

Contact-induced change in southern Bougainville: Papuan features in a grammatically aberrant Austronesian subgroup.

Office 2004 Test Drive U..., 16/9/09 17:35

Deleted: PAPER

The Northwest Solomonic (NWS) Oceanic languages of Bougainville and the Solomon Islands display numerous innovations resulting in morphological and syntactic characteristics highly atypical of Oceanic. These changes are assumed to reflect long contact with Papuan languages. However, while linguistic effects of Papuan-Austronesian contact have been explored in some regions of Oceania (Thurston 1987, Ross 1996), there has been little detailed research on this in NWS.

The most aberrant NWS group is Mono-Uruavan (Torau, Uruava, Mono-Alu), whose languages have adopted right-headed structures including verb-final clauses and OV VPs, postpositions, preposed possessors, and in some constructions post-verbal subject agreement. They also lack the multiple categories of alienable possession typical of Oceanic, and display distinct genitive pronouns.

Many of these features have been described as typically Papuan, but no attempt has been made to link them with particular Papuan languages and contact situations. In this paper we investigate the hypothesis that these features can be attributed to contact with neighbouring Papuan languages of the South Bougainville family (Nasioi, Nagovisi, Buin, Motuna). Drawing on on-going primary research on South Bougainville and Mono-Uruavan, we compare in detail the 'non-Oceanic' features of Mono-Uruavan with structures in South Bougainville languages to reconstruct a picture of Papuan-Austronesian contact in this region.