

# THE FIELD OF CREOLE LANGUAGE STUDIES

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## INTRODUCTION

A DECADE AGO, THE STUDY OF PIDGIN AND CREOLE LANGUAGES WAS HIGHLY compartmentalized. Very few linguists dealt with both pidgins and creoles. Few students of creole English were aware of current studies in other widely separated geographical areas, even of studies of the same language (e.g., Chinese pidgin English, Hawaiian English, Jamaican creole, and West African Krio). This compartmentalization is now rapidly breaking down. Linguists now view pidgins and creoles as two phases, perhaps even as only two aspects, of the same linguistic process. The geographical and interlingual barriers have so eroded that although a linguist may think of himself as primarily a Caribbeanist or a French creolist, he can no longer ignore work in other areas and other languages. Students of Haitian French and of Trinidadian English realize that they are dealing not with similar linguistic problems, but with the same linguistic problem. There is an increasing tendency to speak not of *creoles* but of *creole*.

The crucial date in this unification of the field was 1959, when the first international conference on creole language studies was held at Mona, Jamaica. During the five-day conference a new monogenetic theory of the origin of pidgins and creoles was proposed and hotly debated. The generative-transformational theory—at that time a new and controversial approach, only two years after the publication of Chomsky's *Syntactic structures*—was first applied to creole languages. New sociolinguistic concepts such as diglossia and continuum were discussed. The proceedings of this conference (Le Page, 1961) have formed the basis of a great deal of the research and discussion since 1959. A second conference on creole studies is planned for the spring of 1968. [See p. 134 in this issue of LARR.] Even more international and interlingual than the first conference, it will attempt to suggest new approaches for the second decade of general creole studies.

This paper will attempt to outline the current issues in creole studies, to summarize the progress so far, and to suggest approaches which are being made or which might be made to creole linguistic problems. It is not intended for the specialist but for the student of the English language or of general linguistics. So that it may serve as a bibliographic guide to any reader interested in further study of creole, I have provided rather extensive citation of sources. The bibliography is representative, not exhaustive. Many important works have

been omitted, and I am well aware that another author with different interests might recommend a very different list. It is intended as a supplement to, not as a substitute for, such standard bibliographic guides as *Bilingualism in the Americas* (Haugen, 1956) and *Languages in Contact* (Weinreich, 1964). The beginning student of creole would do well to start with these two guides and with the relevant papers in *The Ethnography of Communication* (Gumperz and Hymes, 1964) and in *Language in Culture and Society* (Hymes, 1964).

#### THE NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF PIDGINS AND CREOLES

Each pidgin or creole is related (lexically related, at least) to one or more languages, usually a European language, with English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch the most frequent. A creole which shares most of its vocabulary with English is traditionally called an *English-based creole* or *creolized English*. These terms unfortunately imply a theory of origin, and the origin of pidgins and creoles is indeed controversial. Many linguists would hotly deny that French-based creole is "genetically" related to French in the same sense that French is related to Italian. These terms must be understood as purely descriptive labels which refer primarily to similarities in vocabulary, not to basic structural similarities or to genetic classification. Pidgins and creoles are also often called mixed languages, an even more dangerous term, for it not only begs the historical question but is also descriptively misleading, implying that a pidgin or creole is only a potpourri with no uniform coherent structure of its own. These are genuine languages in their own right, not just macaronic blends or interlingual corruptions of standard languages.

The term *pidgin* was first used for Chinese pidgin English and was later applied to any language of similar type. A pidgin is a contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers. The word *pidgin* perhaps derives from English *business*, and a pidgin is used for trading or between employer and worker or in any situation requiring communication between persons who do not speak each other's native languages. A pidgin is characterized by a limited vocabulary and a simplification or elimination of many grammatical devices such as number and gender.

The term *creole* (from Portuguese *crioulo*, via Spanish and French) originally meant a white man of European descent but born and raised in a tropical or semi-tropical colony. Only later was the meaning extended to include indigenous natives and others of non-European origin, e.g., African slaves (Cassidy, 1961:21–3, 161–2). The term was then applied to certain languages spoken by creoles in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa and was later extended to other languages of similar types. Most creoles, like most pidgins, are European based, i.e., each has derived most of its vocabulary from one or more European languages. Creole French (also called *patois*) and creole

English are the most frequent in West Africa and the New World, but Spanish and Portuguese creoles are common in other parts of the world and, as I will later discuss, are of great importance in the historical development of pidgins and creoles. By no means all of the vocabulary of a creole is shared with its corresponding European language, however, and in both phonology and syntax the differences between a creole and a standard are usually so great as to make them mutually unintelligible. Some pidgins and creoles are not European based. The famous Chinook Jargon, once used for trading by northwestern American Indians, was a pidgin (Jacobs, 1932; Boas, 1933; Grant, 1945); and there are non-European creoles flourishing today in Africa (Samarin, 1962).

Unlike a pidgin, which functions only as an auxiliary contact language, a creole is the native language of most of its speakers. Therefore its vocabulary and syntactic devices are, like those of any native language, large enough to meet all the communication needs of its speakers. In West Africa and in the Caribbean there is a small but growing literature written in creole languages. A creole, like a pidgin, tends to minimize redundancy in syntax. For example, although pidgin English lacks any plural marker for nouns, creole English has a plural suffix or enclitic *-dem* (derived from the English demonstrative *them*). This suffix is normally omitted when redundant, i.e., when plurality may be inferred from other signals. Thus the standard English *the boys*, *the three boys*, and *those boys* would appear in creole as *di bwai-dem*, *di trii bwai*, and *dem bwai*; neither *di trii bwai-dem* nor *dem bwai-dem* would occur unless unusual emphasis on the plurality is intended.

A creole is inferior to its corresponding standard language only in social status. A pidgin, however, is so limited, both lexically and structurally, that it is suitable only for specialized and limited communication. Pidgins are therefore short lived. Rarely does a pidgin survive for a century, and there is no parallel to the longevity of Sabir, better known as Mediterranean Lingua Franca, which survived from the middle ages until the twentieth century (Schuchardt, 1909; Reinecke, 1938; Whinnom, 1965). If the interlingual contact ends, the pidgin usually also ends; there is no longer a need for it, and there are no sentimental attachments or nationalistic motivations for preserving a dead pidgin. If the interlingual contact is maintained for a long time, usually one group learns the standard language of the other, as the American Indians learned English (Leachman and Hall, 1955). The only way in which a pidgin may escape extinction is by evolving into a creole; i.e., the syntax and vocabulary are extended and it becomes the native language of a community. After this metamorphosis, it may survive long after the termination of the interlingual contacts which had maintained the pidgin. In fact we can never know how many of the "normal" languages of the world originated via this pidgin-creole process. It was apparently Bloomfield (1933:474) who first suggested this historical relationship

between pidgin and creole. Robert A. Hall, Jr., has carried the idea much further, however; he makes a pidgin origin an essential feature of his definition of creole and postulates a sort of linguistic "life cycle" beginning with a spontaneous generation of a pidgin, followed by evolution to creole (Hall, 1953, 1962, 1966).

Creole is spoken today by more than six million persons in and around the Caribbean and by smaller and more scattered groups of speakers in West Africa (especially Sierra Leone and the Camerouns) and in South and Southeast Asia (e.g., India, Macao, and the Philippines). Because pidgin is an auxiliary rather than a native language, estimates of total numbers of speakers are difficult and unreliable, but one could safely say that several million persons daily use some form of pidgin in at least some language situations (*Languages of the World*, 1964; Whinnom, 1956; Le Page, 1957-8:54-62; Hall, 1966; Stewart, 1962). Numerically the largest are the French creoles, perhaps totaling 4,500,000 speakers. There are four major dialects of French creole in the Caribbean (all mutually intelligible): Haiti, French Guiana, Louisiana, and the Lesser Antilles (i.e., the French islands of Guadeloupe, Les Saintes, Marie-Galante, and Martinique, and the once French but later British islands of Dominica, Trinidad, Grenada, and St. Lucia). Creole French is also spoken on the French island of Réunion and the British island of Mauritius, both in the Indian Ocean. These creoles have long coexisted with standard French or standard English and (in the British islands) with creole English, all with surprisingly little interlingual influence (Stewart, 1962; Goodman, 1964).

Creole English is used in West Africa, in the Camerouns and in Sierra Leone (Berry, 1961, 1962). It is also spoken by at least a million and a half speakers in Jamaica and by smaller numbers in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana (British Guiana), British Honduras, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Anguilla, Nevis, and the Netherlands Antilles. Sranan (also called Sranan Tongo or Taki-Taki) and Saramaccan, two mutually unintelligible dialects of creole English, are still spoken by about 80,000 in Surinam, even though that territory passed from British to Dutch hands in 1667 (Voorhoeve, 1961b, 1962). Gullah, once widely spoken in Georgia, South Carolina, and the nearby Sea Islands, is now almost extinct on the mainland and becoming rare on the islands (Turner, 1949). Negerhollands, still spoken by a few persons in the U. S. Virgin Islands, is not an English but a Dutch creole, long antedating the American purchase of these islands in 1916.

Spanish and Portuguese creoles are widely used in the Far East (Whinnom, 1956), and Stewart (1962:53) reports creole Portuguese still in use on three islands off the West African coast: Cape Verde, Annobón, and São Tomé. The only clear example in the Caribbean is Papiamentu, spoken by about 200,000 in the Dutch ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao) in

the southern Caribbean. The Spanish and Portuguese elements in Papiamentu are both so pervasive and so intermingled that its classification is disputed. Since the islands were acquired by the Netherlands in 1634 it has been so influenced by other languages, especially Dutch and English, that it now resembles a sort of creolized Esperanto (van Wijk, 1958; Navarro Tomás, 1951).

European-based creoles are used also in other widely-scattered areas of the world, such as South Africa (Valkhoff, 1966), Hawaii (Reinecke and Tokimasa, 1934), and Pitcairn Island (Ross, 1964). Pitcairnese is the creole descendant of the pidgin English used by the original Bounty mutineers who reached the island in 1790. Non-European-based creoles are less common, but Samarin (1962) reports them from Africa. Furthermore, many other "mixed languages" not usually thought of as creoles (e.g., Yiddish, Indonesian, and Swahili) have many creole characteristics.

#### THE ORIGIN OF PIDGINS AND CREOLES

Within the past decade a controversy has arisen between monogenetic and polygenetic theories of origin for pidgin and creole. Do all pidgins and creoles have a common "genetic" ancestor from which they have diverged in the traditional stammbaum sense? Or is each different pidgin and creole—perhaps even the pidgin or creole of each different speech community—the result of a separate act of creation and process of development? In other words, is general pidgin-creole a single language which has developed distinct and mutually-unintelligible varieties (French, English, Portuguese, etc.) under the influence of the relevant standard languages? Or is each pidgin and creole genetically related to the corresponding standard language, from which it diverged under the influence of a similar sociolinguistic situation?

Until recently, the only controversy was among competing polygenetic theories. The earliest of these was incredibly naive but unfortunately is still held by many reputable scholars. According to this theory, each pidgin and creole began as a sort of baby-talk used by masters, plantation owners, and merchants to communicate with their servants, slaves, and customers. Each speaker deliberately mutilated the standard language by eliminating all grammatical inflections, reducing the number of phonological and syntactic contrasts, and limiting the vocabulary to a few hundred words. The resulting structure was described by many scholars as a "corruption," a "minimum grammar," a return to an "archaic state," etc. (e.g., Göbl-Galdi, 1934). Even Jespersen described pidgins as "minimal" and "makeshift" languages (1922:Ch. XII). Some scholars (e.g., Hjelmslev, 1939) inverted the invidious value judgments, describing pidgin structure as "optimum" rather than "minimum" grammar, but still espoused the simplistic baby-talk theory and denied to pidgins a status as true languages.

The baby-talk theory is easily refuted. First, all the early accounts (dating from the eighteenth century in Jamaica, for example) report that the white planters and their families were learning the creole from the slaves, not vice versa (Cassidy, 1961:21–3). Furthermore, if each European had indeed improvised his own variety of baby-talk to communicate with his servants and slaves, how could one explain the fact that all dialects of creole French, including those in the Indian Ocean, are mutually intelligible? Even the typological similarities shared by creole French, English, Spanish, etc., are too great for coincidence, and when we consider that these creoles also share many common vocabulary words, including syntactic function words, the baby-talk hypothesis completely collapses (Valdman, 1964:85; Taylor, 1956).

These similarities were explained by many writers as a result of languages in contact; i.e., Haitian French is similar to Jamaican English because the slaves there were also Africans. The planter in Jamaica not only taught English, in a simplified form, to his slaves; he also learned from them, and the resulting language was a blend of English and African elements. Le Page, for example, saw the phonemic structure of Jamaican creole as reflecting “the process of translation by West African ears” (Le Page and DeCamp, 1960:118). But Africa, even West Africa, is anything but a linguistically uniform area. Slaves were brought from many areas speaking many different languages of widely different type. No one African language can account for all or even a majority of the “African” elements in Caribbean creole, nor is any significant “African” feature in creole shared by all or even a majority of the native languages of the slaves (for the ethnic backgrounds of West Indian slavery, see Le Page and DeCamp, 1960: Ch. IV; Cassidy, 1961:15–19). Furthermore, plantation owners deliberately acquired slaves with the greatest possible variety of languages in order to make native-language communication among slaves impossible and thus reduce the risk of insurrection. Thus there could not have been any real African “substratum.” If we assume that the language-mixing process was eclectic, taking one feature from this African language, another from that one, we are still unable to explain the similarities between creoles and the remarkable uniformity of French creole. That each slave owner would just happen to choose the same features from Twi, the same from Hausa, etc., would stretch coincidence too far. And why would a slave owner, even if he had such an unbelievable familiarity with the great variety of African languages spoken by his slaves, have ever wanted to use a word which was found in the native language of only a few of his slaves? Finally, as Le Page pointed out in an attack on the African substratum theories of Herskovits (Le Page, 1957–58:374–5), many of the common features of Caribbean and African creoles are also shared by other creoles such as Pitcairnese, where there have been no African influences, only English and Polynesian (see also Ross, 1962).

The most vigorous defender of polygenesis today is Robert A. Hall, Jr. He insists that all creoles have evolved from pidgins and may evolve further into “normal” languages, thus completing a “life cycle”; pidgins, on the other hand, appear by spontaneous generation whenever and wherever the need for them arises.

A pidgin normally owes its origin to relatively casual, short-term contact between groups which do not have a language in common. . . . a pidgin can arise—on occasion, even in the space of only a few hours—whenever an emergency situation calls for communication on a minimal level of comprehension. (Hall, 1962: 152)

Whenever guide meets tourist, employer meets employee, or shopkeeper meets customer, a new pidgin is likely to arise if the two do not share a common language. The pidgin will draw its minimal vocabulary from both languages. The phonology and syntax will be stripped not only of redundancies, but also of many essential features, so that the pidgin is suitable only for minimal and specialized communication. “Me Tarzan, you Jane!” is the prototype pidgin situation. Most such pidgins are ephemeral and disappear as quickly as they arise. If the interlingual contact is prolonged and institutionalized, however, as in the case of slavery, the presence of foreign military troops, or the marriage of Tarzan and Jane, then the pidgin becomes fixed, and newcomers to that interlingual scene must learn it as they would learn Esperanto. The pidgin may then be expanded to make it suitable for a greater variety of speech situations, either externally by borrowing additional features from the standard languages or internally by analogical improvisations on the resources of the original pidgin—and so begins the process of evolution which may someday result in a creole if speakers begin using it as a native language.

Note that Hall provides not one but two mechanisms for the appearance of a pidgin or creole in a given community: either the spontaneous generation of a new pidgin or the extension to a new community of an already established pidgin or creole (e.g., the spread of pidgin English throughout Melanesia). If we find a similar creole in two communities, we would assume that the latter process (diffusion) has operated, for two different tourists would hardly improvise the same interlingual pidgin to communicate with their guides. Thus we could explain the uniformity of the French creoles by assuming that creole French had become institutionalized and followed the flag to the colonies. But what about the similarities between creoles whose sets of original interlingual components apparently had nothing in common, e.g., the English creole of the Caribbean and the Spanish creole of the Philippines? These similarities are too great for coincidence: elimination of inflections for number in nouns and for gender and case in pronouns, identity of adverb and adjective, use of iteration for intensification of adverb-adjectives, development of compound prepositions

using the Portuguese *na* and *de*, use of verbal aspects marked by syntactic particles rather than true tenses, etc. (Taylor, 1957). If we were also to explain these similarities as the result of diffusion, we would be moving rapidly toward a monogenetic theory, and we might well wonder whether the spontaneous generation alternative had much relevance except in trivial situations like the tourist and his guide.

During the 1950's several scholars became increasingly dissatisfied with polygenetic theories. In 1951 Navarro Tomás argued that Papiamentu was not an indigenous Caribbean blend of Portuguese and/or Spanish with African elements, but rather had its origin in the Portuguese pidgin used as a trade jargon in West Africa during the slave trade. In 1956 Keith Whinnom proved that four Spanish creoles of the Philippines were not independent developments, but all had diverged from a common source in the Moluccas, and that underlying these Spanish creoles was a Portuguese pidgin very similar to that of Goa in India (Whinnom, 1956, 1965). Whinnom's book drew everyone's attention to the key importance of Portuguese pidgin, which during the sixteenth century replaced Arabic and Malay as the trade language of the Far East. This pidgin was used by traders of all nationalities, from India to Indonesia and as far north as Japan. It became clear that the Asian Spanish creoles were not simply "restructured" Spanish, but rather were Portuguese pidgin "relexified" under later Spanish influences. And when arguments were later presented that the Chinese elements in pidgin English might be only secondary and that pidgin English was very possibly also a relexification of pidgin Portuguese, the case was then indeed strong for monogenesis of the Far Eastern pidgins and creoles (Whinnom, 1965:519–22; according to an eighteenth-century account cited by Whinnom in a private communication, the earliest pidgin English in use in China was a "broken and mixed dialect of Portuguese and English").

In the Caribbean, Douglas Taylor (1956, 1957, 1960, 1961) emphasized the similarities among the Caribbean creoles and their many parallels with the creoles of the Far East, and suggested that both Papiamentu and Sranan were also relexifications of pidgin Portuguese. R. W. Thompson (1961) argued for a parallel development of all the pidgins and creoles, Caribbean, African and Far Eastern, from Portuguese sources (see also Cassidy, 1962). William Stewart (1962) discussed the functions of structure and lexicon in linguistic relationships and concluded that the divergent relexification (i.e., a wholesale shift of vocabulary) of a single proto-pidgin was a more tenable hypothesis than the convergent restructuring of a whole group of separate languages. And Whinnom (1965:522–7) now suggests that Sabir, the famous Lingua Franca of the Mediterranean, was the proto-creole, the source of all the European-based pidgins and creoles of the world. Sabir is at least as old as the Crusades; texts survive from the early sixteenth century; the language became moribund

after the French conquest of North Africa but was still alive when it was described by Schuchardt in 1909. Though its vocabulary was drawn from almost every language in the Mediterranean, the proportions of the mixture varied from place to place. It is very possible that a predominantly Portuguese version of Sabir (or a Portuguese relexification of it) was indeed that pidgin which in the sixteenth century was carried to the Far East, where it developed into the Portuguese and so-called Spanish creoles and perhaps also pidgin English, and was carried to West Africa, where its creole descendent is still spoken on Cape Verde and other islands, and thence to the New World, where it formed the basis not only of Papiamentu but also of the English, French, and Dutch creoles.

The supporters of monogenesis would thus have us think of Anglicized creole rather than creolized English. As yet, the theory rests on many assumptions and very little documentary evidence, but it has a great deal to recommend it. Even if we were to assume that the lexicon and the structure of a language were equally susceptible to change, relexification would still be a better explanation than restructuring for the development of pidgins and creoles; for the influences which could bring about a wholesale adoption of French vocabulary in French territories, English vocabulary in British territories, etc., are clear and obvious, whereas there is no known influence, either sociolinguistic or from languages in contact, which could explain why the structures of five different European languages should have been modified in precisely the same direction (for further discussion of the problems of convergent development and genetic relationships, see Weinreich, 1958).

The weaknesses in the monogenetic theory are first a very sketchy historical documentation, second the controversial status of Far Eastern pidgin English (which lacks many of the features shared by other pidgins and creoles), and third the problem of certain pidgins and creoles which clearly developed without any Portuguese influence; these include not only the non-European-based pidgins like Kituba and Chinook, but also some of the European-based like Pitcairnese and Amerindian pidgin English. The first two are negative arguments from lack of evidence and perhaps may be resolved, one way or the other, by further research. At least some of the non-European-based pidgins, however, were certainly independent creations, and probably no monogenetic theory will ever account for absolutely all the pidgins of the world. Hall's theory of spontaneous generation indeed must apply to some cases, though—as he would himself admit—the area of applicability has dwindled as a result of the research of the past decade. It is significant that the non-European-based pidgins are very different in structure from the European-based, much more complex and lacking even the typological features common to the European-based pidgins. Creoles such as Pitcairnese which had no direct Portuguese influences yet share many common creole characteristics, may have arisen by

stimulus diffusion rather than by either direct descent or totally independent creation. If a person with even a casual familiarity with any form of pidgin participates in the spontaneous creation of a new pidgin, the resulting language will not be a random mixture of two languages but will inevitably be influenced by the pattern of the pidgin already known. If an American tourist in Mexico has previously learned pidgin English in the Far East, his interlingual improvisations with a Mexican taxi driver will be influenced by it. It is probable that many of the English speakers who participated in the development of Pitcairnesse and Hawaiian English had already had some contact with other pidgins.

Two significant areas of agreement have become established during this controversy, both of importance to general linguistics. The first is that both pidgins and creole languages are real languages, which must be learned by their speakers. Although the structure of a pidgin may be so reduced that it is capable only of limited communication, it does indeed have a structure. Any visitor to the Far East who attempts to communicate in Chinese pidgin English quickly learns that he cannot get by just with speaking bad English. Pidgin is more than just carelessly-articulated English sans grammar. It is (for an English speaker, at least) a much easier task than learning Chinese, but learn it he must. Creolists like Hall and Taylor were insisting on this point decades ago, but the scholarly opposition has now dwindled to a few die-hard adherents of the baby-talk school, and even non-academics (e.g., government leaders and schoolteachers in Jamaica) are beginning to talk about "the grammar of creole."

The other is that the rate of linguistic change for a pidgin-creole may change greatly from time to time. The almost total relexification of a pidgin or the extensive structural and lexical expansion which accompanies creolization may take place within a few decades. The rapid growth of Bahasa Indonesia as the Indonesian national language is by no means a unique phenomenon resulting from modern linguistic engineering. The total evolution of the Caribbean French creoles, for example, took place almost entirely within the first half century of French settlement there (Jourdain, 1956). The English creoles of Surinam developed within one generation (Voorhoeve, 1962). This fact casts considerable doubt on the reliability of glottochronology, for there is no way of knowing whether a language of unknown history has ever passed through the pidgin-creole cycle and thus been subject to these enormously accelerated changes (Hall, 1959). If Jamaican English and Haitian French are indeed genetically related, the time depths must be less than four hundred years, but glottochronology would enormously exaggerate this figure.

#### SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND PIDGIN-CREOLE STUDIES

Creolists agree that sociolinguistic factors were important to the origin of pidgins, though they disagree on their degree of importance. The polygenetic

position would give a primarily sociolinguistic explanation of the origin, emphasizing the frequency of spontaneous generation of new pidgins (Reinecke, 1938; Hall, 1962). The monogenetic position would hold that the sociolinguistic situation usually only initiates the same two processes which are common to all language history: diffusion and divergence of an already existing pidgin (Whinnom, 1965).

There is no question, however, of the overwhelming importance of sociolinguistic factors in the subsequent history of pidgins and creoles. Once a pidgin has been created or imported into a community, its continued survival and its evolution toward creole status and beyond both depend entirely on its role in the society, not on its inherent structure. The drastically limited vocabulary and syntactic devices of a pidgin do not in themselves lessen the chance of survival—though they may condition adverse social prejudices which can indeed threaten its survival—for any pidgin is capable of expanding its structure and vocabulary whenever changing social conditions call on it to perform a role greater than minimal interlingual communication, just as any primitive tribal language is inherently capable of expanding its vocabulary to become a national cultural language when the need arises. The limited resources of a pidgin will be the very cause of its survival if the need for a minimal pidgin persists in the community. Pidgin English is indeed very limited, yet it has survived for centuries, and one variety, Neo-Melanesian, was even given official status under the German rule (Hall, 1962:154). On the other hand Negerhollands, a creole so “developed” that it boasts a translation of the Bible, is now nearly extinct; and of course many “normal” languages, including culture languages, have become extinct.

If the interlingual situation which first brought a pidgin into a community remains unchanged, the pidgin will normally also remain, and with very little change. If not, then its subsequent development depends mainly on two factors: the social status of the pidgin vis-à-vis the standard language of the community, and the variability of both the language and the culture. A pidgin invariably and a creole almost invariably have low social status. If the equivalent European language is also the standard language of the community, the creole is especially unlikely to be granted status as a real language. Rather it is thought of as merely a barbarous corruption of the standard language. In Jamaica, for example, most educators persist in treating the “dialect problem” as if it were a problem of speech correction, attributing it to careless, slovenly pronunciation. The few exceptional teachers who see it as a foreign language problem are considered dangerously radical by many Jamaicans. The creole is inseparably associated with poverty, ignorance, and lack of moral character. This association is, of course, a half truth, for the poor, the uneducated, and the unambitious do speak the broader varieties of creole, whereas the bright young boy with a chance at

education and a white-collar job strives diligently to acquire the Kingston middle-class standard. However it is the social prejudice against creole which is partially responsible for continued poverty, ignorance, and lack of ambition. The overwhelming majority of the population are told every day of their lives that they will never amount to anything because they "talk like Quashie," and the nouveau-rich middle class lead lives of desperate linguistic anxiety, loudly proclaiming the superiority of their own "standard" English while nursing inward doubts about whether their English is really sufficiently standard. The written compositions of schoolchildren are dull and vapid because the children are so fearful of lapsing into their native creole that they cannot express themselves freely. Some middle-class speakers become almost inarticulate in the presence of anyone of higher social status.

Similar situations occur in other creole areas (Hall, 1955: Ch. 3; Efron, 1954). In some areas, e.g., Sierra Leone (Berry, 1961:5 note), a nationalist reaction against the oppressive corrective pressures from the standard language results in "hyper-creolization," an aggressive assertion of linguistic discreteness and superior status for creole. Hyper-creolization is usually limited to small dissident groups, however, and an attitude of mutual tolerance is even more rare. A pidgin which is developed by elites for interlingual communication of limited duration and in prestigious circumstances, e.g., university students at an international conference or expert technicians working with foreign counterparts in a foreign aid program, may enjoy high status within that in-group; it may even function as what Malinowski calls "phatic communion," with members proudly using it at later reunions as a nostalgic assertion of membership (John Stuart Goodman, 1967). Such a pidgin is not valued by the larger community outside the elite in-group however. To greater or lesser extent, every creole must survive despite the diffidence of its speakers and hostile invective from the authorities. One of the difficulties in doing field work in creole is the fact that a creole speaker who also speaks the standard is usually offended if anyone speaks to him in creole.

As we have seen, pidgins and creoles are capable of sudden and massive changes, especially in vocabulary. Their degree of divergent development and consequent variability is therefore potentially very great. Their variability is the result of social forces, however, not their inherent structures or their mixed origins, for some are far more uniform than others. The French creoles of the Caribbean and of the Indian Ocean are all mutually intelligible. Within each community the French creole is also quite uniform and contrasts sharply with standard French. In fact a speaker's shift from the creole to the mutually-unintelligible standard French is much like a shift to a totally foreign language, a situation which Ferguson calls "diglossia" (Ferguson, 1959). The Spanish

and Portuguese creoles are also relatively uniform (though not mutually intelligible) and in sharp contrast with the standard languages, though few of them now coexist in a community with standard Spanish or Portuguese. Creole English, however, is extremely variable. Even the two principal dialects of English in Surinam are both mutually unintelligible and unintelligible to speakers of other English creoles. One cause is isolation. Most creole French areas have long had contact with France and standard French, whereas the official language of Surinam has been Dutch since 1667. Grenada, however, has been in British hands for two centuries, yet the creole French there is not substantially different from that spoken on islands which have always been under French rule. And the extreme varieties of Jamaican English are mutually unintelligible even though English has been the only official language since the Spaniards were all evicted in 1655. Isolation is indeed an important factor, but an isolation far more basic and complex than a mere change of an official language. Rather it was a geographical and social isolation which occurred in both Surinam and Jamaica as a result of lack of contact between scattered plantations (separated by dense forests in Surinam, by rugged mountains in Jamaica) and of the development of a rigid caste system which minimized European influences during the formative years (Voorhoeve, 1962:234–7; DeCamp, 1961:61–3).

In Jamaica this variability now operates in two dimensions: a great deal of geographical dialect variation, especially in vocabulary, with many localisms totally unknown even in adjacent villages, and also a socio-economically oriented linguistic continuum, a continuous spectrum of speech varieties whose extremes are mutually unintelligible but which also includes all possible intermediate varieties (Le Page, 1957–58:380; Le Page and DeCamp, 1960:116–7; DeCamp, 1961:80–4). At one end of this continuum is the speech of highly-educated Jamaican leaders, many of whom claim to be speaking standard British English but who are actually using what seems to be evolving into a standard Jamaican English; it is mutually intelligible with, but undeniably different from standard British. At the other extreme is the so-called “broad creole” or “broken language,” the variety which so far has received the most attention from linguists (e.g., Cassidy, 1961, 1962; Bailey, 1966; Cassidy and Le Page, 1967). Each Jamaican speaker commands a span of this continuum, the breadth of the span depending on the breadth of his social activities; a labor leader, for example, can command a greater span of varieties than can a sheltered housewife of suburban middle class. A housewife may make a limited adjustment downward on the continuum in order to communicate with a market woman, and the market woman may adjust upward when she talks to the housewife. Each of them may then believe that she is speaking the other’s language, for the myth persists in Jamaica that there are only two varieties of language—standard

English and "the dialect"—but the fact is that the housewife's broadest dialect may be closer to the standard end of the spectrum than is the market woman's "standard."

Because of this lack of clear separation between speech varieties, some writers call Jamaican English an English dialect system rather than a true creole (Stewart, 1962:50–1; Taylor, 1963; Alleyne, 1967). Stewart goes so far as to make a clear separation from standard, i.e., a structural gap between the two at some point, a defining criterion of a creole. This seems unjustifiably arbitrary, however, and if, as some creolists believe (e.g., Reinecke and Tokimasa, 1934), continuing corrective pressures from schools and other institutions can turn any creole community into a dialect continuum, then we have in Jamaica only a creole in a late stage of development, perhaps comparable to the creole English of Hawaii. If any term is needed to distinguish the situation in Jamaica from that in Surinam and Haiti, then I suggest that we call Jamaica a *post-creole* community. Hawaii, the Gullah areas, and the other British West Indies (British Honduras, Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, etc.) are probably also post-creole areas. It would appear that a speech community can reach post-creole status only under two conditions. First, the dominant official language must be the same as the creole vocabulary base; if it is different, then the creole either persists as a separate language with little change (e.g., the English creoles of Surinam and the French creole of St. Lucia and Grenada) or becomes extinct, as Negerhollands is now doing. Second, the social system, though perhaps still sharply stratified, must provide for sufficient social mobility and sufficient corrective pressures from above in order for the standard language to exert real influence on creole speakers; otherwise the creole and the standard remain sharply separated as they do in the French areas. These corrective pressures (radio, television, internal migration, education, and other government "uplift" programs) do not operate uniformly on all speakers, of course; otherwise the result would be a merger of the creole with the standard rather than a continuum. Rather the educational and occupational opportunities and the necessity of learning a more nearly standard variety of English in order to get a better job all act on individual speakers, pulling them in differing degrees toward the standard end of the continuum.

Some linguists like Beryl Bailey (1966) strongly believe that Jamaican is a creole, yet restrict the term to the hard-core, extreme non-standard end of the continuum. In fact the language generated by Bailey's transformational rules is probably an "unreal" abstract ideal, a composite of all the non-standard features of all her informants. None of the many texts collected by linguists during a decade of intensive research, including the texts which she herself collected and published (Bailey, 1962) conform entirely to her rules. Consequently her estimate of a million creole speakers in Jamaica (Bailey, 1966:2)

is totally unacceptable if we are to interpret "creole" as meaning the entire structure described in her book. If, on the other hand, we call creole any variety of Jamaican English which includes a significant number of structural features she describes, then her estimate of a million is too low. It is a difficult question of how far a variety can become Anglicized and still be called a creole. If we accept the monogenetic theory of origin, we are then faced with a difficult paradox. In a post-creole continuum like Jamaica the extreme non-standard variety would be unquestionably a creole, i.e., an English relexification of a proto pidgin-creole. But in a post-creole community this process of Anglicization has continued—for some speakers more than for others—so that we have no way of drawing a line of demarcation between adjacent (i.e., minimally-different) speakers, and we are led to include as creole even the extreme acculturated varieties. Thus we are forced to conclude that a speech variety which is no more deviant from standard British than is standard American or standard Australian must still be related genetically to Papiamentu and to Cape Verde Portuguese, not to English. This statement provokes an incredulity comparable to that of the schoolchild whose teacher has just informed him that the whale is a mammal and not a fish.

The problem of post-creole variability requires further study. My own linguistic and cultural survey of 142 Jamaican communities (in preparation) draws some rough outlines, but much remains to be done. Sociolinguists competent in general sociological theory must assess the significance of linguistic pluralism to the new and controversial theories of social pluralism in the West Indies (Smith, 1965). Carefully controlled experiments must determine the linguistic behavior of both groups and individuals under varying circumstances (e.g., experiments of the type reported by Labov, 1966). The political implications of a linguistic continuum have received almost no attention: Alleyne (1963) has published one paper on the socio-linguistic factors in a Jamaican election, and I included a few questions on political attitudes in my linguistic survey. It is clear, however, that a command of the creole can be an asset to a politician. The phenomenal political success of one Jamaican leader is at least partially due to his conscious and successful efforts to learn the speech and the social mores of the people in his slum constituency; despite his white middle-class background, he is able to talk with the people, not at them. It is worth noting that before entering politics he had been a publishing scholar in anthropology. Finally, although the problems of multilingualism in newly-emerging nations have drawn the attention of linguists (e.g., *Symposium* 1962; Le Page, 1964), the relationships between linguistic variability and emergent nationalism are largely unexplored. A post-creole community like Jamaica provides an ideal laboratory for sociolinguistic study, for there a great variety of social and linguistic phenomena are available within a small and conveniently accessible

area, and, as in all creole communities, historical processes normally requiring centuries may sometimes be accelerated to a few years.

#### DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS AND PIDGIN-CREOLE STUDIES

Allusions, travelers' accounts, and even fragmentary texts of pidgins date back to the middle ages. Historians in the eighteenth century "described" the Caribbean creoles. But such early accounts were generally limited to invectives and parodies, providing little information beyond the fact that the author had contempt for the pidgin or creole. Objective description began in the later nineteenth century. In 1868 Russell published the first reliable and extensive account of Jamaican creole. In 1869 Thomas did the same for the French creole of Trinidad. In 1909 appeared Schuchardt's famous description of Sabir (Mediterranean Lingua Franca). Competent descriptions were rare before World War II. Both Jacobs (1932) and Boas (1933) published on Chinook jargon, but the European-based pidgins and creoles received almost no attention from the structural linguists, most of whom were more interested in "real" languages than in odd dialects (a notable exception is Reinecke and Tokimasa, 1934). The war brought a change of attitude, however, and within a decade appeared structural descriptions of Taki-Taki (Sranan) in Surinam (Hall, 1948), of Gullah (Turner, 1949), of Haitian creole (Hall, 1953), and of pidgin English (Hall, 1955), and Taylor published two structural sketches of "Caribbean creole" (1947, 1951; the progress during the 1940's and 1950's is summarized in Cassidy 1959).

In the past decade, however, pidgin-creole studies have become respectable and the research has intensified. For Jamaica alone we have a structural sketch (Le Page, 1957–58), a generative syntax (Bailey, 1966), a set of edited texts in phonemic transcription (Le Page and DeCamp, 1960: 125–79), an account of the cultural setting of the language (Cassidy, 1961), a major historical dictionary (Cassidy and Le Page, 1967), and an attempt at a description of the highly complex suprasegmental phenomena (Lawton, 1963). The Cassidy-Le Page dictionary is particularly notable; containing more than fifteen thousand entries, it is a Jamaican supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary comparable in scope and in scholarship to the *Dictionary of American English*. A beginning has been made in linguistic geography in the British Caribbean generally (Le Page, 1957–58), in Jamaica (DeCamp, 1961), and in the creole French areas (Goodman, 1964). The recognition that creoles are genuine languages has stimulated efforts in applied linguistics. Peace Corps language training materials have been prepared for Jamaican creole (Bailey, 1962; Lawton, 1964) and Sierra Leone (*Introductory Krio Language Training Manual*, 1964), and the first part of a modern programmed course in Haitian creole French is now available (Valdman, 1967). In 1964 a conference of linguists

and educators was held in Jamaica (for the proceedings, see Faculty of Education, 1965) to summarize and attempt to apply the results of Creole research to the many special problems of language teaching in the West Indies. Research was presented there which proved conclusively that the inability of West Indian schoolchildren to express themselves adequately in the standard language is at least partly a foreign language learning problem, not merely cultural deprivation. Some American linguists and anthropologists are beginning to apply the concept of the post-creole continuum to the language problems of the Negro in the United States and to view Negro speech not as a simple matter of American dialects but as a part of a general New World Negro cultural continuum.

Bailey's *Jamaican Creole Syntax* (1966) is the first major transformational attempt on a creole (preceded only by a few somewhat transformationally oriented articles: Voorhoeve, 1961; DeCamp, 1962, 1963) and is the most extensive syntactic study to appear so far. Unfortunately it is based on the pre-1960 formulation of generative theory, and its rules are therefore unnecessarily cumbersome and complex. Co-occurrence restrictions are expressed in the phrase structure by means of context-sensitive rules operating on a bewildering (but still insufficient) number of non-terminal symbols. This format tends to exaggerate the differences between creole and standard English. Even if we do not go so far as to agree with some theorists that phrase structure branching rules are universals, it is still clear that standard English and creole, even the extreme variety of creole described by Bailey, are identical in phrase structure. The differences are entirely in the lexicon and the transformations. For example, Mrs. Bailey sees the intransitive use of transitive verbs to form a passive in creole (*di bota sel-aaf*, "the butter has all been sold") as a fundamental difference between creole and standard. But this construction is also common in standard English: *The eggs are boiling* or, for that matter, *The eggs are selling at a good price*. The only difference is in lexical restrictions. In standard English only a few verbs may participate in this transformation; in creole most (not all) transitive verbs are so privileged.

Despite these defects, Mrs. Bailey's book provides the first comprehensive picture of a creole syntactic structure. The main problem now is to reconcile the simple uniform structure which we find in the book (i.e., the extreme creole pole of the continuum) with the great variety of structures which we actually hear in Jamaica. This problem cannot be dismissed as simply an example of Chomsky's opposition of competence and performance. The variation within a post-creole continuum is not just random deviation from a norm; it consists of a whole ordered series of "switching" operations which occur as we move from one speaker to another along the continuum or as a speaker shifts his style. Because these changes are an ordered series, we can predict that if a speaker uses form *a* instead of *a'*, he will also use *b* instead of *b'*, *c* instead of *c'*, etc. Any

set of rules which generates only one point on the continuum describes only a part of the larger structure of Jamaican creole. In 1961 (in a Linguistic Society paper not published until DeCamp, 1968) I demonstrated that neither the overall-pattern approach of Trager nor the diasystem approach of Weinreich can account for the relationship of the point to the continuum, the idiolectal structure to the sociolinguistic macrostructure, as well as can a supplementary ordered set of rules which convert each point to an adjacent one on the continuum. I assume that an index numeral (0, 1, 2, . . . , n) is inserted in the sentence-qualifier constituent by the highest-level rules. This numeral then triggers the appropriate conversion rules from the supplementary set. An index of 0 would leave the basic grammar unchanged; an index of *n* would trigger all the rules and result in the maximally deviant grammar. The advantages of such an approach are obvious: a whole series of separate grammars, one for each point on the continuum, would be absurdly inefficient, for each grammar would differ from its neighbor in the series by only one minimal feature; a single conversion rule is simpler than an entire new grammar. The principal problem is that such conversion rules would have to operate on the phonology (DeCamp, 1967) and the semantics (DeCamp, 1963: 541–4) as well as the syntax. They would therefore either require an entirely-new lowest-level component in the grammar or else have to be scattered throughout the grammar wherever they are relevant. Both alternatives entail theoretical difficulties.

The simplest possible set of rules capable of converting an initial grammar into any and all other grammars in the continuum will automatically order all these grammars into their relative positions along the continuum, just as the simplest possible specification of an infinite number of colors will be a description of the color spectrum. Thus a grammar containing such rules will incorporate a good portion of the sociolinguistics and will partially recapitulate the history of the language (DeCamp, 1962). Only a decade ago, most linguists were keeping synchronic and diachronic linguistic studies in isolated compartments and were treating sociolinguistics as an ancillary field, only “associated” with linguistics. Descriptive linguists pretended ignorance of the history and social context of the language—adopting “the objectivity of a man from Mars,” as the old textbook cliché put it. The era of the man from Mars is now happily over. Despite conflicting theories and divergent interests, the field of general linguistics, like the subsidiary field of pidgin-creole studies, is now more united, less compartmentalized than ever before.

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