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GREEN IN TOK PISIN: A CORPUS STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate uses of the words for green in Tok Pisin (Neo-Melanesian), a language spoken in Papua New Guinea, classified as an extended pidgin and creole (or a pidgincreole), based on English. In this study, we investigate the uses of green, grin and grinpela, basing on the data extracted from a Tok Pisin corpus, containing texts published in Wantok (Wantok Niuspepa), a weekly magazine issued in Papua New Guinea. The size of the corpus is 3,653,073 words. The program we employ is AntConc, created by Lawrence Anthony.

The corpus data provide evidence that green is found in proper names, grin is frequently used in borrowed expressions and grinpela is mainly employed as a colour term, functioning as a noun modifier. Moreover, grin shares figurative meanings with its counterparts in other languages. The figurative expressions, referring to vegetation and environmental issues, are undoubtedly borrowings from English. The words green and grin are found in proper names, including names of environmental organizations.

The use of the Tok Pisin words for green in ecological contexts not only points to contemporary language and culture contact, but also indicates that globally discussed topics, including environmental issues, are important in media discourse in Papua New Guinea.

Keywords*: colour terms, corpus study, green, metaphor, metonymy, Tok Pisin.*

1. Introduction.

The aim of this paper is to investigate uses of Tok Pisin words for green – *grin* and *grinpela* – in the magazine *Wantok*, with the help of corpus tools offered by the software AntConc.

Tok Pisin, also known as Neo-Melanesian, is one of the three official languages of Papua New Guinea. It is classified as an English-based extended pidgin and creole (or a pidgincreole). Before concentrating on the Tok Pisin colour lexicon, more specifically on the words for green, we briefly present selected aspects of pidgin and creole languages.

Pidgins emerge from unstable prepidgin varieties, called jargons or early pidgins. A jargon is an unstable variety of a lingua franca used in impromptu communication between speakers of different languages. Pidgins are stable language systems without native speakers. However, if a pidgin begins to be employed in various situations, not only in ad hoc situations, it may become an intermediate form between a pidgin and a creole. This form is called a *pidgincreole* or *stable pidgin*. Moreover, stable pidgins which are in contact with the lexifier language may undergo the post-pidgin or post-creole continuum change. As a result, new varieties of the lexifier language may appear. Stable pidgins which become native languages develop into creoles (Bakker, 2008, p. 131–132).

2. Literature review.

As regards research on Tok Pisin, its linguistic features and sociolinguistic situation have been investigated by numerous researchers who concentrate on its phonology (e.g. Laycock, 1985; Smith, 2005), morphology (e.g. Gallegos García, 2014; Mühlhäusler, 1983, 1985a; Parkvall, 2003; Walczyński, 2007), syntax (e.g. Kornacki, 2015; Mühlhäusler, 1985b; Sankoff & Mazzie, 1991; Woolford, 1981), lexicon and figurative patterns (e.g. Goulden, 1989; Kosecki, 2020a, 2020b, 2022; Mühlhäusler, 1985c; Radomyski, in press; Walczyński, 2012a) or varieties, functions and change (e.g. Crowley, 1991; Romaine, 1992; Smith, 2002; Walczyński, 2012b, 2013). There are also collections of papers dealing with different aspects of this language (e.g. Verhaar, ed., 1990; Wurm & Mühlhäusler, eds., 1985).

Let us concentrate on the lexicons of pidgin and creole languages. These lexicons happen to be much smaller than the lexicons of the donor languages, due to the process of reduction, which is defined as "the process whereby large parts of the source language that are available to native speakers are lost or are not acquired by pidginizing non-native speakers" (Trudgill, 1992, p. 62). Reduction may be repaired by "a process of expansion or creolization, as a result of having acquired a community of native speakers, and of being employed for an increasingly wide range of purposes" (Trudgill, 1992, p. 21).

In pidgincreoles and creoles, vocabulary expands and becomes stabilized; however, no massive extension of colour vocabulary is observed. Speakers of these languages tend to use – almost exclusively – basic colour terms, as understood by Berlin and Kay (1969), not adding many non-basic terms to their colour lexicons. Let us recall that according to Berlin and Kay, the set of basic terms consists of eleven colour names. In English, this set includes *white*, *black*, *red*, *green*, *yellow*, *blue*, *brown*, *purple*, *pink*, *orange* and *grey*. However, there are languages with fewer basic colour terms.

Returning to Tok Pisin, Mühlhäusler (1985c, p. 425) enumerates the following basic colour terms found in this language: *blak* 'black, dark blue or dark green', *ret* 'red, light brown', *wait* 'white, light coloured, silver', *blu* 'lighter shades of blue', *grin* 'lighter shades of green' and *braun* 'brown, grey'. A Tok Pisin phrasebook by Hunter (1986) provides the following colour terms: *wait* 'white', *blakpela* 'black', *ret* 'red, pink', *grin* 'green', *yelo* 'yellow', *blu* 'blue', *braun* 'brown' and *gre* 'grey'. This list includes separate words for brown and grey as well as a word for yellow; moreover, *ret* may mean both 'red' and 'pink'.

It needs to be explained here that the suffix *-pela* (from English *fellow*) – as in *blakpela* – is used to form adjectives (Verhaar, 1995, p. 12–27). Dictionaries provide both forms of colour terms – the root and the root + *-pela*, e.g. *blak* and *blakpela*, *blu* and *blupela*, *grin* and

grinpela (Steinbauer, 1998, p. 20, 21, 32; Volker, ed., p. 206, 208, 289).

As regards previous corpus studies of Tok Pisin colour vocabulary, we investigated the words for red found in Tok Pisin texts, using the same corpus as the one we employ in this study (Stanulewicz & Radomyski, 2021, 2022). The compiled corpus with the tools offered by AntConc allowed us to identify the differences and similarities in the uses of *ret*, *retpela* and *red*.

3. Aim and research questions.

The aim of this paper is to examine the uses of the Tok Pisin words for green, making use of the data extracted from a Tok Pisin corpus. Our study is guided by the following research questions:

(1) What words for green are used in the Tok Pisin press texts?
(2) In what contexts do these words occur?
(3) Are there any differences in their use?
(4) Are they used figuratively, meaning 'pertaining to vegetation' and 'environmental'?

4. Methodology.

As we have already signalled, we investigate the uses of the Tok Pisin words for green, employing the data extracted from a corpus of texts written in this language. The corpus contains texts published in Wantok (also called Wantok Niuspepa), which is a weekly magazine issued in Papua New Guinea, available at http://wantokniuspepa.com/ (see e.g. Walczyński, 2012a, 2013). The corpus size is 3,653,073 words. As regards the software used to compile the corpus, it was AntConc, created by Laurence Anthony (https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/), to be more exact, AntConc Version 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2021). We also used the tools provided by AntConc Version 4.1.0 (Anthony, 2022). The corpus includes texts from 184 randomly selected issues of Wantok published in 2010–2017 (Table 1).

Table 1

The Tok Pisin corpus

Year	*Number of issues of Wantok*	*Number of words*	*Percentage*
2010	23	453,150	12.40
2011	23	439,166	12.02
2012	23	434,667	11.90
2013	23	488,260	13.37
2014	23	453,738	12.42
2015	23	471,756	12.91
2016	23	490,139	13.42
2017	23	422,197	11.56
Total	184	3,653,073	100.00

As regards the statistical data, we take into consideration the normalized frequency. Normalized frequencies of words or word combinations are calculated by using the following equation (see e.g. Brezina, 2018, p. 46):

$$normalized\ frequency = \frac{f(x)}{N} \cdot 1{,}000{,}000$$

where: $f(x)$ = raw frequency of a word, N = number of words in the corpus.

5. Results.

The Oxford Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin English Dictionary gives grin and grinpela as the Tok Pisin equivalents of green (Volker, ed., 2023, p. 42, 289). The dictionary provides an example of the use of the lexeme grin: Kala bilong ol lip bilong diwai em i grin. 'The colour of the leaves on the tree is green.' (Volker, ed., 2023, p. 42). As can be easily seen, this example actually contains a definition of the word grin: 'the colour of tree leaves'.

The corpus data demonstrate that apart from grin and grinpela, the form green is used as well, and – surprisingly – it enjoys the highest frequency (almost 49 percent of the occurrences of the words for green). Table 2 presents the raw and normalized frequencies of these three words (forms).

Table 2

Frequencies of green, grin and grinpela

Rank	*Lexeme*	*Number of occurrences*	*Percentage*	*Frequency per 1 million words*
1	*green*	96	48.98	26.28
2	*grin*	82	41.84	22.45
3	*grinpela*	18	9.18	4.93
Total		196	100.00	

The contexts in which the three words occur allow us to observe that apart from functioning as regular colour terms, they are frequently used figuratively and constitute parts of proper names. Tables 3, 4 and 5 present the identified uses of *green*, *grin* and *grinpela*.

Table 3

Uses of green

Use	*Number of occurrences*	*Percentage*	*Frequency per 1 million words*
Surname	51	53.13	13.96
Part of a geographical name	19	19.79	5.20
Part of a name of an environmental programme	13	13.54	3.56
Part of a name of an organization / company / team etc.	7	7.29	1.92
Part of a name of a product – figurative use	2	2.08	0.55
Regular colour term	1	1.04	0.27
Part of a name of an animal	1	1.04	0.27
Part of a borrowed expression	1	1.04	0.27
Unclear	1	1.04	0.27
Total	96	100.00	

Table 4

Uses of grin

Use	*Number of occurrences*	*Percentage*	*Frequency per 1 million words*
Part of a borrowed expression: figurative use (metaphor, metonymy)	37	45.12	10.13
Regular colour term	21	25.61	5.75
Part of a geographical name	9	10.98	2.46
Part of a name of an event	5	6.10	1.37
Part of a name of an organization	4	4.88	1.09
Part of a name of a sports team	4	4.88	1.09
Noun meaning 'vegetable'	1	1.22	0.27

Use	*Number of occurrences*	*Percentage*	*Frequency per 1 million words*
Surname	1	1.22	0.27
Total	82	100.00	

Table 5

Uses of grinpela

Use	*Number of occurrences*	*Percentage*	*Frequency per 1 million words*
Regular colour term	13	72.22	3.56
Figurative use	5	27.78	1.37
Total	18	100.00	

6. Discussion.

As the data in Table 3 indicate, apart from the surname Green (53%), the form green is mainly used in proper names which are either internationally known, e.g. Green Peace, or happen to be borrowings from English, e.g. Green Pati 'Green Party' and Go Green, an environmental programme introduced in schools in Papua New Guinea. The following examples illustrate such uses of green:

(1) *Wanpela intenesenel ogenisesen,* ***Grin Pis (Green Peace)*** *i kamautim pinis wanpela ripot olsem planti bilong ol dispela kain SABL i save kamap long giamnim ol papagraun, tasol long larim ol loging kampani i katim diwai tasol na ol i go wantaim mani*. (*Wantok* no. 1982)
'An international organization, **Green Peace**, has already released a report that many of these SABLs are used to deceive landowners, but to allow logging companies to cut down trees and take away money.'

(2) *Lida bilong Australia* ***Green Pati****, Bob Brown, i tok sapos ol i painim aut olsem tru true m ol i refuji, bai i gutpela long ol i kam na sindaun nau long Australia*. (*Wantok* no. 1948)
'Australian **Green Party** leader Bob Brown said if they found out they were really refugees, it would be better for them to come and live in Australia.'

(3) *Het tisa long skul i tok tenkyu i go long BSP na Mis Papua Niugini long kamapim dispela kempen bilong* ***Go Green*** *insait long kantri*. (*Wantok* no. 1928)
'The headmaster of the school thanked BSP and Miss Papua New Guinea for launching the **Go Green** campaign in the country.'

Also, the form *green* is encountered in geographical names, such as *Vanimo Green*, e.g.

(4) *Ol tripela pikinini husat i kisim dispela sik insait long* ***Vanimo Green*** *Distrik, em krismas bilong ol 8 mun, 9 mun na 21 mun, na ol i stap klostu long boda bilong PNG na Indonesia*. (*Wantok* no. 2043)
'The three children who contracted the disease in the **Vanimo Green** District, aged 8 months, 9 months and 21 months, live near the PNG-Indonesia border.'

The form *grin* is found in borrowed expressions, such as *grin ikonomi* ‘green economy’, *grin eneji* ‘green energy’ and *grin siti* ‘green city’, used mainly figuratively. Let us now present these expressions in broader contexts:

(5) […] *rot long daunim ol grinhaus ges na tu, givim bilien moa mani long helpim ol liklik o tarangu kantri long bihainim rot long kamap* ***moa grin ikonomi***. (*Wantok* no. 2153)
‘[…] reduce greenhouse gas emissions and providing billions of dollars to help small or poor countries move towards a **greener economy**.’

(6) *Wanpela long ol agrimen i larim tupela kantri long kirapim wanpela nupela join fan inap long 18 milian dola long dispela foapela yia bihain, bilong serim infomesen bilong* ***grin eneji***. (*Wantok* no. 1914)
‘One of the agreements allows the two countries to set up a new joint fund worth $18 million over the next four years, to share **green energy** information.’

(7) ***Grin siti*** *nau i senis igo long pot hol siti long wanem i gat planti pot hol insait long siti, we save kamapim planti hevi bilong ol manmeri i gat kar long en.* (*Wantok* no. 1941)
‘The **green city** has now turned into a pothole city as there are many potholes in the city, which causes many problems for people with cars.’

What can be seen is that these expressions exemplify the metonymy A FEATURE (COLOUR) FOR AN OBJECT – in this case, GREEN FOR PLANTS (cf. e.g. Stanulewicz and Pawłowski, in press, and Warth-Szczygłowska, 2014) .

Let us now concentrate on the form *grinpela* (*grin* + *pela*). It is predominantly employed as a regular colour term modifying a noun. Examples (8) and (9) show such uses:

(8) *CFMEU em i tim ol i werim* ***grinpela siot*** *na yelopela siot em ol Pamusa Warriors.* (*Wantok* no. 2159)
‘The CFMEU is the team wearing the **green shirts** and the yellow shirts are the Pamusa Warriors.’

(9) *Em i painim wanpela gutpela ples i gat* ***grinpela gras*** *na wara tu.* (*Wantok* no. 2111)
‘He found a beautiful place with **green grass** and water.’

However, it is worth emphasizing that *grinpela* may function in expressions in a figurative way as well. This can be observed in example (10):

(10) *Bikpela ples bilong Botswana i pulap long kala kala bilong flawa i olsem wanpela bed i kamap antap long* ***grinpela kapet***. (*Wantok* no. 2011)
‘The vast landscape of Botswana is covered with colourful flowers, appearing on a **green carpet**.’

What may be inferred from this example is that the word *grinpela* is found in an expression representing the metaphtonymy A LAWN IS A GREEN CARPET, employing the metonymy GREEN FOR VEGETATION and the metaphor A LAWN IS A CARPET.

All in all, it may be observed that the basic sense of the words for green and its

extended senses form a chain – from 'green' (colour) via 'pertaining to vegetation', to 'pertaining to nature' and 'pertaining to the natural environment', also from 'pertaining to nature' and 'pertaining to the natural environment' to 'protecting nature' and 'protecting the natural environment' respectively (see Figure 1).

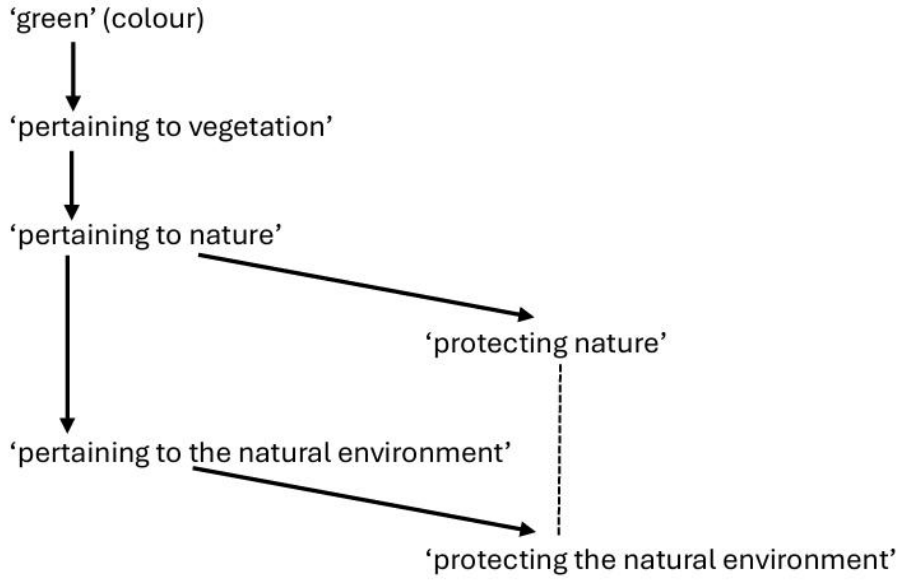


***Figure** 1. The related meanings of the words for green*

Table 6 presents the numbers of uses of the words for green in relation to environmental issues – including their occurrences in proper names. It appears that almost 21 percent of all their uses concern these issues.

Table 6

The uses of the Tok Pisin words for green in relation to environmental issues

Lexeme	*No. of occurrences*	*Percentage (N = 196)*
green	17	20,92
grin	23	
grinpela	1	
Total	41	

Another issue worth mentioning is the use of *grinpela* and *grin* as noun modifiers. The word combination *grinpela* + N is employed in expressions in which the colour term specifies the property of the object described by the adjective (e.g. *grinpela siot* 'green shirt', *grinpela gras* 'green grass', *grinpela lip* 'green leaf'). Although the word *grin* is used in a similar pattern, that is, *grin* + N, it is employed in expressions borrowed from English (e.g. *grin kat* 'green card', *grin haus gas* 'greenhouse gas', *grin eneji* 'green energy'). It is worth noting that there are two Tok Pisin variants of the English expression *green city*, that is, *grin siti* and *grinpela citi*.

Also, the spelling variants of certain expressions should be considered. For instance, the names *Green Peace*, *Go Green* and *Vanimo Green* are also spelt as *Grin Pis*, *Go Grin* and *Vanimo Grin* respectively.

7. Conclusions.

Let us recall the four research questions presented in section 3 of this paper. As regards the words for green used in Tok Pisin texts, they are green (not included in dictionaries, e.g. Steinbauer, 1998, and Volker, ed., 2023), grin and grinpela. The three words have their dominant uses. Green is used as a surname and as part of different names, while grin is found in borrowed figurative expressions; moreover, it can have both predicative and attributive functions. As regards the lexeme grinpela, it is mostly employed as a regular colour term modifying the noun.

As the corpus data indicate, the Tok Pisin words for green are used figuratively, meaning 'pertaining to vegetation' and 'environmental'. These are cases of borrowed expressions. It can be observed that Tok Pisin follows the global tendencies in the extensions of meaning of words for green. The use of the Tok Pisin words for green in ecological contexts not only points to contemporary language and culture contact, but also indicates that globally discussed topics, including environmental issues, are important in media discourse in Papua New Guinea. The relatively high frequency of expressions relating to these issues indirectly points to the problems which Papua New Guinea shares with other countries of our globe.

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Анотація

Метою цієї статті є дослідження використання слів, що позначають зелений колір, у мові ток-пісін (неомеланезійській), якою розмовляють у Папуа-Новій Гвінеї, класифікованій як розширений піджин та креольська (або піджинкреольська) мова, що базується на англійській мові. У цій розвідці досліджено використання слів green, grin *та* grinpela *на основі даних, отриманих з корпусу ток-пісін, що містить тексти, опубліковані в* Wantok (Wantok Niuspepa), *щотижневому журналі, який видається в Папуа-Новій Гвінеї. Розмір корпусу становить 3 653 073 слова. Програма* AntConc, *яку використовують автори, створена Лоуренсом Ентоні.*

Дані корпусу свідчать про те, що лексема green *зустрічається у власних назвах, лексема* grin *часто використовується в запозичених виразах, а лексема* grinpela *переважно використовується як термін кольору, функціонуючи як модифікатор іменника. Більше того,* grin *має спільні переносні значення з його аналогами в інших мовах. Переносні вирази, що стосуються рослинності та екологічних проблем, безсумнівно, є запозиченнями з англійської мови. Слова* green *та* grin *зустрічаються у власних назвах, включаючи назви екологічних організацій.*

*Використання слів мови ток-пісін для позначення зеленого (*green*) в екологічному контексті не лише вказує на сучасні мовні та культурні контакти, але й свідчить про те, що глобально обговорювані теми, включаючи екологічні проблеми, є важливими в медіадискурсі Папуа-Нової Гвінеї.*

Ключові слова: *кольорові терміни, корпусне дослідження, зелений, метафора, метонімія, ток-пісін.*