General Information\textsuperscript{1,2}

- around 122,000 1\textsuperscript{st} language speakers (www.ethnologue.com)
- around 4,000,000 2\textsuperscript{nd} language speakers (www.ethnologue.com)
- one of two national languages
- English is ‘official’ language (business, commerce); Tok Pisin is used in Parliament
- English-based creole (means that English is primary source of vocabulary)
- regional and social dialects differences exist (as with any sizeable language)
- Urban Tok Pisin more heavily influenced by English vocabulary than Rural Tok Pisin

\textsuperscript{1} Data in Tok Pisin is given in the native spelling, and not in IPA (excluding in the sound inventory charts, or when in // or [ ]).

\textsuperscript{2} Data herein comes from Lyovin (1997) or Verhaar (1995).
**Location:** Papua New Guinea

- Papua New Guinea is one of the most linguistically-dense areas of the world
- 830 indigenous languages; median language has 1,200 speakers (www.ethnologue.com)
Writing System
- uses 22 (or 23) letters of the Roman alphabet
  - q, x, z not used (though they may be used in mathematics, etc)
  - c only used in some abbreviations
    - cm (sentimita ‘centimeter’)
    - vaitamin C ‘vitamin C’
    - bihaim a-b-c ‘to follow the alphabetical order’
- spelling is more close to pronunciation than English
  - mun ‘moon’ min ‘(to) mean’ haus ‘house’ laik ‘like’
  - foti ‘forty’ (note: in British English, the <r> is not pronounced)
  - amaun ‘amount’ (note: in Tok Pisin, syllable-final clusters are simplified)

Phonetics/Phonology

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveopalatal</th>
<th>Retroflex</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plosive</td>
<td>p b</td>
<td>t d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fricative</td>
<td>f v</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dʒ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasal</td>
<td>m n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>η</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquid</td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glide</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- English interdental fricative /θ ð/ and palatal fricatives /ʃ ʒ/ are absent
- English voiceless affricate /tʃ/ is absent; voice affricate /dʒ/ does not occur word-finally (e.g. ajenda ‘agenda’, jas ‘judge’)
- /p/ and /t/ sounds exhibit variation, especially those spelled with <p>. This may be pronounced [f], [p] or [Φ] (a bilabial fricative), depending on the speaker/dialect.

Vowels
- canonical 5 vowels (common in contact languages)

- no tense/lax distinction (e.g. /i/ and /ɪ/ are neutralized)
- no height distinction (e.g. /æ/ and /e/ are neutralized)
- In addition, Tok Pisin has three diphthongs: /aj/, /aw/ and /oij/
  - English has (depending on dialect): /aj/ (+ variant [ʌj]), /aw/ /ɔj/, /e/ /ow/
Phonological Processes

- final-obstruent devoicing (obstruent = plosive + fricative + affricate)
  - *hait* ‘hide’; *bed* ‘bet’; *road* ‘rot’; *jas* ‘judge’; *bilip* ‘believe’
- syllable-final consonant cluster simplification (through deletion or *epenthesis*)
  - *bis* ‘beads’; *akis* ‘axe’; *danis* ‘dance’
- voiceless plosives are always unaspirated
- reduplication occurs
  - some is morphological
    - *brukbruk* ‘to fall apart in little pieces’; from *bruk* ‘to break’
  - some is phonological
    - *demdem* ‘snail’ (i.e. there is no word *dem*)
    - *kuskus* ‘secretary’; *limlimbur* ‘to stroll’; *longlong* ‘confused, crazy, mad’
Syntax/Morphology
- no inflectional morphology (common among contact languages)
- no prefixes, only suffixes
- analytic/isolating (common among contact languages)
- SVO

Pronouns
- marked for person (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd})
- marked for number (singular, plural, dual, trial)
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural marked for inclusive/exclusive
- not marked for case (e.g. no difference between ‘I’ and ‘me’)

**TABLE 10. PERSONAL PRONOUNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INCLUSIVE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>EXCLUSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 SG</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>‘I’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SG</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>‘you’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SG</td>
<td>em</td>
<td>‘he, she, it’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 PL</td>
<td>yumi</td>
<td>‘we’</td>
<td>mipela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>yunitupela</td>
<td>‘the two of us’</td>
<td>miupela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>yunitripela</td>
<td>‘the three of us’</td>
<td>miripela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PL</td>
<td>yupela</td>
<td>‘you (people)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>yutupela</td>
<td>‘you two’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>yutripela</td>
<td>‘you three’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 PL</td>
<td>ol</td>
<td>‘they’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>tupela</td>
<td>‘the two of them’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>tripela</td>
<td>‘the three of them’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, sg = singular,
pl = plural, du = dual, tr = trial

- Verhaar (1995) notes that *fopela* is also attested in his corpus, whereas *faipela* has been claimed to exist, but was not attested in his corpus.
Verbs

- tense, aspect, mood not marked on verb; no agreement between verb and subject/object
  - tense
    - past shown by use of unmarked verb
      \[Long\ dispela\ taim\ Piring\ em\ i\ slip\ long\ bet\ na\ i\ guria\ tasol.\]
      ‘At that time Piring was lying on his bed and he was just shivering.’
      (Verhaar 1995:312)
    - present appears to use unmarked verb as well (but it was not clearly stated)
    - future is marked with bai
      \[Bai\ mi\ go long\ taun.\ (or\ Mi\ bai\ go long\ taun.)\]
      FUT 1sg go to town
      ‘I will go to town.’
      - when the subject NP is short, bai usually precedes it; when long, bai usually follows it
  - aspect
    - perfective marked with pinis
      \[Mi\ ritim\ Wantok\ niuspepa\ pinis.\]
      ‘I have finished reading the newspaper “Wantok”.’
    - continuative marked by i stap (from stap ‘stay, be located’)
      \[Mi\ raun\ i\ stap\ bilong\ pain-im\ wok.\]
      ‘I am walking around looking for work.’
    - habitualness marked by save
      \[Em\ i\ save\ kaikai\ ol\ man.\]
      ‘It used to eat people.’

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3 The length of a phrase influencing its position is not unique to Tok Pisin. In English, for example, we have something called Heavy NP-shift.

- i) My doctor told me to drink \([NP\ mineral\ water]\) every night.
- ii) *My doctor told me to drink every night \([NP\ mineral\ water]\).
- iii) My doctor told me to drink every night \([NP\ two\ glasses\ of\ mineral\ water\ with\ a\ slice\ of\ lemon].\)
  (ex. (iii) from Haegeman, 1994:419)
-im
- generally a verbal suffix, making transitive verbs from
  i. transitive verbs
     
     min minim ‘to mean’
     litimap litimapim ‘to lift up’
     tekewe tekeweim ‘to take away’
     tekimaut tekimautim ‘to throw away’

  ii. intransitive verbs
     wok ‘to work’ → wokim ‘to make, build (something)’
     boil ‘to boil’ → boilim ‘to boil (something)’

  iii. ‘preforms’ (means that root (i.e. without –im) is a bound morpheme)
     adorim ‘to adore’ askim ‘to ask’
     baim ‘to buy’ putim ‘to put’

  iv. modifiers
     klinim ‘to clean’ kolim ‘to cool’ sapim ‘to sharpen’

  v. adverbs
     autim ‘to express’ bihainim ‘to follow’ daunim ‘to defeat’

  vi. nouns
     rongim ‘to wrong’ gluim ‘to glue’ graunim ‘to plant (in the ground)’

  - transitive -im/-∅ pairs do not always have the same meaning
     kaikai (bret) ‘to eat (bread)’ kaikaim ‘to bite’
     pispis (blut) ‘to piss (blood)’ vs. pispisim ‘to urinate on (something)’

  - some –im verbs can be used as nouns as well
     askim ‘to ask’ ‘(a) question’
     bekim ‘to answer’ or ‘(an) answer’
     helpim ‘to help’ ‘(a) helper’
long

- a preposition corresponding to several English prepositions
  
  i. location

  *long as bilong botol*  
  *long baret*  
  ‘at the bottom of the bottle’  
  ‘in the drain’

  *long baksait bilong lip*  
  *long maunten*  
  ‘at the back of the leaf’  
  ‘on/in the mountain(s)’

  ii. direction (‘to’ or ‘from’)

  *Dispela stori i kam long Mista Swale.*  
  ‘This story comes from Mr. Swale.’

  *Yumi mas bringim em i go kwiktaim long haus sik.*  
  ‘We (incl.) must take him to the hospital fast.’

  iii. recipient

  *Bai mi singaut long em i givim dispela mani long mi nau tasol!*  
  ‘I’ll demand that he gives me this money right now!’

  iv. instrument

  *Ol i pasim kau long baklain.*  
  ‘They tie the cow with a rope.’

  v. time

  *Mobeta yu pinisim dispela pilai long taim ol i laikim yet.*  
  ‘Better finish this game while they still enjoy it.’

  vi. other (more examples in Verhaar 1995)

  *Yu tok long wanem kantri?*  
  ‘What country are you talking about?’
-pela

- a derivational affix with several functions

1. used to make some modifiers

   naispela haus ‘beautiful house’ (attributive use)
   dispela haus i naispela ‘this house is beautiful’ (predicative use)

   - modifiers with -pela fall into 3 classes
     i. -pela obligatory in both attributive and predicative use
     ii. -pela obligatory in attributive, optional in predicative use
     iii. -pela obligatory in attributive, prohibited in predicative use

     
     | MODIFIER | OBLIGATORY | OPTIONAL | PROHIBITED |
     |-----------|------------|----------|------------|
     | drai-1    |            |          | +          |
     | #drai-2 [=trai] | +       |          |            |
     | flei      |            |          | not applicable |
     | goi       |            |          | not applicable |
     | grin      |            | +        |            |
     | gui       |            | +        |            |
     | hat-1     |            |          |            |
     | hat-2     | +          |          |            |
     | hevi      |            |          | +          |
     | hoi [= hat-1] | +      |          |            |
     | isi       |            | +        |            |
     | klia      |            | +        |            |
     | klin      |            |          | +          |
     | koi       |            |          | +          |
     | las       |            |          | +          |
     | likiik    |            |          | +          |
     | #long     |            |          | +          |
     | mau       |            |          | +          |
     | nais      |            |          | +          |

     (partial list from Verhaar 1995)

2. used to make some pronouns

   - personal pronouns (marks most nonsingular forms)
     mipela ‘we’ (exclusive)   yupela ‘you’
   - demonstrative pronoun (only one exists)
     dispela ‘this’
   - indefinites
     wanpela ‘a certain’   sampela ‘some’   (n)arapela ‘other’
3. used to make some numbers (in System A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System A</th>
<th>System B</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(=rural; in decline)</td>
<td>(=urban; growing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wan</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tu</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tri</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>foa</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>faiv</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sikis</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>seven</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>et</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nain</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ten</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>wampela ten wan</td>
<td>eleven</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wampela ten tu</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wampela ten tri</td>
<td>titin</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tupela ten</td>
<td>twenty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tripela ten</td>
<td>titi</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fopela ten</td>
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<tr>
<td>...</td>
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<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wan hundet</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tu hundet</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wan tausen</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


\(^4\) Available in its entirety (>450 pages) through JSTOR, an online database.