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Language Contact in the Early Colonial Pacific: Maritime Polynesian Pidgin before Pidgin English (Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact)

Emanuel J. Drechsel

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This volume presents a historical-sociolinguistic description and analysis of Maritime Polynesian Pidgin. It offers linguistic and sociohistorical substantiation for a regional Eastern Polynesian-based pidgin, and challenges conventional Eurocentric assumptions about early colonial contact in the eastern Pacific by arguing that Maritime Polynesian Pidgin preceded the introduction of Pidgin English by as much as a century. Emanuel J. Drechsel not only opens up new methodological avenues for historical-sociolinguistic research in Oceania by a combination of philology and ethnohistory, but also gives greater recognition to Pacific Islanders in early contact between cultures. Students and researchers working on language contact, language typology, historical linguistics and sociolinguistics will want to read this book. It redefines our understanding of how Europeans and Americans interacted with Pacific Islanders in eastern Polynesia during early encounters and offers an alternative model of language contact.

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