14 Language Contact and Language Generation: Pidgins and Creoles

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1 Introduction

Pidgins and creoles are new varieties of language generated in situations of language contact.[1] A *pidgin* is sharply restricted in social role, used for limited communication between speakers of two or more languages who have repeated or extended contacts with each other, for instance, through trade, enslavement, or migration. A pidgin usually combines elements of the native languages of its users and is typically simpler than those native languages insofar as it has fewer words, less morphology, and a more restricted range of phonological and syntactic options (Rickford, 1992: 224). A *creole*, in the classical sense of Hall (1966), is a pidgin that has acquired native speakers, usually, the descendants of pidgin speakers who grow up using the pidgin as their first language. In keeping with their extended social role, creoles typically have a larger vocabulary and more complicated grammatical resources than pidgins. However, some extended pidgins which serve as the primary language of their speakers (e.g., Tok Pisin in New Guinea, Sango in the Central African Republic) are already quite complex, and seem relatively unaffected by the acquisition of native speakers (Sankoff, 1979; Samarin, 1995).

We will expand and elaborate on these definitions in sections 2 and 3 below, but we should ask first why pidgins and creoles should be of interest to sociolinguistics. One answer is that these languages compel attention to their *social histories* and to the embedding of languages in their social contexts, even more so than ordinary languages do (Rickford, 1987: 52). As Hymes (1971: 5) puts it, "the processes of pidginization and creolization . . . seem to represent the extreme to which social factors can go in shaping the transmission and use

of language." The pages of the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* are filled with argumentation about the sociohistorical matrices of pidginization and creolization (see, for instance, Baker, 1991a; Singler, 1986, 1992; Bickerton, 1992, 1994; Bruyn and Veenstra, 1993; McWhorter, 1994). There is simply no other area of sociolinguistics in which sociohistorical issues are raised so repeatedly and with such vigor.

A second, related answer is that these languages have served and continue to serve as data sources and testing grounds for models of *sociolinguistic variation and change*, for instance, the concept of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959; Winford, 1985; Valdman 1988), the quantitative and implicational paradigms (Bickerton, 1971; DeCamp, 1971a; Labov, 1971; Rickford, 1979; Winford, 1980), the sociopsychological "acts of identity" model (Edwards, 1983; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985), and sociolinguistic theories of language change (Romaine, 1988a). As De Rooij (1995: 53) observes, "For the student of pidgin and creole languages, there is no escape from the problem of variation." Far from wanting to escape it, researchers interested in the study of sociolinguistic variation, multilingualism, and code-switching are often attracted to pidgin- and creole-speaking communities for the opportunities they offer to study these topics and related ones, such as the relation of language to social class, power, and identity (Rickford, 1986; Morgan, 1994).

A third answer is that these languages exemplify in acute form many of the issues with which *applied sociolinguistics and language planning* are concerned, including the question of whether local vernaculars can be used as instruments of social integration and political liberation (Searle, 1984; Devonish, 1986), and the challenges of orthography, corpus development, and status planning required to make them into official or national languages (Baker, 1991b; Carrington, 1993; Romaine, 1994a; Alleyne, 1994; Winford, 1994). Less ambitiously but no less importantly, pidgins and creoles offer us opportunities to draw on as well as contribute to macro-sociolinguistics via such topics as the emergence of vernacular literatures (Voorhoeve and Lichtveld, 1975; Barbag-Stoll, 1983; Braithwaite, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Adamson and van Rossem, 1995), the nature and effects of language attitudes (Rickford and Traugott, 1985), and the question of whether these varieties can be taken into account in improved methods of teaching children to read and write in school or in combating adult illiteracy (Cassidy, 1970; Craig, 1971, 1980; Sato, 1985; Romaine, 1992; Watson-Gegeo, 1994).

Finally, pidgin creole studies has what may be described as a "fractious energy" which contemporary sociolinguistics seems to lack. Creolists are constantly arguing about theories and subtheories – sometimes too snidely to be sure, but in a way that makes every conference and every issue of the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* exciting, and that constantly spawns new research. Readers will notice that even the co-authors of this paper disagree on some issues. Sociolinguistics could do with more of this energy.

2 Pidgins

2.1 Description

Pidgins have most commonly arisen as vehicles of trade between ethnic groups (e.g., Pidgin Yimas and other pidgins of Papua New Guinea); as linguae francae on plantations and in other multi-ethnic work situations (e.g., Fanakalo between the British and Zulus in the mines of Natal in South Africa); as linguae francae for multi-ethnic ship crews (e.g., Melanesian Pidgin English in Pacific trade of the early nineteenth century); and as languages of service (e.g., Tây Bôi between the French and their Vietnamese servants). Structurally, pidgins are, as noted above, simpler than their source languages, particularly the language which provides the bulk of their lexicon. This is well exemplified by Russenorsk, a trade pidgin used by Norwegians and Russians in the nineteenth century.[2]

1 Russenorsk had a core lexical stock of 150 to 200 words (Broch and Jahr 1984: 30), unmarked for case, number, gender, or inflection: *moja snai* "I know," *Kristus snai* "Jesus knows."

2 There was a single preposition *på* used to encode a wide array of concepts: *på moja stova* "at my house," *på Arkangel* "to Archangel," *sprek på moja* "say to me," etc. (Fox, 1983: 56–7).

3 There was no expressed equative copula: *eta ø samme slag* "this is the same type" (p. 56).[3]

4 Subordination was expressed via juxtaposition: *Kristus grot vrei, tvoja ljugom* "Christ will be very angry if you lie" (Broch and Jahr, 1984: 31).

5 Limited lexical stock conditioned semantic extensions, such as the extension of *anner* "second" to the meaning of "next" as in *på anner ar* "next year" (Fox, 1983: 63), and reduplication, such as *morra-morradag* "the day after tomorrow" (Broch and Jahr, 1984: 37).

It must be noted, however, that relative simplicity cannot in itself be seen as diagnostic of pidginization. For example, we find limited morphology in Chinese as well as pidgins. One response to this conundrum has been to distinguish between simplification of *outer form* (i.e., morphosyntactic complexity) and simplification of *inner form* (i.e., lexical resources, semantic distinctions, pragmatic machinery). While languages like Chinese display simplification of outer form (lack of morphology), pidgins display this as well as simplification of inner form (constrained lexicon, limited semantic and pragmatic resources; see Hymes, 1971: 70). Pidgins can be further distinguished as being the only languages which combine simplification of inner form with two other factors: the combination of elements from different native languages, and use by speakers of different native languages (Hymes, 1971).

Other types of simplified registers, such as foreigner talk (Ferguson, 1971) and argots, lack one of these traits.

Finally, pidgins have traditionally been defined as being conventionalized or having relatively established norms of usage, in contrast to jargons (or *prepidgin continua*) which are more variable, and strongly affected by the native language of their users. *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* (guest-worker's German) is jargonlike insofar as it varies according to whether its speaker is Turkish or Greek (HFP, 1975: 167), but speakers of Chinook Jargon (a pidgin in the American Northwest) regularly negated sentences with a clause-initial marker even when their native language provided no model (Thomason, 1983: 853–5).

While Russenorsk is an example of a pidgin established between groups of relatively equal status, pidgins often emerge within contexts of asymmetrical social status. Social dominance can result from various factors, such as power, as in the case of the British plantation trade in Melanesia establishing Melanesian Pidgin English, or prestige within a trade context, as in the case of Pidgin Yimas, developed between the Yimas who supply fish and the Arafundi who supply the lesser-valued sago (Foley, 1988: 168). In some cases, social dominance falls to those who were the original inhabitants of the area the pidgin emerges in, as in the case of the pidgin Fijian used by the British in Fiji (Siegel, 1987: 69–73) at the same time that Melanesian Pidgin English was emerging in other contexts.

In such cases, most of the pidgin's lexical stock is derived from the language of the socially dominant (the *superstrate language*) while the language or languages of the socially subordinate (the *substrate language(s)*) have most of their effect upon its phonology, syntax, and semantics (although the substrate indeed makes lexical contributions and the superstrate has significant influence upon structure). Note, for example, the following passage in the dialect of Melanesian Pidgin English spoken in Papua New Guinea, Tok Pisin (Hall, 1966: 149):

[1] Nau wanfela master em i-kisim mi . . . nau ol master i-kik, i-kikim em. then one white-man he PM-get me then PL white-man PM-kick, PM-kick him "Then a white man took me . . . then the white men were kicking, they were kicking it."

Note that the lexicon is drawn from English, even though in many cases the function of an item in English has been re-analyzed or extended. However, much of the structure is drawn from the Eastern Oceanic languages spoken by the originators of Tok Pisin. For example, the *i* predicate marker [PM], the *-im* (<*him*) transitive marker, and *ol* (<*all*) a plural marker [PL] all reflect Eastern Oceanic rather than English structure (Keesing, 1988: 105–32).

2.2 Genesis

Pidgins owe their structure to the interaction of various phenomena related to language contact. The preliminary input for them may, in some cases, derive

from foreigner talk registers. As Ferguson and DeBose (1977: 104) show, people attempting to communicate in their language with foreigners use common if not universal simplification tendencies such as slow, exaggerated enunciation, uninflected forms, and the omission of articles, prepositions, and other function words. This practice has often passed from the individual domain into development as an established register regularly acquired and utilized by members of a community when communicating with outsiders. Such registers were pivotal in the emergence of pidgins such as Pidgin Fijian (Siegel, 1987) and Chinook Jargon (Thomason, 1983). Fijians established a register of their language with established norms of its own for use with outsiders, and it was this register that the British were expected to learn upon arrival in Fiji. Often, the establishment of such registers reflects a desire on the part of the speakers to reserve the use of the full language for themselves, as a reflection of elevated status or distinctness from foreigners (Foley, 1988: 163–4). For example, the Chinook Amerindians were explicitly opposed to non-native speakers acquiring their language, which led to the establishment of Chinook Jargon for use in trade (Hymes, 1980). There is no a priori reason to rule out the possibility that pidgins can arise without an established foreigner talk model, and indeed, such established registers are only occasionally explicitly attested. However, the observed sociolinguistic tendency for such registers to arise on both the idiolectal and community levels demonstrates the viability of incorporating foreigner talk within an account of pidgin genesis.

Furthermore, as we have seen above in Tok Pisin, substrate features are salient determiners of pidgin structure. One example beyond Tok Pisin is the serial verb constructions in Tây Bôi Pidgin French, derived from the Vietnamese substrate (Phillips, 1975: 164–71). Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 181–94) provide additional examples of such transfer from Chinook Jargon, Kituba, Hiri Motu, Bislama, and Chinese Pidgin Russian, among other languages, arguing that the diverse marked features which these languages illustrate are only explicable by reference to their different substrates. An oversimplified but heuristically useful characterization of pidgins would be that they result from the interaction between superstrate-based foreigner talk and structural features derived from the substrate languages. Note, however, that the substrate speakers can be thought to contribute a foreigner talk register of their own grammars to the emerging pidgin, as documented in the Melanesian Pidgin English case by Keesing (1988: 89–104).

2.3 *Pidginization and simplification as a cline*

Our reference to prototypical pidgins like Russenorsk and Tok Pisin (themselves quite different in terms of the size of their lexicon, the complexity of their structure, and their historical trajectories) should not be taken to indicate that the distinction between full languages and pidgins is binary. Pidginization manifests itself in degrees, as do most language contact phenomena, such

that pidginization can be seen as one end of a cline which begins with full acquisition, proceeds through cases of language shift such as Irish English and Yiddish, and culminates in pidgins like Russenorsk and Tok Pisin. Various pidgins, however, fall between Russenorsk and Yiddish along this cline, therefore displaying more vigorous reflections of structural complexity, and a vaster lexical stock. Such cases typically stem from either richer contact between superstrate and substrate speakers than was the case between the originators of deeper pidgins, or from close genetic relationship between superstrate and substrate languages.[4]

For example, the pidginized Assamese called Naga Pidgin displays more inflection than most pidgins; this feature is due in part to the fact that the Nagas encountered Assamese not only as a trade language but as a language of instruction (Bhattachariya, 1994). Similarly, Kituba, a pidgin resulting from interaction between various dialects of Kikongo, also displays greater than average morphology – in this case because its speakers shared a core of grammatical structure which they could readily incorporate into a pidgin regardless of its complexity to non-Kikongos (Mufwene, 1986). We see how genetic relatedness acts as a brake upon pidginization particularly clearly in the case of Hiri Motu, the pidginized register of the Austronesian language Motu. Hiri Motu exists in two dialects. That spoken by speakers of Papuan languages is prototypically reduced along the lines of Tok Pisin, while that spoken by Austronesian speakers displays more Motu structure (Dutton, 1985).

2.4 *Life-cycle issues*

Pidgins figured in the classic formulation of the contact language life cycle offered by Hall (1966), in which they were couched as the initial stage in a process which proceeded through creolization and ended in eventual decreolization towards a lexifier. The elegance and renown of this formulation have had the effect, however, of obscuring the various alternative fates which a pidgin in fact may experience. Creolization is indeed one of the alternatives; however, just as commonly encountered are stasis and death.

Creolization is associated with expansion of structural form, the result being the transformation of an erstwhile pidgin into a full language. Under Hall's definition, as well as that of many scholars of contact languages today, creolization is equated with nativization (adoption as a first language by children). However, research demonstrates that the transformation of a pidgin into a creole is sometimes achieved via general expansion of social domain, such that the language develops via heavy usage in a wide variety of contexts, accomplished by adults as well as by children. As such, it is perhaps more appropriate to equate the transformation of a pidgin into a creole not with nativization, but with expansion through extension in social role (Hymes, 1971: 79).

For example, Keesing (1988) demonstrates that Melanesian Pidgin English emerged as a jargon used by multi-ethnic ship crews on whaling ships in the Pacific in the early nineteenth century and then was transformed into the lingua franca among multi-ethnic plantation workers in the sandalwood and sea cucumber trades; he ascribes a relatively negligible presence to children at this stage. While one of the dialects of this language, Tok Pisin, has been adopted as a first language over the past few decades, Sankoff (1979) and Romaine (1988b: 68, 304) argue that the effects of nativization upon the language have been relatively minor, and in the meantime, even before its adoption as a native language, Tok Pisin displayed structure as elaborated as any creole, including grammaticalized markers of tense, mood, and aspect, embedding structures, and extensive development in the lexicon. This has led Tok Pisin to be often described as an expanded pidgin, a designation also applied to the only recently nativized English-based pidgins of West Africa such as Nigerian Pidgin English. What is significant is that these expanded pidgins are essentially indistinguishable from creoles in their level of structural complexity, and that manipulation by adults has effected this complexity.

It has been more specifically argued that it is high usage among speakers of mutually unintelligible substrate languages, rather than between superstrate and substrate speakers, that sparks expansion, given that superstrate-substrate communication will often take place within contexts of a rather sociolinguistically narrow variety. For example, the expanded character of Naga Pidgin can be ascribed more to its use among speakers of various Naga languages than to its relatively constrained use between Nagas and the Assamese. Similarly, Chinese Pidgin English only acquired a degree of fluency when used between speakers of unintelligible dialects of Chinese, rather than between the Chinese and the British (Whinnom, 1971: 104). Whinnom's related suggestion that contact only results in the creation of stable pidgins when speakers of two or more languages use another language for communication (so-called "tertiary hybridization") has, however, been disputed (see Thomason and Kaufman, 1988: 196-7).

Pidgins also frequently pass through various geographical and sociolinguistic contexts in the process of expansion. For example, Hiri Motu began as a register of Motu used in trade with subordinate groups along the Gulf of Papua, became the general lingua franca of the Port Moresby area with the arrival of Europeans, and went on to be spread by the native police force into the interior, where it spread because of its association with high status, economic development and integration, despite the fact that Motu itself was not natively spoken there (Dutton, 1985). Similarly, Lingala emerged as a trade pidgin used between speakers of a few closely related Bantu languages along the Congo River in Central Africa, but has long since been established in urban centers as a lingua franca used in business, education, and the military (Knappett, 1979). We have also seen how Melanesian Pidgin English began as a shipboard lingua franca, was adopted as a plantation language, and has finally become the reigning language of the inter-ethnic city context, associ-

ated with education and achievement. Thus we see that the pidgin-creole-decreolization life cycle formulation, while useful, tends to obscure the rich variety of interactions which a pidgin language can have with its sociological setting.

While many pidgins undergo the types of expansion discussed above, just as many persist in pidgin form over long periods of time. Russenorsk, for example, showed no signs of expanding significantly: Trade was consistently vigorous, but nevertheless there was no need for the adoption of a trade language as a primary one, although it was sometimes acquired at an early age (Broch and Jahr, 1984: 55). Similarly, pidgins such as Chinook Jargon and pidginized Eleman and Koriki in Papua New Guinea experienced little significant expansion during their long lifetimes. The Hall formulation perhaps unwittingly gives an impression of inevitability; however, cases such as the ones above demonstrate that a pidgin only expands in response to sociological motivations licensing such expansion. In the absence of such motivation, pidgins remain reduced but functional trade vehicles.

Finally, most pidgins which do not experience expansion eventually undergo language death when the sociological motivations for their existence cease to exist. For example, after 1850, Norwegian merchants began acquiring fuller competence in Russian because of longer stays in Russia than had obtained in the past. As a result, Russenorsk, previously spoken by all levels of the trade community, became associated with the fishermen in particular, and looked down upon as inferior to the actual Russian spoken by the merchants. The *coup de grâce* was delivered by the incursion of the large-scale cash trade in the first decades of the twentieth century, which eventually eliminated the need for the old barter trade, the last bastion of Russenorsk (Broch and Jahr, 1984: 55-8). Attitudinal factors can also spell the death of a pidgin. Because of its association with white racism, Fanakalo, a pidginized Zulu, is being eliminated in favor of pidginized Town Bemba or CiBemba in Zambia (Holm, 1989: 555).

2.5 *Distribution*

Pidginization tends to be treated as an "exotic" phenomenon in the literature, as an "extreme" example of language restructuring. However, this perspective may well be an artifact of the monolingual Western perspective, given that pidginization has been exceedingly common worldwide. While creole languages tend to cluster in tropical locations where the European powers established plantation colonies from the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries, pidgins have been documented on all natively inhabited continents in all possible climates. Pidgins appear to represent a universal and common human response to the need for constrained communication between groups speaking unintelligible languages - a need which can arise almost anywhere on earth.

The sheer ordinariness of pidginization becomes clearer when we note the wide variety of Indo-Aryan pidgins in India, or the innumerable pidgins as yet undocumented in Papua New Guinea, the most linguistically diverse area in the world.[5] This conception is further reinforced by an awareness that countless pidgins have been lost to history; for example, in the eighteenth century, Scandinavia was host to various trade pidgins such as Borgarmålet, a Swedish-Lappish hybrid (Broch and Jahr, 1984: 51).

3 Creole Languages

3.1 Creole features and subtypes

As mentioned above, creoles are usually more complex and structurally elaborated than pidgins. The differences between the "pidgin" and "creole" stages are not so evident if the pidgin has been in existence for a long time and has stabilized and become the primary language of its speakers before nativization takes place – as with New Guinea Tok Pisin – (Sankoff, 1979; Bickerton, 1981: 3–4; Romaine, 1988b: 68, 304). However, the differences are clearer in cases of *early creolized creoles*, that is, creoles which acquire native speakers quickly after the initial contact situation (within a generation), so that the contact vernacular is at a rudimentary and variable pre-pidgin or jargon stage when creolization takes place. Thomason and Kaufman (1988) refer to the process which produces such creoles as *abrupt creolization*, and they see it as having applied to many of the world's known creoles, including "creoles that arose in the context of the European slave trade in Africa, the Caribbean area, and several islands in the Indian Ocean" (p. 148). Like Thomason and Kaufman (1988), Bickerton (1988: 272) believes that early creolized creoles are the norm rather than the exception; but unlike them, he believes that Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) belongs in this category.[6]

Some of the features shared by creoles but lacking in (rudimentary, early stage) pidgins like Hawaiian Pidgin English include:[7]

1 Movement rules. For instance, the Guyanese Creole [GC] sentence *Jan bin sii wan uman* "John saw a woman" can be realized as *a Jan bin sii wan uman* to focus the subject, *a wan uman Jan bin sii* to focus the object, and *a sii Jan bin sii wan uman* to focus the verb (Bickerton, 1981: 52).

2 An article system (p. 56) which distinguishes between definite noun phrases (GC *di buk* "the book"), indefinites (GC *wan buk* "a particular book"), and nonspecifics (GC *buk* "books").

3 The encoding of such tense, modality, and aspect distinctions as anterior, irrealis, and punctual by invariant, preverbal markers, for in-

stance, *bin, go* and *a* respectively in GC, *te, ava* and *ape* respectively in Haitian Creole [HC] (p. 59).

4 Facilities for relativization and other complex sentence embeddings, with or without a relative pronoun [RP], e.g., GC *bo mi granfaada bin ga wan ool boot,* [ø RP] *bin ton dong batam wan big manggo chrii* [ø RP] *bin de rait a head a di biling* "But my grandfather had an old boat [which was] turned down underneath a big mango tree [that] was right in front of the building" (Irene, quoted in Rickford, 1987: 148).

Besides early and late creolized creoles, distinctions have also been drawn (Bickerton, 1988: 269–70, Arends, 1995: 16–17) between *fort creoles, plantation creoles,* and *maroon creoles. Fort creoles* refer to contact vernaculars which developed in and around the European outposts on the West African coast between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily between Europeans and local Africans working in the forts or assisting in the slave trade.[8] The English, like the Portuguese, had several such forts, and Hancock (1986) has suggested that they spawned a Guinea Coast Creole English (GCCE) which in turn became the source of many of the Caribbean English-based creoles. By contrast, the Spanish did not have such West African settlements, and McWhorter (1995a) has surmised that the rarity of Spanish-based creoles in the New World might be attributable to this fact. The assumption that the crucial sociohistorical crucible for New World creoles was not the New World plantation but the West African forts from which most slaves came is a fascinating but not unproblematic one; there is reason to believe that most of the "sale slaves" who reached the New World did NOT know GCCE or any other fort creoles, while the West African hired hands (*grumettoes*) and "castle slaves" most familiar with such creoles were least likely to have gone to the New World (Goodman, 1987; Rickford, 1987: 46–51, 53–6). *Plantation creoles,* as their names imply, are those which are assumed to have been created or developed on (primarily sugar) plantations in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans to which ethnically diverse groups of slaves or indentured laborers were brought from other parts of the world. The relation between the demographics and social structure of such plantation communities and the processes of pidgin-creole creation or development which took place therein is not in itself a new topic (cf. Alleyne, 1971; Baker, 1982), but it has been the source of considerable new research in recent years (Singler, 1990a, 1993; Arends, 1995; Rickford and Handler, 1995). Finally, maroon creoles are those spoken among descendants of maroons or runaway slaves who escaped from slavery and set up their own communities, usually in inland and relatively inaccessible areas. Saramaccan in Suriname, South America, is the best-known maroon creole. Its distinctive non-European features may be due in part to the relative isolation which maroonage provides (Price, 1973; Alleyne, 1986; Arends, 1995: 16).

3.2 *Theories of origin*

One of the oldest and most hotly contested issues in pidgin-creole studies is how these languages arose, or more specifically, how their similarities (and to a lesser extent their relatively simplified and mixed characters; cf. Muysken, 1988: 285–6) are to be explained. Originally, the competition was between *polygenetic* theories, which assume that most varieties arose independently at different times and in different places, and *monogenetic* theories, which assume that most varieties are derived from one or a small number of ancestors which subsequently diffused or spread to other locations. But for the past two decades, discussions of the bioprogram theory – which is neither polygenetic nor monogenetic – have dominated the literature.

Polygenetic theories have the potential attraction of being universally applicable and not requiring the implausible assumption that every one of the world's pidgins and creoles is historically related. But they face this recurrent challenge – if these varieties are independent creations, how are their similarities to be explained? The basic strategy which polygeneticists adopt is to point to one or more factors in the contact situations that create pidgins and creoles which might cause them to develop in parallel ways.[9]

One such factor – and one of tremendous interest to sociolinguists – is the parallel social contexts in which pidgins and creoles arise and the parallel functions they are required to serve. This is indeed a component of the so-called *Independent Parallel Development* theory attributed to Hall (1966) by Todd (1974: 31) and Romaine (1988b: 92–102) and the *Common Social Context* theory attributed to Sankoff (1980) by Muysken (1988: 286–7) and Muysken and Veenstra (1995: 128). But one searches in vain in Hall and Sankoff for any well developed functionalist theory of this type. Hall (1966) is essentially an exposition of the baby talk theory, one which recognizes both superstrate and (some) substrate influence in the context of imperfect second language acquisition (see below). Sankoff (1980) is a multifaceted collection of articles, including pioneering discussions of grammaticalization in relation to discourse; but none of them articulates the "strictly functionalist perspective: the functionalist perspective which the names of these theories seem to suggest, but primarily in recognizing the possible contributions of foreigner talk (see below). While one might hope, from a sociolinguist's perspective, that research will eventually yield more fully developed functionalist theories of pidgin-creole genesis, we should be wary of overstating the contextual similarities among trade and plantation situations whose details are on reflection quite diverse and as yet not sufficiently well known.

For Bloomfield (1933: 472–3), as for Hall (1966: 5), the parallel factor in polygenesis is the process by which speakers of the superstrate might have deliberately simplified their language to facilitate its understanding and ac-

quisition by substrate speakers. In its initial formulations, this *baby talk* theory (so called because adults produce similar simplifications to facilitate comprehension by children) was both simplistic and racist.[10] But an even bigger problem for it was to explain how separate acts of simplification by speakers of different superstrate languages (English, French, Portuguese, Chinook) could result in pidgins and creoles with so many striking structural similarities. The *nautical jargon* theory – that pidgins and creoles are outgrowths of an international jargon developed and spread by ship's crews – could explain some of the lexical items (e.g., *kapsaiz* "turn over," *hais* "lift") found in many (European-based) pidgins and creoles, but not their structural similarity. The notion that there are widespread if not universal patterns of *foreigner talk* (Ferguson, 1971; Ferguson and DeBose, 1977) – and that these involve conventional reduction processes similar to those found in pidgins and creoles[11] – has served to legitimize and rescue the baby talk theory somewhat. But the baby talk theory has other weaknesses, including the fact that it is often substrate rather than superstrate speakers who are the main creators and users of pidgin-creole varieties (Whinnom, 1971), the fact that pidgins and creoles are usually unintelligible to uninitiated speakers of the superstrate, and the unlikelihood that central pidgin-creole features resulted from deliberate simplification. As Taylor (1963: 810) has noted:

the predicative systems of these three creole languages [Martinique Creole, Haitian Creole, and Sranan] cannot be explained as reduced or corrupt versions of those found in French or English ... these characteristics, though shared by many West African and other non-creole languages, would hardly suggest themselves to a Western European seeking to simplify his own speech.

In these latter objections lie the kernels of alternative polygenetic theories of origin. If one focuses on the substrate speakers rather than the superstrate speakers, one might regard their creation of pidgins (at least) as the product of limited *second language acquisition* (Bickerton, 1977; Andersen, 1983), seeing the parallel factor as the set of linguistic, cognitive and other factors which produce similar kinds of interlanguage (or, to use Ferguson and DeBose's less felicitous term, "broken language"). Considerable doubt has been expressed recently, however, about whether pidginization really involves attempts to acquire a target language, rather than attempts to create a medium for interethnic communication (Baker, 1990: 111). Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 174–94) argue, in fact, that only a perspective which assumes that both superstrate and substrate speakers were involved in *mutual linguistic accommodation* can account for *differences* among pidgins with respect to their inclusion of universally marked features, like the presence of duals and trials in the pronouns of Bislama and Tok Pisin, a feature of the Austronesian substrate. Of course, no single substrate can account for all of the world's pidgins and creoles, but Alleyne (1980a), Boretzky (1983), Lefebvre (1986), Holm (1986), McWhorter (1992), and others have argued that Kwa and other West African languages

are sufficiently similar with respect to serial verb constructions and other features found in Saramaccan, Haitian, and other Caribbean creoles spoken by African-derived populations for substrate influence to be the most plausible explanation.[12] This theory, referred to as *Afro-genesis* by Muysken (1988), has been attacked by Bickerton (1984, 1994) and by Muysken and Smith (1995) for failing to account adequately for differences between possible West African source languages with respect to putative substrate features, for failing to provide a scenario for the transmission of substrate features into the emerging creole, and for failing to explain why some features of the substrate but not others were incorporated in the derived creoles. However, the debate on these issues is far from closed, as articles in the *Journal of Pidgin Creole Linguistics* will attest. Afro-genesis is itself a subvariety of *substratist* theories, and such theories have received a big boost from the work of Keesing (1988) on the Oceanic substrate in Melanesian Pidgin English.

Monogenetic theories, unlike their polygenetic counterparts, come in only two varieties. The first is a *broad scope* variety which suggests that many of the world's pidgins and creoles are derived from a Portuguese contact language developed in the course of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century contacts between Portuguese and West Africans, perhaps itself related to Sabir, the medieval lingua franca of the Mediterranean. This theory, and its associated relexification hypothesis (required to explain how French, English, and other varieties evolved from a Portuguese–West African base) produced a great deal of excitement in the 1960s and 1970s for several reasons, including its historical linking of widely separated Atlantic and Pacific varieties.[13] However, it has since fallen into disfavor, partly because it is patently inapplicable to many pidgins and creoles (those that had no direct or indirect contact with the Portuguese) and because it makes an assumption which den Besten and others (1995: 88) consider "irrational" – that pidginization and creolization, alone of all human conceptual and cultural activities, happened only once, rather than again and again. The other monogenetic theory is *restricted in scope* to the English-based pidgins and creoles, which Hancock (1986) sees as descendants of a putative Guinea Coast Creole English (GCCE) which developed on the West African coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As noted above, one key question is whether GCCE or any similar entity was in fact spoken by significant numbers of "sale slaves" and transported by sufficient numbers of them to influence the development of English in various parts of the Caribbean. Rickford (1987) is skeptical, but McWhorter (1995b) is not.

The theory which has in fact dominated discussions of creole genesis since the 1980s is Bickerton's (1981, 1984, 1986) *Language Bioprogram Hypothesis* (LBH), which views creoles as inventions of the first generations of children who acquire them natively. According to Bickerton, children who were born into contact situations where rudimentary pidgins or jargons were spoken drew on a species-specific bioprogram to transform them into the early creolized creoles evident in Hawaii, Jamaica, Haiti, and the Sudan. On the face of it this is a polygenetic theory, since it posits independent creation in the

separate places in which creole languages developed (note that this hypothesis is strictly limited to creole rather than pidgin origins). But in a sense it is simultaneously as guided by a monogenetic theory, insofar as it sees the development of these creoles as guided by a single linguistic bioprogram which is common to all human beings. In any event, the LBH is so different from traditional polygenetic and monogenetic theories that it defies categorization in their terms.

Evidence in favor of the bioprogram includes the contrasts between the rudimentary HPE spoken by Japanese and Filipino immigrants who arrived between 1900 and 1920 and the expanded HCE spoken by people born and raised in Hawaii thereafter, and the fact that the very features in which HPE and HCE differ – movement rules, TMA markers, and so on (see above) – are those found in creoles from a variety of different lexical bases elsewhere. The fact that the lexical source languages (English, French, Dutch) of these creoles do not contain the features indicates that they did not provide them, and the fact that the HPE-speaking immigrants do not use the features rules out monogenesis and most varieties of polygenesis as likely explanations for their presence in the creoles. A third bit of evidence is the fact that the language of children in non-creole-speaking communities – supposedly representing the early effects of the bioprogram – often includes features found in creoles. According to the LBH, the first creole-speaking children would have been quite unusual in terms of first language acquisition worldwide, insofar as the children would have had more expertise in the language than their parents. But their exceptional nature would have been due to the fact that they were born into a situation in which the language they had to acquire was a rudimentary rather than a full-fledged one, and the fact that as children – unlike adults who have passed the relevant development stage – they had access to the bioprogram to expand it.

Arguments against the bioprogram have been varied.[14] One of the earliest was the fact that the LBH is not a comprehensive theory of creole genesis insofar as it does not account for non-European-based varieties like Lingala (Mufwene, 1984), nor for late creolized varieties like Tok Pisin. A quite different argument is that the HPE documented by Bickerton was not the real progenitor of HCE, but that the latter had its roots in an older and more fully developed English-based pidgin which replaced the earlier pidginized Hawaiian as a lingua franca in the late nineteenth century (Goodman, 1985; McWhorter, 1993, 1994; see note 6). Bickerton's analysis of the TMA system in a number of creoles has also been challenged (cf. papers in Singler, 1990b), with the creoles looking somewhat less uniform than he had suggested and perhaps less likely to have been the product of a single bioprogram. Another criticism is that Bickerton's LBH scenario posits a smaller role for the parents of the first creolizing children and less influence of the substrate languages than seems likely (Alleyne, 1980b, 1986; Goodman, 1985; Holm, 1986; Thomason and Kaufman, 1988: 163–5). Singler (1986, 1992) was also the first to suggest that nativization might have taken a long time to be accomplished because of the low birth and survival rates and the high death rates in many

plantation communities, with the implication that locally born children might have had a much smaller role in the creation of plantation creoles than in Bickerton's LBH scenario. Both demographic and linguistic evidence have been introduced in recent years in support of the gradualism hypothesis – the view that many creoles developed over a long period of time rather than in the short time-span LBH requires, and that stabilization rather than nativization was the crucial milestone in their genesis (Carden and Stewart, 1988; McWhorter, 1992; Arends, 1995; Arends and Bruyn, 1995).

In the face of these criticisms of and questions about the LBH, Bickerton has been far from silent, airing his rebuttals and clarifications principally in the pages of the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Studies* (e.g., 1987, 1991, 1992, 1994). Bickerton's critics have invariably responded with rejoinders of their own (Thomason, 1992; Singler, 1992; McWhorter, 1994; Arends 1995), contributing to the "fractious energy" of the field to which we alluded earlier. Overall, it is probably fair to say that most creolists see some role both for universals and for substrate influence in creole genesis (cf. Mufwene, 1986, and other contributions in Muysken and Smith, 1986). But whether they regard the former as evidence for an innate "bioprogram," and how much of a role they attribute to one or the other of these key elements are issues on which they remain sharply divided.

3.3 The creole continuum and decreolization

In some communities (e.g., Guyana, Hawaii, Jamaica) in which a creole (or "basilect") coexists with a lexically related standard language (or "acrolect"), there exists a continuum of intermediate varieties (or "mesolects") between them, as illustrated by Allsopp's (1958) list of alternative ways of saying "I told him" in Guyana (cf. Bickerton, 1975: 9–14 for discussion):

ai tould him		(acrolect)
ai told him		
ai tol mi		
ai tel im		
a tel im		(mesolects)
ai tel i		
mi tel i		
mi tel am		(basilect)

The traditional account of such continua (DeCamp, 1971a) is that they are later developments from an earlier situation in which only the creole and the standard existed. Over time, on this account, creole speakers gained greater opportunity and motivation to decreolize or modify their speech in the direction of the standard, producing the intermediate mesolects in the process.

Challenging this view, Alleyne (1971) suggested that differences in the social experiences and attitudes of different groups of slaves in the colonies (for instance, house slaves vs field slaves, old hands vs new arrivals, locally born vs African-born) might have led to continuum-like variability right from the start. And Bickerton (1986: 226), noting that the earliest Africans in the colonies were initially outnumbered by Europeans and would have had more exposure to the superstrate, suggested that the creole continuum "must have formed 'backwards'. . . acrolect first, then mesolect, then basilect, as the pyramid of slave society slowly formed itself." (On this point, see also Baker, 1991a: 267, 277.) Mufwene (1988, 1989) is also strongly skeptical about the notion of decreolization, particularly insofar as it assumes a monolithic and relatively invariant creole as starting point, and insofar as its existence is inferred from synchronic rather than diachronic evidence.

However, one can agree that present-day continuum situations must have been variable almost from their inception (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the Caribbean, in the nineteenth century for Hawaii) while still assuming that they were produced by processes of language learning and shift which we might regard as "decreolization." For one thing, even house slaves who acquired acrolectal varieties of English are likely to have done so gradually and via a series of interlanguage stages – basilang, mesolang, acrolang – that are structurally reminiscent of the points along a decreolizing creole continuum (Schumann and Stauble, 1983; Rickford, 1987: 34). Second, while the current basilects, mesolect(s), and acrolects might have come into being one, two, or three hundred years ago,[15] there is little doubt that quantitative decreolization has occurred in the interim, in the sense that the proportion of basilectal speakers has been declining and the proportion of speakers who control mesolectal (if not acrolectal) varieties has been increasing (Alleyne, 1980a: 192–4; Rickford, 1983: 300ff.). Third, decreolization in the qualitative sense – in which basilectal features and varieties historically attested are no longer evident – has clearly occurred in some communities (cf. Winer, 1993:6, for Trinidad and Tobago, Rickford and Handler, 1994, for Barbados). Finally, if we adopt what I have elsewhere (Rickford, 1979:411–13, 1987:34–5) referred to as a polygenetic rather than a monogenetic model of decreolization, its current applicability to continuum situations would remain very strong. In a monogenetic model, the creation of the continuum would have occurred only once – whether in the seventeenth century or the nineteenth – and subsequent decreolizing speakers would be seen as *adopting* or acquiring existing intermediate varieties. In a polygenetic model, however, decreolizing speakers would be seen as actively *creating* intermediate varieties as they attempt to shift from basilect to acrolect, retracing paths similar to those who have done so before them because they are moving between similar starting points and end-points and are motivated by similar sociolinguistic considerations.

A related issue is whether it is possible to regard African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) as a decreolized form of an earlier African-American plantation creole. Recent debate has moved beyond the polarized positions of creolists

like Stewart (1967, 1968) and Dillard (1972) who favored the decreolization position and dialectologists like Davis (1970) and McDavid and McDavid (1971) who opposed it. Scholars who have considered the issue more recently tend to use quantitative and other variationist evidence and to draw on data from the African-American diaspora in places like Samaná in the Dominican Republic, or Liberia. Some of them are ardent opponents of the (de)creolization hypothesis (Poplack and Sankoff, 1987; Tagliamonte and Poplack, 1994) and some of them ardent proponents (Baugh, 1980; Holm, 1984; Singer, 1991; Winford, 1992a; Rickford, forthcoming). But there is an interesting intermediate group of scholars who were stronger supporters of the creole hypothesis in earlier times but now have reservations, feeling that AAVE might have been a semi-creole or had some partial creole influence without having been a full-fledged creole (Holm, 1991; Mufwene, 1992; Winford 1992b).

Controversies about creole continua involve more than the diachronic issue of whether they can be viewed as the products of decreolization. There is also the issue of whether synchronic variation in so-called continuum communities is either as continuous or unidimensional as continuum models seem to suggest, the issue of whether continuum analysts have given adequate consideration to the social, stylistic, and human dimensions of continuum variation, and whether the assumption that continuum change is always unilinear – towards the acrolect – is correct. For discussion of these issues, see Rickford (1987: 15–39), Carrington (1992), Alleyne (1994), Winford (1994), and De Rooij (1995).

4 Conclusion

Pidgins and creoles are fascinating examples of the extent to which and the ways in which languages can be generated and shaped through language contact. The study of these languages has been going on for over 200 years (Magens, 1770), and sociolinguists have been interested in them almost from the inception of modern sociolinguistics itself (Ferguson, 1959; Hymes, 1971). In this paper we have tried to sketch out the theoretical, methodological, and practical significance of these languages for sociolinguistics, and then to present, in somewhat greater detail, the synchronic and diachronic issues which occupy scholars of pidgins, creoles, and creole continua. We have not been able to describe in as much detail the human – expressive, sociopolitical, educational, and economic – advantages and challenges which these languages offer their language users. Devonish (1986), Romaine (1992), and Alleyne (1994) are good references to consult to pursue these issues further.

The field of pidgin-creole studies is, as noted in our introduction, a field full of excitement and "fractious energy," one in which new discoveries are constantly being made and old ideas are constantly being challenged and over-

turned. Sociolinguists should find in this field much from which they can learn, and much to which they can contribute.

NOTES

1 We wish to express our gratitude to Derek Bickerton and Angela Rickford for comments on an earlier version of this paper, while absolving them of responsibility for any errors it contains.

2 In the examples that follow, the following words are from Russian: *moja, snai, eta, samme, tvoja*; the other words are from Norwegian, but *pā* is derivable from both languages.

3 Russian has no equative copula, but Norwegian does.

4 Compare Bickerton's (1984: 178) *pidginization index*, critiqued by Singer (1990a) and modified by Bickerton (1992).

5 See Foley (1988) for documentation of Pidgin Yimas, combining elements of Yimas and Arafundi and virtually unknown in pidgin-creole studies before Foley's work.

6 Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 352, n 1) believe, as Goodman (1985), Holm (1986), and McWhorter (1994: 87–9) do, that HCE developed from a pre-existing nineteenth-century Pacific English pidgin which was more structured than the "Hawaiian Pidgin English" (HPE) of Japanese and Filipino immigrants discussed in Bickerton (1981) and elsewhere. However, on this issue the co-authors of this article have different views, Rickford feeling that little evidence has been presented to confirm the prior widespread existence in Hawaii of a stable nineteenth-century Pacific English pidgin, and disagreeing with

McWhorter that the HPE of Japanese and Filipino immigrants can be dismissed as a "halting . . . second language register of an English contact language which had taken root long before their arrival." Rickford is particularly impressed with the extensive demographic and textual evidence on the nature and development of Pidgin Hawaiian, Pidgin English, and Creole English in Hawaii compiled by Roberts (1995a, b) and Bickerton (1995).

7 See Bickerton (1981: 51–72) for 12 such features in various creoles.

8 Although they are generally referred to as creoles, these contact vernaculars must clearly have been non-native varieties to many if not most of their users, although the children of European/African unions may have learned them natively, and they might have become primary languages for some to whom they were not a native language.

9 It should be noted that the people whose work we will classify as polygeneticist do not necessarily or consciously classify themselves as such.

10 For instance, from Hall (1966: 5): "The European . . . would assume that the native's incomplete efforts at speaking the European's language were due, not to insufficient practice, but to inherent mental inferiority. So the European would conclude that it was useless to use 'good language' to the native, and

would reply to him in a replica of the latter's incomplete speech, adding also some of the patterns of baby-talk commonly used by mothers and nurses in his own country. The aboriginal, not knowing any better, would assume that this was the white man's real language and would delight in using it." Interestingly enough, the opposite was true in Papua New Guinea, where one European missionary appears to have "delighted" in learning Motu, but later realized that he was receiving a deliberately simplified version of it (Dutton, 1985).

11 See Foley, 1988: 165, table 1 for a convenient summary of simplifying processes and their results.

12 As Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 162) note: "the typological fit between numerous syntactic structures in Atlantic creoles and corresponding structures in most or all relevant Niger-Congo languages is surely too close to be accidental."

13 See Thompson, 1961, Whinnom, 1965, and other works cited in DeCamp, 1971b, and Todd, 1974.

14 It is striking that some of the best-known introductory texts on pidgins and creoles (e.g., Mühlhäusler, 1986) and even more recent introductory sociolinguistics texts (e.g., Wardhaugh, 1992, and Romaine, 1994b) do not include any arguments against the LBH.

15 This hypothesis assumes the existence of normal (i.e., non-decreolizing) language change in the interim – that is, that the acrolect or standard variety of the twentieth century would not be identical with that of the seventeenth century, because of drift and other factors. Even so, it should be pointed out that the textual evidence for the existence of *all* the currently available varieties in earlier periods (cf. Rickford, 1987; Lalla and D'Costa, 1990) is not as strong as some commentators (e.g., Gilman, 1993: 151; McWhorter, 1995b) have claimed.

15 Language Contact and Language Degeneration

COLETTE GRINEVALD CRAIG

1 Introduction

Although the phenomenon of language death is as old as the recorded history of the languages of the world, its systematic study is a relatively new field of linguistics and sociolinguistics. A series of important publications clustered around the mid-eighties has confirmed its having become a recognized concern and field of study (Dressler, 1972; Dorian, 1981, 1989; Schmidt, 1985; Hill and Hill, 1986; Taylor, 1992, from an SSILA conference in 1985).

For linguists, the scientific interest of the process of language death resides in the fact that many obsolescent languages undergo structural changes, thereby offering more data for the study of the general process of language attrition, which itself should turn out to be telling of the nature of human languages in general. For sociolinguists, the interest resides more in the study of the causes and circumstances of language death, a topic addressed in Brenzinger's contribution (see chapter 16).

The linguistic documentation of dying languages is sometimes labelled as "salvage linguistics." This type of research raises issues of fieldwork methodology, in that standard quantitative studies may be severely constrained by the very nature of the situation and qualitative studies require sensitivity to the particular relation of the last speakers towards their stigmatized obsolescent language. In addition, fieldwork on obsolescent languages raises all the questions of ethics inherent to research on marginalized and dominated populations, issues which are best addressed before and monitored during the time of fieldwork. Work on endangered languages also raises the issue of the position of academics towards efforts aimed at counteracting the process of language death, including their role in language preservation and language revitalization projects.