# Chapter 9: English Pidgins, English Creoles, and English.

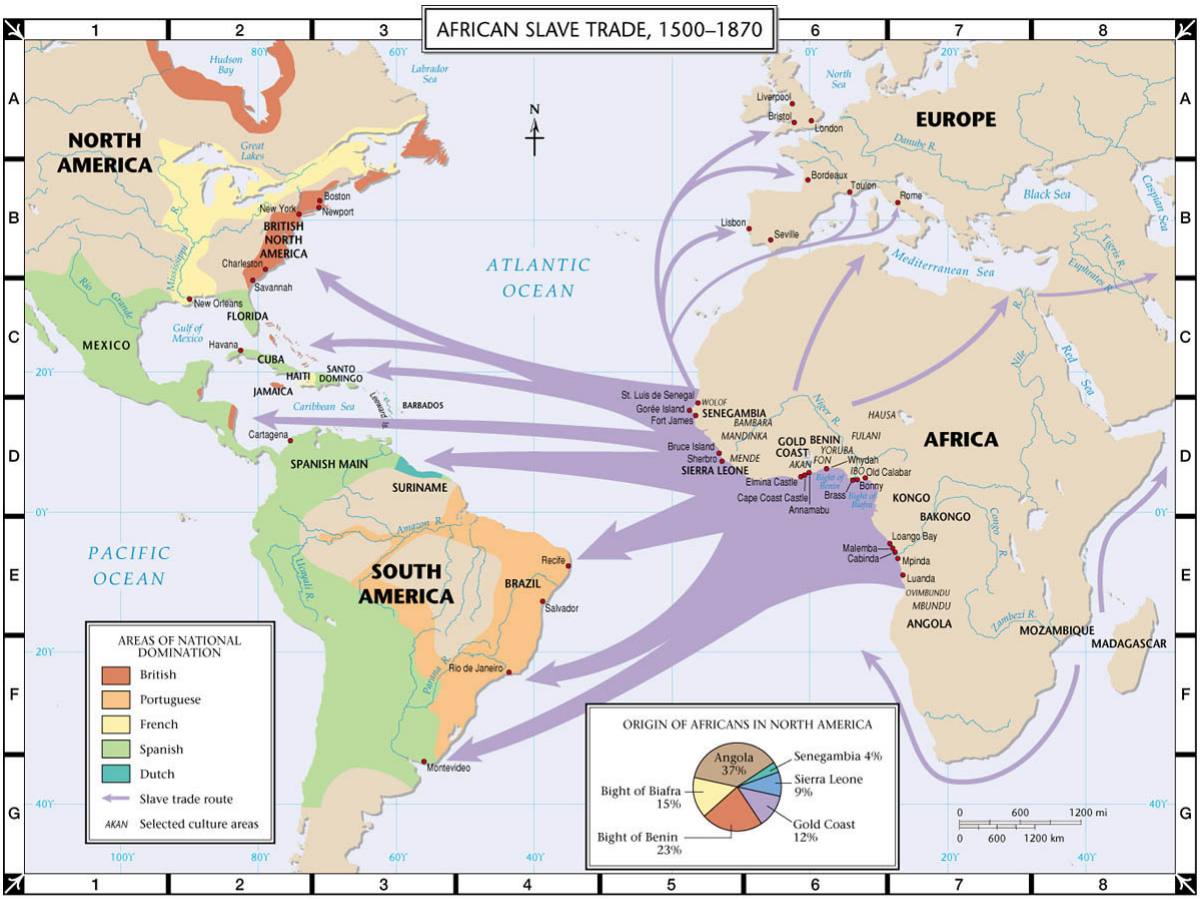
**1. European expansion and the slave trade.** John Hawkins (1532-1595) is seen by many as the creator of the modern British Royal Navy, something he devoted the second half of his career (1570-1595) to. It is, however, the first part of his career for which he is remembered today. In 1562, 1564, and 1567 John Hawkins, as a privateer and semi-pirate, commanded three prominent voyages as part of the notorious triangular trade, whose first leg was to Africa, its second – and middle – leg (hence the "middle passage") from Africa to the Americas, and its final one the return voyage to England. On the first voyage he carried 300 slaves to the Caribbean, on the second and the third, 400 each time, always with the promise of a high return for his backers. Hawkins was not the first Englishman to engage in the slave trade, and by no means the last, but he was to first to do so with system. All in all, men like Hawkins, most of them British, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French, and, later, American, were responsible for carrying some 11 million Africans to the New World, thus depopulating many territories, weakening social structures, and in any case throwing African development back by whole generations.

This chapter traces the spread of English to parts of the colonial world in which the relationship between those spreading the adopting and changing it was marked by conquest and exploitation of the subaltern by the imperial colonizers. This is a history both of economic, social, and cultural domination and of a changing language. We should note right at the outset that change is very much at the center of this chapter, esp. in section 6, which deals with the origin of creoles.

The results of the massive colonial and imperial intrusion in West Africa did indeed have linguistic consequences. The people transported to the Caribbean were thrust into a situation where they could make little or no use of their native languages. This was frequently a programmatic point among the slavers, who deliberately and systematically put people with different linguistic backgrounds (West Africa is a very polyglot region) together, thus insuring that the consequent lack of communication would be a major hindrance to any attempts at rebellion. This practice was continued on New World plantations as well. Since, however, communication was a necessity, both between the slavers and their victims and among the enslaved themselves, a make-shift type of language emerged in which each side, slave and slaver, used the grammatical structures of his or her native language. In addition, to express content the slaves used vocabulary borrowed from the language of the slave masters, i.e. English, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, or French. In this way reduced, contact languages, so-called pidgins, came into existence. These languages were also used for trading purposes in Africa, hence the term trade language. Today Pidgin English, a language which has been passed on over the generations is still widely used as a market language in much of coastal West Africa (and not just in the Anglophone countries of West Africa, but in the Francophone ones as well (e.g. in the Francophone part of Cameroon).

By the mid-15th century, Spain and Portugal were trading with Africa in nuts, fruits, olive oil, gold, and slaves. By 1460 700-800 slaves were brought annually to Portugal, and by the end of the century there was a mad scramble for a monopoly on this trade, and it was rationalized on the basis of Christianity. However, there was little future in Europe for slavery because of the large impoverished European population which was increasingly coming into the cities. In the Americas, after European discovery and conquest, there was, however, a market for slaves. **Indians** had proved inappropriate labor because of their susceptibility to disease and their economic background - which in contrast to the African Gardener Culture was not suited to the disciplined regime of plantation life. **Europeans** were originally used: English indentured servants, prisoners, kidnapped women, children, and drunkards. There was an attempt in the New World to treat them as slaves, but they sued, ran away, and the like. **Africans**, on the other hand, could be purchased and would thus remain as permanent labor; they were not Christians and could be rigorously disciplined; and they were a seemingly inexhaustible supply. If they tried to escape, they could easily be identified and recaptured because of their skin color (Franklin 1980: 34f).

**1.1 The major slave-trading powers.** The slave trade was a source of wealth; and most of the slaves went to the West Indies, where by 1540 10,000 slaves were imported annually. Initially, the **Portuguese** controlled the trade, but the **Dutch**, who were more interested in the trade in slaves than in acquiring territories, took it from them in the 1630s and 1640s and dominated it throughout the 17th century. However, their portion of it declined by the end of that century. The **French**, too, developed an interest in slaving, and they intervened in the 17th century, establishing bases on the River Senegal about 1630 and founding colonies in the Lesser Antilles and later Guiana (1660s), Haiti and Louisiana (early 1680s).

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It was the **English** who came to dominate the trade, but not until the Restoration. However, from then (1672) until 1788 the slave trade was a cornerstone of English economic life. There had been earlier attempts on Britain's (England's) part: John Hawkins had, instructing his crews "to serve God daily" and "to love one another" (Faulkner/Kepler: 11), set out under Elizabeth to secure African slaves. Forts were established early in the 17th century in Gambia (1618) and the Gold Coast (Ghana) (1631); by the end of the century, the off-shore islands around Sierra Leone had been settled by English privateers mixed with Africans. In America permanent colonies were established in the Lesser Antilles in 1625, briefly in Suriname (1651-1666) and on Jamaica, which was taken from the Spanish in 1655; and, of course, there was the North American mainland from 1607 on.

**1.2 The mechanics of the slave trade: factors, European goods, negotiations, Middle Passage**. Bases of operation were set up as well-guarded posts or "factories" on the coast. **European goods** were shipped in: cotton textiles; brass, pewter utensils; ivory boxes of beads of all sizes and shapes; guns, gunpowder; whiskey, brandy, rum; and a variety of foodstuffs. The ship *King Solomon*, for example, brought in £4,250 worth of goods in 1720.[1]

At the posts there were factors (slave traders, hence "factories") who were friendly with the local kings from whom they procured the slaves. The collecting of slaves involved negotiations with the local king, the inspection of possible slaves, and the advice of physicians and others. Prospective slaves were often shaved and soaked in palm oil. Prices varied, but in the middle of the 18th century, a healthy young man brought £20. A stop lasted many weeks and often included courtesy visits. To fill a large vessel (capacity of about 500) it was often necessary to scour the interior or to make stops at several places. Provisions for the trip to America included corn, kidney beans, yams, fruits, coconuts, plantains, and sundry medicines, esp. Malagetta (pepper).

Slaves often resisted sale and transport. Wars between tribes were necessary to get them. Once

[1] This would be £ 586,547 according to the retail price index and £ 6,768,233 according to average earnings (cf. Officer 2009). Franklin 1980 (chapter 3) is still an excellent source for the slave trade. But see also Tibbles 1994.

captured, they had to be chained to prevent them from escaping. Many tried to jump overboard or to commit suicide in some other way to escape slavery. But for the slaver it was worth it: profits of 100% were not uncommon.

**1.3 Numbers and periods**. In the years 1783-1793 (11 years) Liverpool merchants alone moved 303,737 slaves to America. One conservative estimate (Dunbar, 1861) of the extent of the slave trade is given in the table together with Curtin's more modern calculation.

| | Dunbar (in Franklin 1980) | Curtin (1969) |
|---|---|---|
| 16th century: | 900,000 | 241,400 |
| 17th century: | 2,750,000 | 1,341,100 |
| 18th century (till 1810) | 7,000,000 | 6,051,700 |
| 19th century (from 1810): | 4,000,000 | 1,898,400 |

Table 9.1: The slave trade.

The expatriation of millions of people from the continent of Africa in less than four centuries constitutes one of the most far-reaching and drastic social revolutions in the annals of history (Franklin 1980: 59). The European shippers took the best, the healthiest, youngest, largest, ablest, most culturally advanced, leaving the impotent, stultified, and overwhelmed. And Europeans provided the weapons for Africa's own destruction. In the 15th century Africa was not far distant from Europe; European trade brought social and economic decline, ending in 19th century colonialism.

**1.4 Plantation conditions: natural replacement rate**. Sidney Mintz calls it the most massive acculturational event in human history (1970: 6). The African slave trade was intricately bound up with the spread of European military and colonial power and with commercial development, especially of overseas capitalist agriculture. European factory workers were in a position structurally parallel to that occupied by the enslaved and forced-labor strata of the New World societies, but the conditions of slavery were more extreme than the worst we know of in Europe. Take the death rate, for example. In St. Vincent in one year there were

2,656 slave births and
4,205 slave deaths.

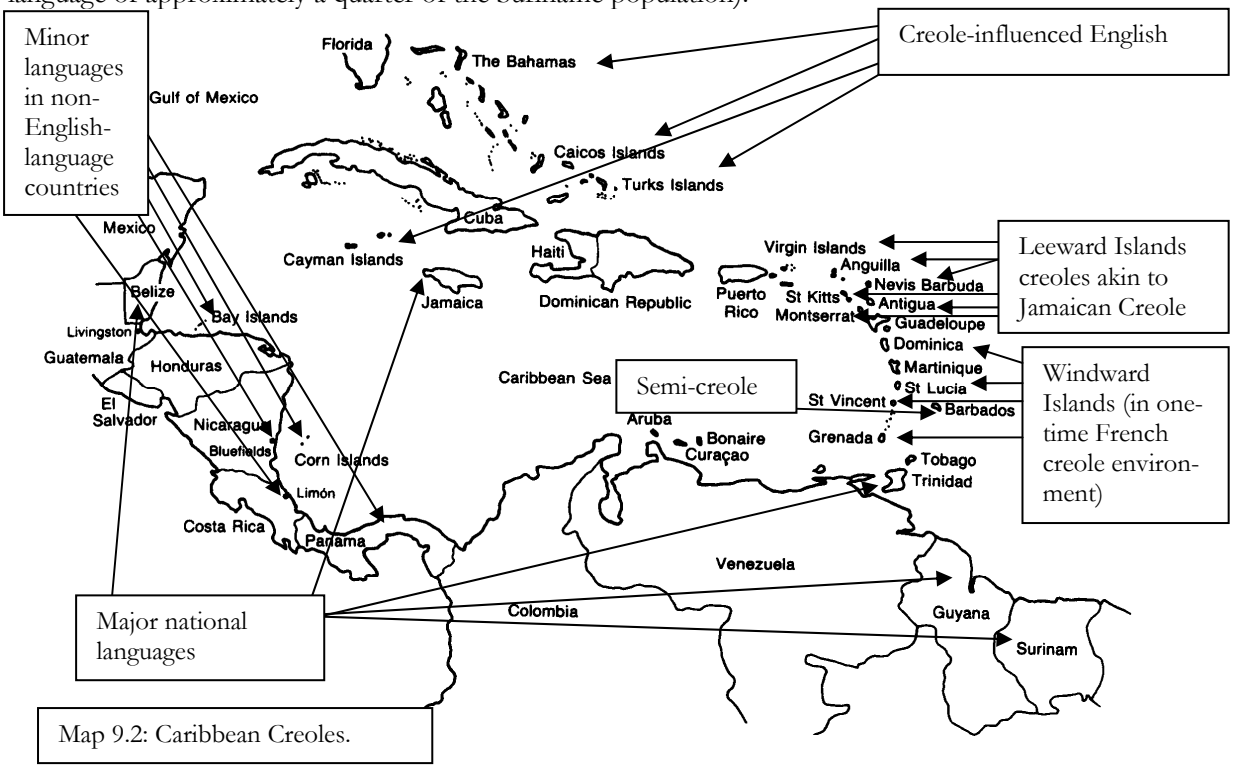
On one Jamaican plantation more than one half of the children died in infancy or by miscarriage, from diseases, and due to poor food. Owners thought: cheaper to buy than to breed new labor. "There were few evidences of humanitarianism on the plantations of the West Indies" (Franklin 1980: 63). Slaves were economic requisites, enhancing the wealth, power, and prestige of European countries.

**1.5 Duration and spread**. Slavery, as an essential part of the Westernization of the world lasted four centuries (the first slaves were brought from Africa less than ten years after Columbus' first voyage (viz. 1501), and slavery was finally abolished in Brazil in 1888). It concentrated the blacks of the New World heavily in the Antilles, coastal Latin America (mostly the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts), and the South of the United States. In 1950, 95% of the blacks and mulattoes in Middle America were in the Antilles islands, and 76% of those in South America were in Brazil, i.e. out of 33 million Negroes and mulattoes in Latin America, 27 million were in Brazil.

**2. Language contact**. The chief motivation for the slave trade was to provide the new tropical and sub-tropical territories which had been taken into European possession with a stable work force on the plantations which were rapidly coming into existence. Under these conditions a slave population, which was multilingual, was forced to wholly abandon its languages. Usually this proceeded in two steps: pidginization and then creolization. Both of these processes represent reactions to the radically changed social situation of their users and stand in stark contrast to relatively slow development of the more traditional forms of English we have been looking at so far. The latter developed over a period of centuries from the varieties of Old, Middle, and Early Modern English to those of today, all of which may be attributed largely to the effects of social, political, cultural, and spatial separation, often reinforced by contact to other languages. The emerging pidgins and creoles of the 16th to 19th centuries, in contrast, were the results of catastrophic scenarios instigated within the plantation system in the Americas and

elsewhere.
Two differing social schemas were implicated in this linguistic development: (1) The **fort** situation, typical of, for example, West Africa, was the one. Here the outside group penetrated a multilingual area and imposed its language (at least for trade purposes) on the native population. Eventually, a process of tertiary hybridization set in in which the new pidginized language was adopted for use among different native groups. (2) The **plantation** situation, typical of the Caribbean and the Pacific areas, was the other, in which the dominant outside group transported people or had them transported from their homeland to a new area overseas.
Numerous people in **fort** situations become Europeanized to varying degrees. The Europeans' native women/wives would presumably have learned the L2 well. Under fort circumstances the European language model diluted quickly as it was used for communication by clients and dependents and tertiarily by these in multilingual trade contacts within their own native communities. Some Europeans will have learned non-European languages in the fort situation, but hardly any will have done so in the plantation situation. On **plantations** the Europeans initially outnumbered the non-Europeans, but in the exploitative phase the number of unskilled laborers brought in from the outside increased rapidly, further diluting the language model available for acquiring the superstrate language (cf. Bickerton.1988: 269f). Whatever the situation, what we have here are instances in which new languages grew up in a situation characterized by language contact

**2.1 The spread of English pidgins and creoles**. Not every pidgin or creole with English as its major source of vocabulary is of interest in the context of this book. Some creoles whose vocabulary comes chiefly from English have little present-day connection to English. This is most obvious in the case of Sranan, the most wide-spread creole in Suriname, spoken by about 80% of the population (and as the first language of approximately a quarter of the Suriname population).




Map 9.2: Caribbean Creoles.

For a number of other countries an English creole, usually a low-prestige language, stands in a relationship to Standard English as the official language (or as one of them). That is the case in many of the territories of the Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua-Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad-Tobago, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the American Virgin Islands – all former plantation types). A second center lies in West Africa (Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone – all former fort situations). In each of the latter countries English is an official language, but not a widely spoken one and the low-prestige form of English is a

pidgin rather than a creole. The third major area in which English pidgins and creoles are to be found is the Pacific. Here we find both a fort type situation as well as a plantation type situation, whereby, however, the force behind labor movements was contract labor rather than slavery. Here we find Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), Neo-Solomonic or Solomon Islands Pijin; Bislama (Vanuatu [New Hebrides]); Australian PE; and Hawaiian PE and Hawaiian CE).

**2.2 Cultural survival.** The transfer of peoples does not necessarily mean the transfer of cultures. The question arises as to what a people so suppressed as these slaves were might be able to keep of their African identity. The details varied considerably in the various colonies, but, in general, such homeland institutions as kings, courts, guilds, markets, cult-groups, and armies were not transplanted. There is the occasional exception, such as the Boni of South America, but for the most part, all was snuffed out under the grinding, grueling work on the new plantations. What did survive were those things closest to a person's behavior and feeling: parts or aspects of language, oral traditions, verbal values, music and performance styles, dance and kinesthetics, religion, and perhaps family structure. It is these aspects which play a role in this chapter; language will be primary, but the other aspects mentioned will be considered - at least in part.

**3. Pidgins**. To begin with, a pidgin is a type of language. It evolves in the context of contact between speakers of several different languages. Historically this has been chiefly in the context of trade or of plantation labor. In this sense it is a **contact language**. It may be a temporary, make-shift means of communication or it may be a more or less permanent and relatively fixed language code. Because of this it is often referred to as a **marginal language**. In either case what is important is that it is not the native language of any one of the speakers or groups of speakers. For this reason it is a **non-native language**.
It does, nevertheless, make use of words, sounds, constructions, and strategies of communication which it may borrow from any of the native languages of its speakers as well as the dominant colonial language. This has led to these languages being called **mixed languages**. However, what is borrowed is often borrowed in a reduced version. Reduction affects not only the systematic syntactic aspects of language, but also the extent of usage of the language. That is, pidgins are employed in fewer situations and allow for less stylistic differentiation. For this reason they are justifiably termed **reduced languages**.
In summary, a **pidgin** is a reduced, impoverished language which is no one's native language and which is used for limited communication in situations of contact between people who do not share a native language. Linguistically, it may consist of elements of a wide variety of native languages; however, the language spoken by the people with the most prestige and/or power will probably supply the majority of the vocabulary. There is, however, a wide spread within pidgins as defined. Some are relatively more make-shift; others have been used over several generations. The former reflect the native languages of its users more strongly (termed **jargons** by Mühlhäusler 1986a); the latter may be much more systematically structured and even contain internal means for the derivation of new words, relatively sophisticated syntax, and an expanded phonology (termed **stabilized** and **expanded pidgins** by Mühlhäusler and approaching the complexity of a creole). As the remarks we have just made show, a definition of a pidgin has to take into account elements which are linguistic, social, and historical. It is perhaps useful to distinguish the term pidgin from other related terms: A **trade jargon** is a reduced type of pidgin as opposed to an extended one; a **lingua franca** is a reduced, simplified form of a language used for communication in limited situations with non-native participants (and possibly some native ones); both creoles and extended pidgins can be used as lingua francas, as can GenE itself; a **koiné** is a common denominator form of a language which has evolved as the long-term product of contact between speakers of differing (regional) varieties of a single language; a **dialect** is a variety of a language which differs from other varieties due to such features of its speakers as region, age, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, etc.; and a **creole** is a native language like any other, but one with a special history, usually rooted in a pidgin.

| | non-native | reduced | marginal | mixed | contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| trade jargon | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| pidgin | yes | yes-no | yes | yes | yes |
| lingua franca | yes-no | yes | yes | no | yes |
| koiné | no | yes-no | no | yes | yes |
| dialect | no | no | yes-no | no | no |
| creole | no | no | no | no | no |

Table 9.2: Pidgins distinguished from related terms.

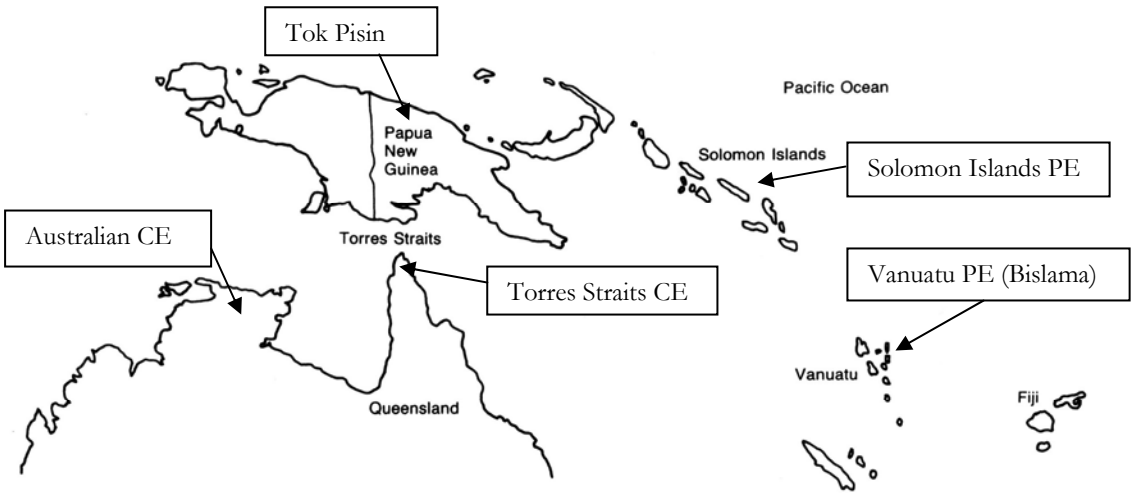
**3.1 Examples of Pidgin English.** If pidgins are, indeed, mixed languages and non-native ones at that, how is it that we can refer to them as *English* pidgins? What is English about them? The following are some examples (all Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE) from Bickerton 1981). Note that the spelling is semi-phonemic[2]:

difren belifs dei get, sam gaiz
different beliefs they get, some guys
"Some guys have different beliefs" (21) [word order in HPE differs from GenE]

haus, haus ai stei go in, jaepan taim
house, house I stay go in, Japan time
"When I lived in Japan I stayed inside the house" [no tense; time marked adverbially] (27)

go tak tu fala go hapai dis wan
go take two fellow go carry this one
"Take two men and carry this away" [*go* used as a marker of the imperative] (31)

Obviously the syntax of these HPE examples is not English, and the morphology is only partially so. We cannot say much of anything about the pronunciation. What we can discern is that the vocabulary is more or less English. In fact, only the single word *hapai* is clearly not English in the examples given above. It is chiefly because the vocabulary comes to such a large extent from English that a pidgin like this is called Pidgin *English*. In such cases English is the **lexifier language**. The phonology, morphology, and syntax of such a pidgin are not fixed; rather, they may reflect the native languages of its various users. In contrast, in well established or **extended and stabilized pidgins** – ones used over several generations – phonology and syntax as well as lexis are relatively more fixed and shared within the larger community. The lexifier language, which is the language of the economically or militarily more powerful and more prestigious, is generally called the **superstrate language**; its contributions are fairly obvious because they determine the vocabulary used. In contrast, the native languages of the suppressed and less powerful are referred to as the **substrate languages**; their influence is less obvious, but arguably present in phonology and communicative structures, less so in syntax, in morphology, and, of course, in lexis.




Map 9.3: Pacific Pidgins and Creoles

**3.2 Lexicon and word-formation**. Make-shift pidgins (jargons) are characterized by their limited vocabulary, which in turn means that fewer words will have to carry relatively more functions / meaning. Tok Pisin (TP), for example, though an extended pidgin, has only two prepositions, *long* (for spatial relations) and *bilong* (for possession or association), while GenE has several hundred. In the place of more precise lexical items such pidgins are likely to depend more on circumlocution. TP uses *gras* (< English *grass*) for various bunches of long stringy things: *gras bilong hed* ("hair") vs. *gras bilong fes* ("beard").

[2] As in the earlier chapters the original text is given in the first line, a literal word-for-word translation in the second and a free Modern English translation in the third.

The main source of the vocabulary of a pidgin is borrowing, most strongly from the lexifier. The following table shows the major sources of vocabulary in three stable pidgins in the Pacific area.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Borrowing: | Bislama: | 90% English | 5% indigenous | 3% French | |
| | Tok Pisin: | 77% English | 16% indigenous | 7% German (etc.) | |
| | Solomon Pijin: | 89% English | 6% indigenous | 5% other | (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 198) |

Table 9.3: Sources of vocabulary in three Pacific pidgins with an English lexifier.

In general a tendency has been noted for the kind of words borrowed to have a higher share of archaic and regional items than is the case in GenE. Furthermore, we find reanalyses of morpheme boundaries, substratum calques, semantic shifts, and reduplication (see below, this section).

Frequently the pidgin (or creole) does not retain the morphological structure of the lexifier. This means that inflections (e.g. for the plural of nouns or the past tense of verbs) are not borrowed together with the word (or lexeme, as it is more technically called). Instead one single form may be used for both present and past, as in the example above of *stei*, which as used there would be *stayed* in GenE. Furthermore, there are a number of cases in which the distinction between what in English are two different words is not maintained. For example, in TP, *tudir* < English *too dear* means simply "expensive." In this way the English morphological structure (a sequence of the two morphemes, {too} and {dear}, is reanalyzed as a single, indivisible morpheme {tudir}. The same applied to *lego* < *let go*, which has become a single word meaning "let go"; and *sekan* < *shake hands* means "make peace" (examples from Mühlhäusler 1986a: 167). Internal resources for adding to the vocabulary by the process of word formation are seldom found in a pidgin though they do begin to develop in creoles.

Borrowing may also ignore the semantic, syntactic, and stylistic constraints of the donor language (here, English). In a stable pidgin, one which has been in use over several generations, as TP has, stylistic differences common in English do not hold. In TP the stylistically neutral word for “rear end” is *as* < English *arse*. Furthermore, *as* also means “origin” or “cause” (ibid.: 168). The syntactic class of a word may also be different than in the lexifier, as when TP *tasol* (< *that’s all*) is used as the conjunction “but” (ibid.). Of course, when the pidgin is used (at the low prestige end) in a given society together with StE (at the high end), the long-term influence of StE norms, including those of social acceptability, is likely to be fairly strong.

The use of Pidgin (or Creole) English against the background of a society with non-European traditions may also lead to a restructuring of some lexical fields, as can be seen in the case of kinship terms. Here TP has *papa* and *mama* much as used in GenE. However, the distinction between a paternal uncle (*smolpapa*) and paternal aunt (*smolmama*), on the one hand, and a maternal uncle or aunt (undifferentiated *kandare*), on the other, is of great importance. Furthermore, not only is a single word used for a grandparent and a grandchild (undifferentiated for gender: *tumbuna*), there is also only one word for both a brother’s brother and for a sister’s sister (*brata*), and a different one for a brother’s sister and a sister’s brother (*susa*) (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 169):

| English | Tok Pisin | | English | Tok Pisin | | English | Tok Pisin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| mother | mama | | maternal aunt or uncle | kandare | | paternal aunt | smolmama |
| father | papa | | | | | paternal uncle | smolpapa |
| same-sex sibling | brata | | opposite-sex sibling | susa | | grandparent or grandchild | tumbuna |

Table 9.4: Kinship terms in Tok Pisin.

A further type of borrowing that is often pointed out is the calque (or loan translation), in which the elements of, for example, a substrate language are translated into the lexifier language, English. This gives us *big áy* for "greedy" or *stròng-héd* for "stubborn" in Nigerian PE. Further examples are American Indian PE and the putative calques: *warpath*, *paleface*, *firewater*, *peace pipe*; also Chinese PE *no can do* "something is impossible to do" (ibid.: 194f).

A process not dependent on borrowing alone is reduplication, which may indeed occur without the influence of the substratum either. In pidgins it occurs in order to signal a variety of distinctions in meaning, such as the plural or a large quantity of what a noun designates (West African PE *dók-dók* “dogs”), repetition and continuity of action (*tók-tók* “constant talk”), indivisibility (*kwíkwík* “quickly,” or intensification (*bík-bík* “very big”) (Schneider 1967).

Lexical distinctions can also be made by using regular derivational processes, at least in older, stabilized

pidgins. The English word *find* shows up in TP as the root {pain} (pronounced like "pine"). It takes this form because the substrate languages do not have the phoneme /f/ and therefore replace it with a /p/. Furthermore, as in many pidgin and creoles as well as many non-standard forms of GenE, final consonant clusters (combinations of one or more consonants) such as /-nd/ are simplified to /n/. Since *pain* is a transitive verb, it regularly takes the final syllable {-im}, which marks transitivity, giving it the meaning "search." When, however, the action of searching is successful (that is, finding), this is marked by having *painim* followed by "finish," a "completive aspectual marker," which in TP is, phonetically, *pinis* (/f/ > /p/; /ʃ/ > /s/). Thus we find here the following pairs:

| | |
|---|---|
| painim / painim pinis | search / find |
| *boilim* / *boilim pinis* | boil / sterilize |
| *promis* / *promis pinis* | promise / keep a promise (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 171) |

The so-called "frustrative" marker *nating* is added to indicate "inferior quality," cf.

| | |
|---|---|
| *pusi nating* | "desexed cat, stray cat, weak cat, cat without a pedigree" |
| *bun nating* | "skinny" [< bone, bum ?] |
| *kuk nating* | "cook vegetarian food" (ibid.: 172) |

Early on TP had lexicalized causative verbs such *kill*, a meaning to cause to be dead, as a single lexeme. As the language developed, it adopted (around 1900) periphrastic and productive *mekim* + noun + verb (e.g. *yu mekim sam wara i boil* "you make some water boil") and then even later (late 1910s-early 1920s a morphological causative of the type *mek*V (e.g. *meksave* "to cause to know, to inform" or *mekpas* "to make fast, to tie up"). However, this did not become productive and was retained only in a few fossilized items. Instead, (c. 1910) a new causative suffix, {-im}, entered the language and became productive (in the 1930s), as in

*bek* "to be back" → *bekim* "to return something, to cause it to be back"
*boil* "to boil → *boilim* "to boil something, i.e. to cause it to boil"
*hariap* "to hurry" → *hariapim* "to make someone hurry"

The range of this causative marker has expanded extensively and systematically since then (ibid.: 184-187).

**3.3 Syntax**. The grammatical structure of pidgins varies considerably depending on whether the pidgin is new and relatively make-shift or whether they have existed long enough to become stabilized and expand. The examples given in 3.1 represent the make-shift pole, in which the native languages of the speakers provide most of the grammatical input.[3] TP represents the other end of the pole. It has a history of well over 100 years, and it is currently undergoing the process of creolization (see below §5). As a result its grammar is relatively complex. Here are a few of examples of the system of TP.

Let us start by looking at the system of personal pronouns, as we have so far done in most of the chapters (cf. also §6.2). Note that no gender distinctions in the 3rd person singular are made:

| Person | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | mi | mi-pela |
| 2nd | yu | yu-pela |
| 3rd | em | em ol |

Table 9.5: The personal pronouns of Tok Pisin (stabilization stage)[4] (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 159).

While early pidgins often have no systematic means of indicating tense, aspect, and number and rely on the pragmatics of the situation, these categories begin to appear as pidgins stabilize and then expand. One of these grammatical markers was introduced to TP by plantation workers returning from Samoa (and speaking Samoan Plantation PE) by about 1900: It is the affixation of the English word *fellow* (in TP: *-pela*) to mark monosyllabic attributive adjectives (e.g. *smolpela dokta* ("little doctor, i.e. medical orderly") or

[3] It has been argued that pidgin formation may be guided by universal principles (see § 6.4).

[4] In recent Tok Pisin we find a more elaborated pronoun system in which the 1st person plural has been differentiated into an exclusive 1st person plural (*mipela*) "speaker and one or more others, but not the addressee" and an inclusive 1st person plural (*yumi*) "speaker and addressee(s)"; 3rd person plural is now simple *ol*.

to mark 1st and 2nd person pronouns as plural (*mi* "I" vs. *mipela* "we"; *yu* "you (singular)" vs. *yupela* ("you (plural)," as in Table 9.5 (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 153f). In both cases this is a good example of **grammatical reanalysis**. The Samoan use of *fellow* (*pela* or *fela*) was variable in word order, coming sometimes before and sometimes after a noun or adjective and carrying, in greater or lesser fashion, the meaning "thing." In TP it was reanalyzed, i.e. grammaticalized, in the sense indicated at the beginning of this paragraph.

TP also gradually introduced tense markers such as the future marker *baimbai* (short form: *bai*) < English *by and by*, cf.

> em bai go long maket
> she will go to market (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 186).

Furthermore, what originally was the pronoun for the 3rd person singular (*he, she, it*), viz. *i* became a marker indicating that the next element in the sentence was the verb (or predicate), cf.

> em i tok se papa i gat sik
> he PREDICATE MARKER say that the father PRED. MARKER got sick
> "he said that the father was sick" (ibid.: 189)

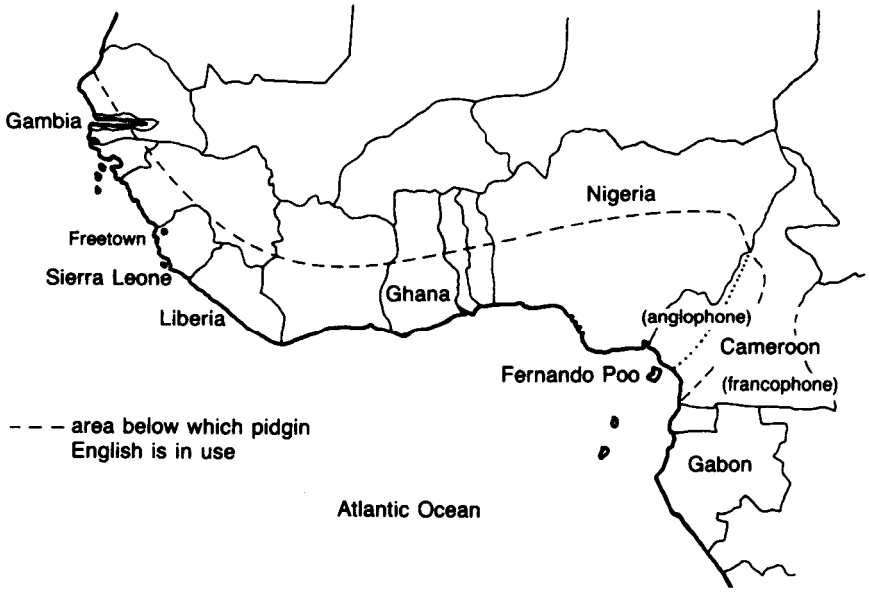
As a final syntactic point let us look at how relative clauses are formed, another point we have been following up in the various stages of the language we have looked at. Quite a number of English-lexifier pidgins have the relative element *we* (< *where*), pronounced /we:/. Mühlhäusler lists West African PE, Bislama, Solomon Islands PE, TP, Queensland Kanaka English, Krio, Torres Strait Broken, and Northern Territory Kriol. In each case the emergence of the relative pronoun may well be an independent development rather than a case of a historical relationship: Due to the temporal discontinuity *we* was lost in the alleged donor pidgins or creoles before the first occurrences of it in the supposed recipient pidgin turned up. For example, when *we* showed up in TP (early 1970s), TP itself had lost any contact with German West Africa, the locale of its presumed source. The development of *we* seems to have spread from place (*ples we*) to time (*taim we*) to animates (*man we*) and finally to inanimate things (*samthing we*), whereby each construction represents a case of reanalysis. (1986a: 189f). In a later step TP speakers have moved in the direction of the lexifier language and introduced the relativizer *husat* "who," originally an interrogative ("who?") adapted as a kind of loan translation from English and used in written TP (for example, in translations). It first applied to people (as does English *who*), e.g. *Mister Paul Langro husat i bin askim* … ("Mr. Paul Langro who asked…"), but then was extended to things as well, e.g. *insait long biktaun bilong PNG husat i gat haus bet* ("in the cities of PNG which have betting shops") (ibid.: 245f).

**3.4 Pronunciation.** This remains the least stable linguistic level in pidgins. In early pidgins, the inventory of sounds in very limited, and sounds unusual in the world's languages are seldom retained (/x/, /ð, θ/, /ʃ, ʒ/). Bisyllabic word structure is favored, and the tempo of speech delivery is said to be slow. A 5-vowel system (/i – e – a – o – u/) is frequent, and vowel length differences are often lost. Substratum influence is generally notable, esp. in the jargon stage, but subsides under stabilization. The lack of a distinction in TP between /s/, /ʃ/, and /tʃ/ (all realized as /s/) can lead to ambiguity. For example *sip* = *ship*, *jib*, *jeep*, *sieve*, *chief* (together with the lack of a long-short vowel distinction, final devoicing, and the realization of /f/ as /p/). Likewise *pis* = *beach*, *beads*, *fish*, *peach*, *piss*, *feast*, *peace*. This explains the misunderstanding on the part of a Member of the House of Assembly in Port Moresby who is reported to have said, "les long toktok long sit nating," wrongly translated as "tired of talking to a bunch of shits" rather than the intended "tired of talking to empty seats." (Better would have been the established term *sia* "seat.") (Mühlhäusler 1986b: 561).

In the expansion phase there is an increase in vowels, e.g. the 5-vowel system to a 7-, 10- or even 12-vowel system. Many of the new distinctions come from the lexifier language, but possibly also from adstrate[5] and substrate languages. More marginal consonants are added allowing more distinctions (but still hardly /ð, θ/); additions may be non-English as in Nigerian PE /gb/, /kp/, and /ɲ/. Phonological rules also begin to emerge: (a) phonotactic restrictions change; (b) deletion, permutation, or addition to the base forms. For example, consonant clusters are allowed: where earlier we had *pún* we now have *spún* "spoon"; *sipik* becomes *spik* "speak" (NigPE). TP had *tiret* or *sitiret* for present-day *stret* "straight." TP also

[5] An adstrate language is an outside language, neither the superstrate (lexifier) nor one of the substrate languages.

now has unstressed syllables (e.g. /pəla/ for earlier /pela/; earlier word initial pre-nasalization is lost (/mb-, nd-, ŋg-/ or regarded as a marker of social backwardness). Indeed, stylistic variation is practiced, e.g. imitating older pronunciations to make fun of a certain (rural) mentality.




Map 9.4: West African Pidgin English

**4. The language continuum.** In the case of many, though not all English creoles, the main reason aside from their vocabulary why they may be regarded as *English* creoles is the fact that they are spoken in countries where English is the official language and the creoles themselves are regarded as being a form of English, often, however, given a pejorative designation, such as "broken" or "bastard" or "bad." This is the case in Jamaica and in Guyana. Even in countries in which English does not have an official status, the same may be true, especially if there is some other regular access to English, such as radio or textual materials. This is the case in a variety of places in Central America. Where, however, a creole has English as its lexifier, but not as its acrolect form, the adjective *English* is questionable. This is the case chiefly in Suriname, where the official language is Dutch, but where a sizable percentage of the population speaks the English-based creole Sranan.

**4.1 The creole continuum.** In countries in which English is the official language and the majority of the population speaks either English or an English creole the continuum covers a variety of forms that lie between the two extremes of StE (the acrolect) and the broadest creole (the basilect). The varieties in between are called mesolects. A continuum implies that "…given two samples of Jamaican speech which differ substantially from one another, it is usually possible to find a third intermediate level in an additional sample. Thus it is not practicable to describe the system in terms of two or three or six or any other manageable number of discrete social dialects" (DeCamp 1971: 354).

*mi a nyam* *me a eat* *me eatin'* *I eatin'* *I is eatin'* *I am eating*
basilect | ← mesoltects → | acrolect
(after Singh 2000: 74)

There may be a fundamental difference between the acrolect and all other varieties in the continuum, and this distinction may well be rooted in the feelings speakers have about any kind of divergence from the standard. Despite the increase in local pride in the creole, the general tendency has been toward the acrolect. Young speakers may have a command of a far greater range within the continuum than older ones (Rickford 1987: 38).

A great deal of attention has been given to the question of the continuum, and there is a fair amount of controversy over whether or not such a thing really exists. The alternative is to see distinct or discrete varieties (say, two or even three). Where two distinct varieties exist, one will generally have more prestige and be the High or classical language. The other is the Low (demotic or vernacular) language. Such relationships are cases of diglossia. (If there are more than two languages or varieties involved this is

triglossia or even polyglossia.) In addition, there are mixed forms, i.e. uses of language in which speakers who use primarily one variety mix in forms from one of the other varieties.

Yet we should note that a great deal of the variation which exists in the "mixed" area is at least somewhat ordered. Such ordering is referred to as being in an implicational relationship. Implicational relations exist on the following scale from basilect towards the standard in Guyana:

| Basilect item | (explained as), if used | implies the use of what follows in the list | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wan* | (as indefinite article) | > | *na* V | (pre-verbal neg.) | > | |
| *dem* | (as subject case pronoun) | > | *aa* | (low unrounded as in *all*) | > | |
| V + 0 | (as dynamic verb past) | > | *a* V | (as progressive) | > | |
| *d* | (as in *this*) | > | *ky/gy* | (as in *car, girl*) | (Rickford 1987: 19) | |

Table 9.6: Implicational relationships in Guyanese CE.

Concretely, this means that if, for example, a creole speaker forms the progressive by combining *a* with the verb (*a* V as in *ii a gu* "he/she is going") that speaker will also pronounce *this* as *dis* and *car* as /kjar/. The other way around, a speaker who produces *hiiz guing* ("he's going") will not produce anything above it in the list. Producing the more extreme creole form implies producing the less extreme ones. Speakers adapt to StE by "losing" the features from the top down in the table. For all this it is important to note that movement is not merely in the direction of adaptation to the acrolect. The standard itself is open to the adoption of creole elements, esp. as speakers with a creole background move up in society and gain in prestige. Almost inevitably they will take some creole elements with them (cf. the role of mobility in the Middle English period as elaborated in chapter 5).

Just what determines what degree of creole a speaker will produce? This seems to be a fairly complicated equation involving education and social status, the social situation (official or familiar) including solidarity, urbanity, age, ethnicity, and gender. The basilect text given below in §7.1.2. was produced by a young boy whose background was that of a fieldworker; the mesolect text came from a young girl whose father was a building contractor and who was going to secondary school in Georgetown (§7.1.2). What this indicates is that variation is not according to a single dimension (unidimensional), but according a variety of factors (multidimensional). Included in these further dimensions is the influence of other languages, such as Spanish or Carib in Guyana.

For all we have said about implicational relations, it is important to remember that discrete categories cannot be imposed on creole communities such as Guyana or Jamaica. There is always a more or less, and not every creole feature can be listed in a table like 9.6. The pragmatic, rather than systematic, nature of such lists should be clear from the fact that they may contain elements of pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary. Furthermore, implicational relations that work in Guyana look very different in Jamaica, cf. (DeCamp 1971 in Rickford 1987: 20):

/*d*/ (as in *this*) > *t* (as in *thin*) > *pikni* (for *child*) > *no ben* (for *didn't*) > *nanny* (for *granny*) > *nyam* (for *eat*)

**4.2 Post-Pidgin and Post-Creole Continua**. African American Vernacular English, spoken in the US is, according to some, an example of what ultimately happens to a creole as it blends into the mainstream of the language more and more (see chap. 10). Here development is toward the original lexifier, and many varieties and idiolects exist in various degrees of general acceptability. But there are also discontinuities. Question: is there a sequential order in development from more to less marked constructions?

Phonological changes are triggered off by borrowings, and many innovations are restricted to borrowed material. However, there are cases of rule generalization and hypercorrection. TP, for example, has added /dʒ/ and is restoring medial consonant clusters and some final ones. Restoration (*bihain* > *bihaindim* or *poin* > *pointim*) leads to hypercorrection as in *kisim* > *kistim* "catch," (no stop /t/ in the lexifier). AusE influence leads to /e/ > /ai/ as in *nem* > *naim* "name"; as a reaction there is a countermovement /ai/ > /e/ as in *lek* (< *laik*) or *keke* (< *kaikai*), where the original form has /ai/. How orderly transition is, is not clear. It may involve lexical diffusion rather than laws of sound change. Highly marked sounds (such as /θ and ð/) appear late and the transition may go via forms neither basilectal nor acrolectal, cf. Kriol *jineg* > *jinek* > *sinek* > *sineik* > *sneik* "snake" (Mühlhäusler 1986a: 238-240).

Adaptation to the lexifier is sometimes dependent on function, e.g. HCE changed from accusative to nominative subject pronouns but more slowly for subjects of copulas. Sometimes a new form is borrowed for a new function and then generalized to an older function, e.g. TP / Kriol *husat* "who" as a

relative, which then partially displaces older *we* "which, that" (see above).

**4.3 The Life-Cycle Theory** (Rickford 1987: 32-5). Some people see a connection between the (synchronic) continuum and diachronic development along a continuum towards the standard. In such a model the mesolects are younger varieties than either pole.

pidgin ---> basilect ---> mesolects ---> acrolect

The life-cycle model has been called into question,[6] for it seems as if "the full spectrum of continuum varieties along the Atlantic seaboard may have existed from the earliest days of African-European contact" (ibid.: 32). The high number of field as opposed to house slaves – the former with little contact to acrolect speakers – made their variety the numerically dominant. There has, of course, been subsequent decreolization (ibid.: 33f). Alleyne (1980: 194) sees basilect speakers as rejecting features perceived as deviant from StE and orienting themselves along the lines of speakers above them socio-economically. Hence they stigmatize vowel final syllables, a genderless pronoun system, and nasalized vowels; these then gradually grow obsolete or become extinct (Rickford 1987: 33).

| Stage One: | Stage Two: | Stage Three: |
|---|---|---|
| - pidgin (esp. new slaves)<br>- basilect (field workers)<br>- mesolects (house servants)<br>- acrolect (overseers, masters) | - basilect absorbs the pidgin, dominates numerically<br>- mesolects continue<br>- acrolect continues | - basilect moves toward mesolects/ acrolect; extreme stigmatized features become obsolete or extinct<br>- relexification without major syntactic change<br>- mesolects become numerically dominant (great variation)<br>- acrolect begins to adopt selected creole features, esp. pronunciation |

**Table 9.8: The life-cycle model.**

**5. Creoles.** Conventionally creoles are described as nativized pidgins, i.e. languages which have been adopted by children growing up in environments where a pidgin is their primary input language and which therefore becomes their native language. In the process of becoming a native or a primary language, a pidgin changes in its nature. It does not remain reduced.[7] Rather, it expands, lexically, syntactically, and morphologically. This expansion includes the number and quality of the contexts in which it is used; it gains in stylistic differentiation, often finding expression in written texts, perhaps eventually becoming standardized. As a result it can no longer be regarded as marginal. The mixing that went into the pidgin and the contact that characterized the genesis of pidgins are now only historical, and for this reason cannot be counted as definitive synchronic features.

**5.1 Creolization.** Despite all that has been written about the process of creolization, a lot still remains vague. Does, for example, creolization necessarily presuppose the prior existence of a pidgin? Bickerton (1988: 278), for example, sees the evolution of creoles in a dilution of the acrolect toward the mesolects and the pidgin stage with concomitant loss of markers of case, gender, and number; of tense, modality, and aspect. Nor is it clear just what role pragmatic factors (speech acts, speech situation, turn-taking, emphatic speech styles, etc.) play (see above § 4.3).

**5.2 Some examples of English creoles**. The abbreviations in small caps indicate functional markers in the examples: NEG "negator"; LOC "locative marker" [someone or something is somewhere]; ANT "anterior, past marker"; EXIST "existence marker"; PROG "progressive marker"; FUT "future marker."

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[6] Bickerton sees the origins of the creole not as moving forward: pidgin → creole → post-creole continuum → standard), but backward: standard → L2 (= second or foreign language) → dilution/mesolect → pidgin/basilect. Inflectional endings (markers of case, gender, and number; of tense, modality, and aspect) are either not retained or seldom are (ibid.: 278). At the end of the process of dilution there "would be little more than a handful of morpho-phonemic shapes" all with little transparent meaning; hence there must be semantic shifts and word class changes, and the kind of grammaticalization which is implicit in the lists in §5.4.1.

[7] Of course, a pidgin need not remain reduced, as we have seen with numerous examples taken from stabilized and expanding pidgins

**Guyanese Creole** (Rickford 1987: 133, 130)
wel mii no noo wisaid den de. yu noo ou laang wii bin gat a mashiin?
well me NEG know what side they LOC you know how long we ANT have that machine
Well I don't know where they are now. Do you know how language we've had that machine?

it a wan naif
it EXIST one knife
There was a knife.

ii a gu, ii a waak
he PROG go he PROG walk
He was going along.

**Hawaiian CE** (Bickerton 1981: 28, 55, 67)
ai no kea hu stei hant insai dea, ai gon hunt
I NEG care who PROG hunt inside there I FUT hunt
I don't care who's hunting in there, I'm going to hunt

Jan bin go wok a haspital
John ANT FUT work at hospital
John would have worked at the hospital

get wan wahini shi get wan data
EXIST one wahin she got one daughter
There is a woman who has a daughter

**5.3 Pronunciation**. Both the substrate and the superstrate can contribute to the phonological structure of creoles. But in pidgins and creoles the relationship is often irregular or unpredictable. Due to the influence of the substratum in phonology there can be underdifferentiation and convergence in the pidgin/creole of what are two phonemes in the lexifier; or there can be overdifferentiation and phonemic divergence of two allophones in the lexifier; or substitution. The same can apply to intonation and to syllable structure. Furthermore, sounds which are more universally present throughout the languages of the world are more likely to survive, e.g. /d/ or /m/; infrequent ones such as /ð/ and /θ/ will more often be replaced. Due to substrate influence there may be phonemes or realizations of phonemes not found in the superstrate, e.g. the co-articulated stops /kp, gb/ and pre-nasalized stops (mb-, ɲdj-, ŋg-/) in Saramaccan and Krio or the phonemic tones of Guyanese CE (iteration = high + high *táll! táll* for intensifying vs. reduplication mid + high *tall-táll* for attenuation; or, in Jamaican Creole, *mieri brón* (Mary Brown) vs. *miéri bron* (Mary is brown). The syntax of creoles will be a central point in the following section on the origins of creoles.

**6. Theories of origins**. This section reviews four approaches to how creoles come about. The interest in following up this question lies in the fact that there are so many structural similarities between creoles with European-language lexifiers throughout the world that many linguists feel a suitable explanation would contribute very much to our understanding of how languages evolve and continue to develop. Most of the theories of the origins set out to account for the fact that many of these languages share a large number of parallel, similar, or even identical forms which do not show up in the same way in the standard forms of their lexifier languages. In the following table Sranan, Guyana CE, and Hawaiian CE have English as their lexifier; Haitian CF has French, and Papiamentu has Spanish (possibly Portuguese).

| | Negation | Anterior | Progressive | Existential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sranan | no | (b)en | (d)e (< there) | de (< there) |
| Guyana CE | no | bin | a (< on/at?) | a/get |
| HCE | no | bin | stei (< stay) | get |
| Haitian CF | *pa* (< *pas*) | *te* (< *été*) | *ap* (< *après* or *au près*) | *gê* (< *j'ai*?) |
| Papiamentu | *n* (< *no*) | *taba/a* (< estaba / ya) | *ta* (< *está*) | *tin* (< *tener*) |

**Table 9.9: Putative European-language sources for verbal markers in various Caribbean creoles**.

In the case of the negation marker each of the creoles has chosen one of the central words used in the lexifier for negation. The anterior (or past time) marker is apparently derived from the past participle of the verb *be* in the lexifier (or in the case of Papiamentu from *ya* "already"). Continuative or progressive, i.e. an on-going action, is marked by a particle derived for a word for being at some place (English *there*, *at/on*, or *stay*, French *au près* or *après*, and Spanish *está* "be somewhere or in some condition"). The existential, finally, comes from a word for having something or being somewhere (as in StE *there is/are*). Other categories of the verb (completive, habitual, irrealis) have similar derivations from their lexifiers.

**6.1 Monogenesis.** This approach postulates one unique origin for all pidgins and creoles with a European-language lexifier. The proto-pidgin so postulated would have had a Portuguese lexical base[8] and was supposedly widely used on the trade routes along the Atlantic coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope, into the Indian Ocean, and on to China. As further Europeans entered the colonial trade they would have used the "same" pidgin, but replaced Portuguese words with Dutch, French, or English ones in a process called "relexification"(cf. Thompson 1961; Voorhoeve 1973). This theory is supported not only by the similar grammatical structure of all (or many) of the pidgins and creoles involved, but also by the "residue" of Portuguese words in, for example, English-lexifier creoles. Such words include *pickaninny* < Portuguese *pequeno, pequenino* "small (child)," *savvy* < *saber* "know," or *sampata* < *sapato* "sandal" (Cassidy 1971: 207ff).

This pidgin would have been extremely simple. Everything "inessential" would have been lost (no gender, no cases, no verb endings). The influence of the substrate is variously evident (e.g. in the phonology or the use of an aspect-mode system instead of a tense system) (Whinnom 1965: 519). The vast majority of the vocabulary is clearly from the superstrate language. But: "If Portuguese pidgin particles survive in a pidgin or creole, this must surely be regarded as conclusive proof of Portuguese pidgin origin" (ibid.: 520).

**Criticism**: Other, non-Portuguese models may have been used if indeed there was development via relexification. However that may be, relexification was theoretically at the pidgin stage, yet this stage predated many creole developments. How could it be that so many of these later developments were similar or parallel if the common source lay further back in history?

**6.2 Polygenesis or parallel development**. This theory soon displaced the monogenetic one. It is based on two important factors: (1) the presence of an African substrate and (2) the plantation situation under conditions of slavery. Indeed, the substrate seems to be central to much of the development of both pidgins and creoles, esp. in the matter of vocabulary.

**African lexical influence**. Obviously no African language survived more than 2-3 generations. But words were retained, esp. among Maroons (run-away communities) and in the secret religious societies (Holm 1988: 79f). Turner (1949) shows numerous retentions in Gullah (a South Carolina creole), as Cassidy (1971, 1980) does for Jamaican Creole (JC). Both list about 250 items plus personal names and formulae in stories, songs, and prayers. Because of stigmatization many retentions were masked or reanalyzed, e.g. *bákra* ("white man"): Belizean CE *bakra* is associated with "back raw"; GC associated it with "back row" (where white prisoners had to sit in church); in Sranan *ba kra* is associated with "brother soul"; in Trinidad CE, ultimately under French influence, from "bas courant" (low folks).

**African calques and reduplication.** These are loan translations, i.e. the translation of each part of a West African expression, as in Bahamian *big-eye* or Haitian CF *gwo zɛ* (from French *gros œil* "big eye") on the model of Twi *ani bre* or Ibo *ana uku* "greedy" (Holm 1988: 86-88). On calquing and reduplication Holm says, "It seems likely that reduplication became a productive mechanism for word formation in the creoles via calquing on African models" (ibid.: 88). Cassidy traced numerous examples of reduplication in JC to African sources, including *putta-putta* "mud" from Twi *pɛtɛpɛtɛ* "muddy" or Yoruba *pòtòpotò* or Baule *pòtopóto* "mud." Furthermore: "Studies of reduplication in creoles ... and African languages ... reveal semantic categories more similar to each other than to those in European languages ..., although there are indeed parallels in all three, suggesting the influence of language universals" (ibid.: 89). While other lexical sources such as adstrate languages are often important, "the impact of the African substrate pervaded the entire lexicon in its effect on semantics, as well as calques on compound words, idioms, and reduplications ..." (ibid.: 89).

**Cultural uniformity** existed in West Africa in the form of similarities in folklore, religion, kinship structures, music, as well as language. Linguistic similarity seems to go back to the Akan and Ewe language groups since early trading was concentrated in their area and Akan influence continued in the West Indies (cf. Coromanti leadership in many early slave revolts). In general, African technology, political organization, and clothing styles largely disappeared; religion, magic, music, superstition, forms of amusement remained in pure or in syncretized form. Language influence can be seen in the underlying

[8] Some (esp. Whinnom 1965) suggest that this might itself have come from the Mediterranean *lingua franca* ("French language"; aka *Sabir*) used among sailors and traders and relexified with Portuguese words in the late 15th or early 16th century. This is not to be confused with the use of the term *lingua franca* for a simplified language of wider communication (see above § 3).

structure. Even some actual lexical items were retained – usually from the private sphere (Alleyne 1971: 175f; see above).

**Similarities in the plantation context**. Over and above the survival of basic West African linguistic and cultural similarities the later development of the cultural contact situation in the Caribbean is also crucial. There seems to have been no wholesale attempt at learning the acrolect, but rather a massive incorporation of lexical items from it into the creole. This included derivational affixes which might become productive in the "lower" language, but overall caused the morphological and syntactic systems to undergo a kind of restructuring that very much resembles simplification (putatively the case of English in contact with Old Norse and Norman French; see discussion in chapters 3 and 4).

**The personal pronoun systems of English creoles** tend to preserve distinctions made in the substrate languages but not found in GenE. We saw this above in TP, where the distinction between inclusive and exclusive 1st person plural was taken into the system. On the other hand, gender distinctions as found in the 3rd person singular pronouns (*he, she, it*) of GenE are frequently neglected or adopted from the lexifier only at a late stage (cf. JC). The three examples in the tables below have been taken from the Pacific, West Africa, and the Americas. The Pacific creole, 9.10a (TP as given here is a late model and may be considered to be at the creole stage), differs from the others inasmuch as it includes dual and trial number and distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive in the non-singular, thus clearly reflecting the linguistic background of the native speech communities. Furthermore, the use of the morpheme {-pela} is specific to the Pacific area. The West African example (9.10b, explicitly a pidgin) is distinguished by the use of some case distinctions. It and the American example share the use of 2nd person *una*. The American example, 9.10c, shows little evidence of case. This lack of case may be a reflection of the extreme early simplification.

Pacific example.

| | 1st person inclusive | 1st person exclusive | 2nd person | 3rd person |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Singular | mi | - | yu | em |
| Dual | yumitupela | mitupela | yutupela | tupelo |
| Trial | yumitripela | mitripela | yutripela | tripela |
| Plural | yumi | mipela | yupela | ol |

Table 9.10a: The personal pronouns of Tok Pisin.

West African example.

| | 1st person | 2nd person | 3rd person |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nominative | a | yu | i |
| Possessive | ma, mi | you, yu | im |
| Object | mi | yu | am |
| emphatic | mi | yu | im |
| Plural (all cases) | wi | una | dem |

Table 9.10b: The personal pronouns of West African PE (Agheyisi 1971: 122, 127).

American example.

| | 1st person | 2nd person | 3rd person |
|---|---|---|---|
| Singular | mi | yu | i(m) |
| Plural | wi | unu | dem |

Table 9.10c: The personal pronouns of Jamaican Creole (Holm: 201).

**6.3 The influence of the superstratum**. The idea here is that the creoles might be traced back to the influence of dialectal or regional forms of English, to baby or foreigner talk, or to maritime jargons. These influences would then be sufficient to explain the differing forms of the English creoles vis-à-vis the standard language.

**Regional dialects**. Speakers of non-standard English moved in large enough numbers to the colonies (esp. Barbados; see below §7.1.1) to provide a model. This could then serve as an explanation for why *does* and *did* are used in the mesolects of, for example, Guyana and Jamaica, where many of the English small-holder moved after they were displaced in the move to sugar cultivation on large holding in the late 17th century. This may explain the use of positive *does (doz)* and *did* to express habitual action (now archaic in StE; also not present in the basilect) (Bickerton 1988: 271). The influence of regional English may also be

found in the lengthy words lists that have been compiled showing, for example, the present of Scottish English words in JC/English (cf. Craig 1982). Note examples such as *krabit* (Miskito Coast) < ScotE *crabbed*, *crabbit* "ill-tempered." **Archaic usage /pronunciation** is also found, cf. *bail* "boil" or *jain* "join" in Miskito Coast CE or *liard*, *criard* (with *-ard* agentive). **Slang and vulgar GenE usage** is common is many English-lexifier pidgins and creoles, e.g. *pis, switpis, pisbag, pisol* for urine, diabetes, bladder, urethra respectively.

A problem regional and stylistic sources can bring with them is that at some point it becomes necessary to shop among an assortment of varieties in order to account for the creole forms. If this becomes too arbitrary, it is no longer credible.

**Foreigner and baby talk input** presupposes that Europeans simplified their speech when speaking to West Africans in the trading centers and to slaves on the plantations. Accordingly traders/masters would use their own language in a reduced fashion, for example, leaving out unnecessary endings. This would serve as the input for those learning the European language. Hence on top of the difficulties anyone has learning a foreign language would come that of not even having a genuine, full model. One criticism of this approach is that while it is true that there are some cultural conventions about the ways people simplify their native languages, there are only vague similarities in the way they do so.

**Nautical jargon** are sometimes presupposed as the model for the various pidgins. It does seem to have been the case that the crews of the various trading ships were often multilingual and that the languages (or jargons) they used were mixtures involving items from a variety of sources. Clearly Miskito Coast CE *gyali* < *galley* "kitchen" or "cooking hut" is likely to be ultimately of nautical origin. (And, of course, one such language served as the basis of the monogenetic theory: Sabir; cf. footnote 8.) By way of criticism, it is not clear whether any such jargon was fixed enough to have served as a widespread model, especially not with regard to the remarkable structural similarity between the various creoles. Most of the jargons seemed themselves to have been variable and/or instable.

**6.4 The effect of linguistic universals (the bioprogram).** This approach argues that the reduction found in pidgins is reversed and that this expansion is a consequence of an innate "bioprogram." This genetically transmitted human language acquisition device is will spark the realization of a set of universal grammatical categories under certain circumstances such as ones where the non-European population quickly outnumbered the Europeans and therefore fewer European linguistic properties are maintained. Children handle this situation very differently from adults because the latter have a viable language already while the former *make* one (Bickerton 1988: 273). In order to do this people who have been raised in the environment of a pidgin have to use the lexis and morphology of the available languages (chiefly the lexifier; see 6.4.1). These principles can be realized relatively directly in those creoles which rather than developing over many, many decades (such as TP) emerge instead within a single generation. Such a creole can abandon "millennia of diachronic change" (Bickerton 1988: 274). From the perspective of this book this means that beside internal change and language contact the further factor of linguistic universals may play a role in the history of a language.

Bickerton's work on Hawaiian PE shows that it was so rudimentary and unordered that it was not suited for the "pidgin-creole cycle." Bickerton also excludes the influence of the substrate languages (Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Tagalog, Portuguese) and of the superstrate English since Hawaiian CE has structures which none of these have, for example the TMA system (see 6.4.2). Yet these same structures are shared with other historically unrelated creoles.[9]

**6.4.1 Universal grammatical categories**. Some of the categories assumed to belong to the bioprogram are: (1) word class assignment (esp. verb vs. non-verb), (2) specificity (generic, indefinite, definite), (3) anteriority (tense), (4) completeness (aspect), (5) potentiality (future-irrealis), (6) CVCV [alternations of consonant and vowel] phonology, and (7) SVO word order. If the source language morphemes for "certain minimal functions" are lost, lexical forms will be adopted to fulfill them.[10] They include:

[9] Note that we are talking here about grammatical structures and not vocabulary (which has clearly been borrowed). It has also been pointed out that speakers of Cape Verde creole speakers were present is Hawaii in the 19th century, hence showing there was a link to historical West African creoles (Mühlhäusler 1986b: 225).

[10] Using Unserdeutsch, a German creole which creolized within one generation, Mühlhäusler reviews 12 typical/universal creole properties and finds little support for Bickerton's universalist-bioprogram approach. He concludes that creoles are related to their pidgin precursors and that historical connections may be more important than Bickerton indicates (1986: 220-228).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| indefinite article | < superstrate word for "one" | definitive article | < superstrate demonstrative |
| anterior marker | < superstrate for past participle of the copula | pluralizer | < superstrate for 3rd plural pronoun |
| non-punctual marker | < superstrate for location | irrealis marker | < superstrate for "to go" |
| irrealis complementizer | < superstrate for "for" | completive marker | < superstrate for "to finish" |
| relative pronoun | < superstrate for "where" | pronouns, if invariant | < superstrate accusative |

**Table 9.11: Superstrate sources of grammatical items**.

Universal principles of syntax together with lexical bits and pieces of related meaning lead to the realization of grammatical items in creole languages. If lost (during pidginization), these categories will reconstitute themselves presumably using "an unmarked set of grammatical options" (Bickerton 1988: 282). Following the lead in the other chapters, we will look specifically at TMA. Relative particles were already explored above in § 3.4 and e) pronouns in § 6.3.

**6.4.2 Relative sequence of TMA particles**. Probably every creole realizes the categories of tense, modality, and aspect. What is especially remarkable is that combinations of two of more of these categories show up in the same relative order: tense before modality before aspect in pre-verbal position. "A majority of creoles, like HCE, express tense, modality, and aspect by means of three preverbal free morphemes. Placed (if they co-occur) in that order" (Bickerton 1981: 58). Voorhoeve has shown this for Sranan, the English-lexifer creole of Suriname.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *waka* | "have walked" (completive present) | |
| *e-waka* | "is walking" | e = progressive marker (A) |
| *sa-waka* | "will walk" | sa = future or irrealis marker(< shall) (M) |
| *ben waka* | "walked" | ben = past marker (T) |
| *ben-sa waka* | "would have walked" | |
| *ben-e waka* | "was walking" | |
| *ben-sa-e waka* | "would have to keep walking" | |
| *sa-e-waka* | "will be walking" | (Voorhoeve 1962: 38-40) |

Table 9.12: The relative order of the TMA elements in Sranan.

Here are a few examples from both a well-established pidgin and from creoles (the simultaneous use of markers of tense, modality, and aspect is rare):

| Variety | Example + Gloss | TMA | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gambian Krio: | Una bin go sidɔn klos mi<br>You should have sat near me | T+M | (Holm 1989: 418) |
| Liberian English (settler variety): | hi ha dɔn gɛ de wɔk<br>He had COMP got the work | T+M | (ibid.: 425) |
| Cameroon PE: | dem bin di kohnggohsa plenty<br>They were chatting a lot | T+A | (ibid.: 432) |
| Belize CE: | we mi de luk fu rowp wan taym<br>We were looking for rope one time | T+A | (ibid.: 479) |
| Guyanese CE: | mina wok a kriyool<br>I was working in (a) creole (workgang) | T+A | (Rickford 1987: 145) |

**Table 9.12: Combinations of tense, modality, and aspect in relative sequence**.

**7. History and textual examples.** The short overview in this section serves to provide a general historical outline that will make some of the linguistic differences in the two major creole English areas, the Caribbean and the Pacific clearer.

**7.1 The Caribbean**. This area may be divided into an eastern and a western part on the basis of linguistic differences. The Eastern Caribbean consists of Barbados, the Lesser Antilles (British Leeward Islands) in the north and the Windward Islands in the south), eastern Jamaica, and Guyana while the Western Caribbean consists of western Jamaica, the Caymans, the Caribbean coast of Central America, especially Belize, and a smaller few islands (see Map 9.2). Linguistically, the eastern areas are less deviant vis-à-vis StE than the west and Guyana (Le Page and DeCamp, qtd. in Holm 1989: 466). One set of distinctions is that the east has monophthongs while the west has corresponding diphthongs, cf. Table 9.13.

| East: | GC (cf. 7.1.2, Text one) | West: | JC (cf. 7.1.3, Text three) | RP-GenAm |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /eː/ | *reezaa* ("razor") | /ie/ | *liedi* ("lady") | /eɪ/ |
| /oː/ | *rood* ("road") | /uo/ | *úol* ("old") | /əʊ - oʊ/ |

**Table 9.13: East-West pronunciation differences in the Caribbean**.

In the following table we see some of the differences in pre-verbal markers.

| | Barbados | Guyana | Jamaica (East, West) | Belize |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anterior | *did* | *bin* | E. *bin, (b)en, min*<br>W: *min, men, wen* | *mi/me* |
| Progressive | *-in* | *a* | E: *(d)a*<br>W: *de* | *de* |
| Habitual | *doz* | *a/doz/oz/z* | unmarked | unmarked or *de/da* |
| Completive | - | *don* | *don* | *don* |
| Future | *goin tu* | *go/gu (sa)* | *go* or *wi* | *wan/wahn* |

**Table 9.14: Tense and aspect markers in four selected Caribbean basilect varieties**.

**7.1.1 Barbados**. In the eastern part of the West Indies Barbados (present population: 252,000) was historically important. Its language influenced Suriname, Jamaica, and the Carolinas, among others. Barbados is a relatively flat island, very suitable for agriculture. It was discovered and claimed by the British in 1624 and settled from 1627 on. It became the center of the Eastern Caribbean area. Originally it was settled by Scots, English, and Irish, and its speech was a conglomerate of regional non-standard speech. The settlers were mostly small free-holders and raised chiefly tobacco and corn. The population reached 37,000 by 1642, when the English Civil War cut off immigration. In the 1640s there was a switch to sugar, and many of the Europeans left as African slaves were imported for the hard work on the sugar plantations. Those leaving went to Suriname, to Jamaica, to the Carolinas, and to the Leeward Islands. Meanwhile the number of slaves increased dramatically:

1645: 6,000 slaves and 40,000 whites
1685: 46,000 slaves and 20,000 whites
1705: 12,000 whites
1750: 80% slaves

According to Hancock (1980), the English of Barbados was never really creolized; rather, creole features were introduced on the basis of 19th century contacts between the islands. Cassidy (1980), in contrast, sees the sugar economy and disproportion of blacks to whites as having led to creolization, yet with rapid and complete decreolization. After emancipation (effectively in 1838) Barbados began to export its people and their language, Bajan. Many of them went as workers and administrators to Guyana, Trinidad, the Windwards, and Panama.

**7.1.2 Guyana and Guyanese Creole English**. Guyana was settled by Dutch planters and their slaves from 1618 on, but large numbers of British from Barbados and the Leewards began settling there with their slaves from the mid-18th century on. Large numbers of Asian Indians (over 200,000) came as indentured servants between the end of slavery in the British Empire in 1838 and World War I. Today the inland area is inhabited mostly by Amerindians (almost 5% of the total population) while the inhabitants of the coast are (in approximate figures) 3% European or Chinese in descent; 30%, African; 51%, Asian Indian; and 13% are mixed. There has been a certain amount of intergroup hostility, esp. between the Asian Indian and the African parts of the population. Linguistically, the Indo-Guyanese group is more rural and uses the basilect more than the more urban Afro-Guyanese group (Rickford 1987: chap. 2).

The basilect is relatively far from GenE as compared to Trinidad (with a similar ethnic history). This has been explained (inconclusively) as the result of (a) 18th century Creole Dutch influence, (b) the large number of new slaves imported in the early 19th century, or (c) the effect of contact with the late 19th Asian Indian indentured servants (Holm 1987: 461-465).

The two following "eastern" Caribbean English creoles texts both come from recordings published in Rickford 1987. The first represents the basilect while the second is high mesolect. This gives us some sense of the enormous amount variation to be found within the variety. The use of a spelling system oriented along the line of StE spelling would have made the close relationship to GenE much clearer, but

it would mask the differences effectively present in the spoken language.

**Text one: Guyanese CE: Basilect** (Rickford 1987: 130f).
A note on the transcription of this and the following text: <ii> = /iː/, <oo> = /oʊ/; <o> = /ə/; <O> = /ɒ/; <ou> = /ʌʊ/; <oh> = /ɔː/; <aa> = /ɑː/; <uu> = /uː/

*dis bina won maan. well ii a piil kookno - wan kookno - wi wan dol*
There was a man. Well, he was peeling coconuts - a coconut - with a dull

*kotlaas. wel dis bina mongkii hii ga wan shaap reezaa. an ii se at ou*
machete. Well, there was this monkey. He had a sharp razor. And he said [how]

*- hii a paas a rood an dis - ii se at ou, "ongkl! yu waan dis*
- he was going by on the road and this - he said [how], "Uncle you want this

*reezo fu piil yu kooknot?" wel di man glaad, bikaaz hii noo dat ou*
razor to peel your coconut?" Well the man was glad because he knew that/how

*hii kooknot na - hee kotlish na shaarp. Wel ii - wen di mongkii len*
his coconut was not - his machete was not sharp. Well he - when the monkey lent

*om, wen ii don piil am …*
him, when he was finished peeling it …

**Text two: Guyanese CE: High mesolect** (Rickford 1987: 170).

*wid ingglish, rait? ai fong maiself spenin tuu moch ov di taim on mai esee,*
With English, right? I found myself spending too much of the time on my essay.

*ai jos push mai esee Ondoniit n it kom - wen ai wuz finish, den ai went*
I just pushed my essay underneath and it came - when I was finished, then I went

*bak tu mai esee. in di mat, ai defnaitlii kudn f inish. noobOdii finish di peepo.*
back to my essay. In the math [exam], I definitely couldn't finish. Nobody finished the paper.

*Hee geev os haaf n ouwo ekschro, n wii kudn finish.*
He gave us half an hour extra, and we couldn't finish.

**7.1.3 Jamaica and Jamaican Creole**. The most central and influential English-speaking country in the Western Caribbean is Jamaica. Its present population of around two and a half million, of whom well over 90% speak JC (or Patois, as it is often called) makes it the largest Creole-speaking country. It was captured from Spain in 1655 and settled from Nevis, Suriname and Barbados in the east and by a significant number of British and their slaves from Suriname in the west. With the growth of sugar cultivation, more and more slaves were needed:

1675: 9,500 slaves and 7,700 whites
1734: 86,000 slaves and ditto whites (slaves = 92%)
1835: 450,000 blacks and 35,000 whites (93% to 7%)

There was immigration of some 36,000 from India between 1844 and 1917, of whom approximately two-thirds stayed. The Maroons were a special group of run-away (< Spanish *cimarrón* "wild") slaves who long preserved especially conservative creole forms. Today the ethnic composition of the population is four-fifths of African origin; the remainder are mixed plus a small number of Asian Indian, European, and Chinese origin. JC cannot be ethnically distinguished.

The Mosquito Coast of Central America including a various islands off the coast contains a number of English-Creole communities whose origin lies with labor migration from Jamaica chiefly in the logging industry and for plantation work. The largest creole-speaking community is Belize, where English is the official language and Belize CE the first language about one-third and the second language of most of the remaining population (see Holm 1986; 1989: chap. 10 for more detail).

**Text three: Jamaican Creole. "William Saves His Sweetheart"** (Hall 1966: 154)

*nóu, a úol táim anánsi-in stúori, we gwáiŋ at nóu. nóu wants dér wáz, a úol wič liedi lív, had wán són,*
Now, a old-time Anancying story we going at now. Now once there was a old witch-lady live, had one son,
We're now going to tell a traditional Anancy story. Once upon a time there was an old witch, who had a son

*níem av wiljɔm. wíljɔm wór ingjéj, tu a jóŋ líedi, frám a néks úol wič sékšɔn hú waz hár mádar in láa.*
name of William. William were engage to a young lady from a next old witch's section who was her mother-in-law.
whose name was William. He was engaged to a girl whose stepmother was from a different witches' clutch.

*nóu dát gjól fáda, had dát gjól wid iz fós waif. an áfra di waif disús, hii iz mári a néks wúman,*
Now that girl's father had that girl with his first wife. And after the wife decease, he is marry a next woman
Now that girl's father had had her with his first wife. And after that wife died, he married another woman

*wič is a úol wič an dát wúman bier túu dáatez bisáidz.*
which is a old witch. And that woman bear two daughters besides.
Who was an old witch. And that women bore him two more daughters.

**7.2 Papua-New Guinea (PNG)**. New Guinea is the second largest island in the world (divided politically into two parts: the western half, Irian Jaya, a part of Indonesia, and the eastern part, PNG); and it is one of the linguistically most diverse places on earth with up to a thousand different languages. With the intrusion of the European colonial powers in the 19th century two important developments were initiated: (1) economic opportunities began to become available (esp. in the form of contract labor on the plantations of Samoa, Vanuatu, and Queensland) and (2) the isolation of the many language communities began to decline.

The linguistic consequences could be seen in PNG in the emergence of lingua francas. They were encouraged by the various colonial administrations (British-Australian and German). In the one case, we have to do with a native-based lingua franca, Police Motu, now renamed more positively Hiri Motu (allegedly from the Motu word hiri "a trading voyage"). In the other, we have languages with European lexifiers, French in New Caledonia, German in New Guinea, but, above all, English in Papua, in New Guinea, in New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides), Fiji, Samoa, and Australia.

Although the overall lines of development and influence are not fully clear, there seems to have been one major strand which spread out via Australia (Australian PE, Roper River Creole, Cape York Creole) and one that spread from the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, Queensland, and Fiji to Papua and New Guinea. Early work force movement was associated with New England whalers and with the Melanesian sandalwood trade. This was followed by the trade with beach-la-mar, a sea slug prized in China as an ingredient in soups (the pidgin English of Vanuatu goes by the name derived from the slug: Bislama PE). From the 1860s on contract labor on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland and Fiji or the copra plantations in Samoa became economically important. And work force movement from and back to PNG via the sugar cane plantations of Queensland and the beach-la-mar and pearling work in the Torres Straits led to the use of early Tok Pisin (TP) as a lingua franca by returning laborers. Consequently, TP, Bislama, and Solomon Islands Pidgin are closely related as a group to Torres Straits Creole. Today TP is spreading in PNG as a lingua franca, but is increasingly felt to be the national language, used in work in the mines, in commerce, industry, shipping, and government administration. It is the primary language for tens of thousands of people, and it is beginning to creolize (see Holm 1989: 510-513, 526-538, 584-586).

**Text four: Masalai bilong Ailan Lep (The Masalai of Lep Island**) from: *Wan Tausen Wan Nait bilong Papua New Guinea (One Thousand One Papua New Guinean Nights*) In: *Wantok* 429, Ogas 7, 1982, pes 44 (*Wantok* 429, August 7, 1982, p. 44)

*Long bipo bipo tru long Manus [Provins] i gat wanpela liklik ailan i stap baksait long Baluan [Ailan], ol i kolim Lep [Baluan-Pam Pipel*].
Long, long ago, in Manus Province, there was a small island behind Baluan Island [Baluan-Pam People]. This island was called Lep.

*Na long dispela Ailan Lep i gat wanpela masalai husat i gat 10-pela het olgeta. Dispela masalai i gat tupela meri. Tripela i stap amamas wantaim long ailan bilong ol. Na i gat planti kain kaikai na prut na ol pikinini bilong diwai i pulap tru long dispela ailan.*
On Lep Island, there was a masalai who had exactly ten heads. This masalai had two wives. The three of them lived happily together on their island. There were many kinds of foods and fruits. Tree fruits filled the island.

*I no gat narapela manmeri i stap long dispela ailan. Dispela masalai na tupela meri bilong em na ol [a]nimal na pisin tasol i stap. Planti taim ol pipel long bikpela ailan, Baluan, i harim stori bilong Ailan Lep.*
There was no other person who lived on this island. It was just the masalai, his two wives, the animals, and the birds that lived there. The people of the big island, Baluan, often heard stories about Lep Island.

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