and Santo (e.g., Valpei pesi, Nokuku pesi, Roria mbes), and possibly also in Guadalcanal (e.g., Ndi, Ghari, Malango pai).

(d) Borrowings from English

The English word dog has been borrowed into the following languages: Rennell-Bellona tokitoki and most of the languages of the Banks and Torres Islands (e.g., Hiw, Mosina, Lehali tok, Motlav notok).

(e) Semantic Crossover

Possible examples of semantic crossover are Hiw suye, Toga haye (Torres Island), Lehali siyae (Banks Island), all meaning “pig”, which may derive from *siga “dog”.

INTERPRETATION

Pigs

Archaeologists are uncertain whether pigs were introduced into Melanesia before the arrival of Austronesian speakers.6 However, it seems fairly clear that Austronesian speakers brought the pig with them into Oceania. At least two words for “pig” – *boRok and *bwo(e) – are attributable to Proto-Oceanic, and one of these (*boRok) continues a PAN prototype. It may be that one term originally referred to “domesticated pig” and the other to “wild/bush pig”, as a number of researchers, e.g. Blust (1976), have suggested. However, people presumably did not transport wild pigs with them in canoes, and probably also kept close guard on their pigs, coming as they did into a pigless environment; and it may be that the semantic distinction between *boRok and *bwo(e) was of a quite different kind. Thus it is difficult to explain why there were two words for “pig”, and even more difficult to suggest reasons why some languages lost one term and some the other. The fact that many non-Austronesian languages in the New Guinea area have a word for pig that is borrowed from reflexes of POC *boRok suggests that pigs were absent from parts or all of New Guinea before Austronesian settlement of the north coast.

All the non-Austronesian languages in the Solomon Islands adopted Oceanic terms for “pig”, and thus presumably their speakers got the pig from the Austronesians. Bilua mbolo and Savosavo pāo derive ultimately from *boRok. Lavukaleve fo’e, Reefs and Santa Cruz poi and Nanggu pā derive ultimately from *bwo(e). Baniata mbo could derive from either.

There is a major “boundary” in Central Vanuatu. Reflexes of the two POC forms *boRok and *bwo(e) are found as far south as Malakula and Epi, but no further south than this. On the other hand, reflexes of the form *bukasi, which are widespread in Central and Southern Vanuatu, are found in Malakula and Paama but no further north. Reflexes of POC *bwo(e) and also of *bukasi are found on Epi. There are at least two possible interpretations of these distributional data. One is that there was a distinct pause in the north-south settlement of Vanuatu, this pause taking place in the Malakula/Epi region. Dialect differentiation began to develop; the term *bukasi was innovated in one dialect, and speakers of this dialect (or their descendants) carried on with the southward move.

The other interpretation is that the southern region was settled from elsewhere, and separately from the northern region, with the Malakula/Epi area being the point at which the two groups came into contact.

Whatever the explanation, the anomalous position of the non-Polynesian languages of Efate has to be explained. Terms for “pig” like Nakanamanga (North Efate) wago, South Efate wag, wak do not derive from either the two POC forms nor from *bukasi.

Oceanic speakers also settled the New Caledonia-Loyalty Islands region, possibly fairly early, but they either did not take the pig with them or, if they did, they lost it soon after arrival; certainly, there is no trace of the pig in the archaeological record for this region (Les Groube, pers. comm.). All the New Caledonia-Loyalty languages have words for pig which reflect PPN *puaka, e.g., Kumac puaka, Caaac poka, Paici pueka, Ajie poaka, Iaai buaka. This suggests that the pig was introduced into the region by Polynesian speakers.
What is also of interest is that, as Polynesian speakers moved westwards and northwards, establishing their Outlier colonies, they apparently lost the pig and reacquired it later, from either a Melanesian or a European source. Emwae in Central Vanuatu is the only exception to this general statement. The forms for “pig” in the Polynesian Outliers of Central Melanesia (from northwest to southeast) are:

- Luangiua: piki (< English pig)
- Rennell-Bellona: piki (< English pig)
- Sikaiana: piki (< English pig)
- Pileni: poi (< POC *bwo(e))
- Tikopia-Anuta: poi (< POC *bwo(e))
- Emwae: poaka (< PPN *puaka)
- Mele-Fila: pokasi (< *bukasi)
- Futuna-Aniwa: pakasi (< *bukasi)

Finally, a brief comment should be made on form. All four reconstructions – POC *boRok, POC *bwo(e), PPN *puaka, and *bukasi – share some formal similarities: initial labial followed by back round vowel. Three of them also contain k, while there are other similarities between *bukasi and PPN *puaka (possibly suggesting an earlier form *bu(ajkasi?)!). Further investigation is required to see whether, and how, these forms can be linked.

**Dogs**

Like the pig, dogs were introduced into Melanesia by humans. Dog bones have been found in association with a Lapita settlement on Mussau Island, dating to early in the first millennium B.C. (Kirch 1988).

Reflexes of POC *gaun are found in the Shortland Islands and in parts of Ysabel, Guadalcanal and Makira, with the only other occurrences in Central Melanesia being in northern New Caledonia. There are no secure reflexes of PAN *asu; the only possible candidates are restricted to the Guadalcanal-Malaita area.

The reconstructions *siga and *pasi are fairly well represented in the Western Solomons. *siga is also reflected in the Banks Islands and *pasi in Santo. Because they are not attested to outside Central Melanesia, neither *siga nor *pasi can be safely attributed to POC. Further comparison with forms in the New Guinea region is needed before any conclusive statements can be made.

What is clear, however, is that in parts of the Loyalties, almost all of Vanuatu, and the Temotu district and parts of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, terms for “dog” derive from a Polynesian source. It may be that, in many of these areas, the original settlers did not bring the dog with them, though it is more likely that they did bring the dog but ate it into extinction, and that the dog was subsequently reintroduced at a later stage.

**General**

The linguistic evidence suggests that the first Oceanic-speaking settlers of the Solomon Islands brought with them both the pig and the dog. Although no POC reflexes for “dog” occur in Vanuatu, the fact that they do occur in New Caledonia suggests that the dog went with the Oceanic speakers throughout Central Melanesia, but subsequently became extinct in Vanuatu, being reintroduced later from a Polynesian source. While the pig made it as far as Vanuatu, it almost certainly did not accompany the original Oceanic settlers of New Caledonia.

None of the PAN or POC terms reached the Fiji/Polynesia region. By the time the Polynesians had started their back-migrations into Melanesia, they had innovated terms for both “pig” (PPN *puaka, Fijian vuaka) and for “dog” (PPN *kulii, Fijian kolii). That the Polynesians took the dog with them back into Melanesia is attested to by the fact that many Melanesian languages have borrowed forms related to *kulii. That they also took the pig with them on these westward migrations is attested to by Emwae poaka; however, on the other Outliers they must have lost the pig, and only much later reacquired it, presumably from a Melanesian source.

**NOTES**

1. It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this volume in Ralph Bulmer’s honour. I first met him in 1970: when I took up my first teaching post, he was my Head of Department. In those days, the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Papua New Guinea contained the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, linguistics, archaeology/prehistory, comparative religion, and social work/community development. It is a tribute to Ralph’s scholarship and academic breadth that he appeared to have no difficulty in handling, or representing the interests of, such diverse people. Perhaps even more important, he built solid and enduring bridges between his own department and a variety of others, most especially Geography and Biology. His contribution to scholarship in a wide range of fields in the Pacific and elsewhere will long be remembered.

2. This is a revised version of a paper presented to the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea in 1983. Data are largely derived from Tryon and Hackman (1981) for the Solomon Islands, Tryon (1976) and my own field notes for Vanuatu, and Leenhardt (1946) and Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre (1982) for New Caledonia.
Map 5. Solomon Islands (minus Eastern Outer Islands) "dog"
Map 6. Eastern Outer Islands, Torres and Banks Islands: “dog”
Map 7. Vanuatu: “dog”
Map 8. New Caledonia and the Loyalties: "dog"
Reconstructed forms can be checked in Wurm and Wilson (1975).

3. Henceforth, I will refer only to *bwo(e), but this should be taken to include the doublet *bwawe.

4. It is just possible that Tolai pap “dog” derives from PAN *babuy by a process of semantic crossover.

5. In certain parts of Northern Vanuatu, slightly deviant forms related to PPN *kulii are found. Biera-Vowa (Epi) shows one change, the addition of the final u, as in kuliu. A number of languages show this change plus the fronting of the first vowel, with or without compensatory labialisation of the initial consonant: e.g., Northeast Ambae kiriu, Baetora (Maewo) xiriu, yiriu, Peterara (Maewo)xiriu; cf. also Valpei (Santo) wuriu. From this labialisation may have developed the initial labial consonants in Raga swiri, Fortsenal, Aore, Tangoa (Santo) kriu, Vao (Malakula) kri, and so on. I treat all of these as forms related to PPN *kulii.

6. Bulmer (1966) reports finds of pig-bones from two New Guinea Highlands sites which may be older than the earliest Austronesian-associated assemblages found in Melanesia. The latter date to about 2000 B.C. (Pawley and Green 1984, Kirch 1988).

7. See Hudson (n.d.a. and especially n.d.b) for an extended discussion of the history of the dog in Oceania.

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SAYING THINGS IN KALAM:
REFLECTIONS ON LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

Andrew Pawley
Australian National University

I have a confession to make. I don’t much like reading grammar books.1 Of course, grammars are not in their nature very readable books, even to grammarians. Any fairly comprehensive account of the structure of a language has to be dense – thick with the details of intricate patterns – and should be consulted like a dictionary rather than read like a novel. But consulting even the fullest of grammars can be a frustrating business. Rarely does one grammarian’s description of a grammatical domain answer all the questions another wishes to ask about that domain.

To me, though, the most frustrating thing about grammar books is that they don’t really tell me, as a language learner or translator, how to say things in the languages they describe. By ‘how to say things’ I don’t mean vocabulary, in the dictionary sense, the names for things. I refer to the conventions for idiomatic discourse – for talking about situations and events, for telling jokes, for complaining and apologising, for accusing and denying, and so on. The thing that is said is the speaker’s meaning.2 How a thing is said is its expression, the particular choice of grammatical construction and words. The pair of sentences ‘He apologised’ and ‘He said he was sorry’ say the same thing (at one level) but say it differently.