and American colonies, 1940–1990. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Görlach M (2002). *Still more Englishes.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Greenbaum S (ed.) (1996). *Comparing English worldwide: The international corpus of English.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Gupta A F (1994). *The step-tongue: Children's English in Singapore.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kachru B B (ed.) (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures* (2nd edn.). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Kwan-Terry A (ed.) (1991). *Child language development in Singapore and Malaysia.* Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Lefebvre C (1998). *Creole genesis and the acquisition of grammar: The case of Haitian creole.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mufwene S (1994). 'New Englishes and criteria for naming them.' *World Englishes 13,* 21–31.

Ooi V (ed.) (2001). *Evolving identities: The English language in Singapore and Malaysia.* Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Platt J, Weber H & Ho M L (1984). *The new Englishes.* London: Routledge.

Quirk R & Widdowson H G (eds.) (1985). *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schneider E W (2003). 'The dynamics of new Englishes: From identity construction to dialect birth.' *Language 79,* 233–281.

Talib I (2002). *The language of postcolonial literatures: An introduction.* London: Routledge.

Thomason S G (2001). *Language contact: An introduction.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Thomason S G & Kaufman T (1988). *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Winford D (2003). *An introduction to contact linguistics.* Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Variation in Pidgins and Creoles

G Escure, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction: Creole Myths

Pidgins and creoles have long been characterized as ungrammatical and their speakers as uneducated. This bias is illustrated in the following excerpt from the first novel completely written in a French-based creole (Guyanais), a stinging satire of French colonial society in Cayenne offered through the voices of two Creole characters: Atipa, a gold miner, and his friend Bosobio:

(1)	**Atipa:**	Nu	kriol	pa	gen	reg	ku	franse
		We	*creole*	*not*	*have*	*rule*	*like*	*French*

(2)	nu	sa	pale	li	ku	nu	wle...
	we	*TOP*	*speak*	*it*	*as*	*we*	*want*

(3)	gremesi	bunge	landan	nu	lang
	Thank	*god*	*in*	*we*	*language*

(4)	nu	pa	benzwen	okjupe	di	sintas...
	we	*not*	*need*	*worry*	*of*	*syntax*

(5)	Mo	rin	save	sintas-la	sa	lang	ye
	me	*nothing*	*know*	*syntax-DET*	*TOP*	*language*	*that*

(6)	ka	pale	la	konsey	ke	la	tribinal
	IMPERF	*speak*	*DET*	*council*	*like*	*DET*	*tribunal*

(7)	**Bosobio:**	a	pu	sa	li	gen	un	ta	di	zafe
		TOP	*for*	*that*	*it*	*have*	*one*	*lot*	*of*	*business*

(8)	mo	pu	ka	konpren	ni	la
	me	*not*	*IMPERF*	*understand*	*neither*	*at*
	tribinal	ni	la	fomasi-la		
	tribunal	*nor*	*DET*	*pharmacy-DET*		

> **Atipa:** 'We Creoles do not have grammatical rules as in French, we speak just as we like. Thanks to God who gave us our language, we don't have to worry about syntax. I don't know anything about syntax, it's the language they use at council meetings, and at the tribunal. **Bosobio:** That's why there are so many things I don't understand, either at the tribunal, or the pharmacy.' *Atipa* (Parépou, 1885)

Atipa's anonymous author, who used the pseudonym of Alfred Parépou, neatly summarizes the myths attached to creoles, and their social correlates: creoles are not real languages ('we speak as we want'; 'creole has no syntax'); furthermore, creole speakers are excluded from official business and basic social services. Yet, the author demonstrates that this nonlanguage can be used to write a 227-page novel!

The young languages we call pidgins and creoles are universally engendered in the context of traumatic situations such as slavery, indenture, or migration. Although pidgins and creoles differ in the scope of their social functions – pidgins are short-term creative attempts at producing *lingua franca*s, whereas creoles are native vernaculars – they have in common that they are oral languages spoken by marginalized groups, are rarely acknowledged as valid grammatical systems, even by their own speakers, and are therefore rarely written. *Atipa* is a major exception, but even now literature fully written in creole is scarce.

This article identifies some of the linguistic conflicts and choices that face pidgin and creole speakers in their social networks. Rather than providing an overview of the wide range of variation that occurs in creole communities around the world, I will focus on a few representative examples.

Variation in Pidgins

Pidgins are generally short-term varieties restricted to specific social domains or occasional events such as seasonal trade activities. Pidginization has often been defined as 'imperfect' acquisition of the target language, but this characterization is debatable. The objective in any of the emergency situations that give birth to new varieties is basic communication, not native-like fluency in the dominant language. If one accepts this pragmatic goal as a realistic option, it is clear that linguistic variability must have been present from the very beginning of the contact.

Since the rapid production of an operational lingua franca is crucial, and happens without the benefit of proper instruction, pidgin development can be expected to be highly variable. Some of the strategies widely used in pidginization are illustrated in the following sample of CPE (Chinese Pidgin English), a lingua franca that developed in the 19th century as British ships traded in Canton, and Cantonese (Yue)-speaking Chinese (Chinese, Yue) merchants and servants made the effort to communicate in English with Europeans. CPE evidence is represented in a large number of occasional (and not necessarily accurate) observations made by Europeans. CPE combines English lexicon and Chinese substratal influences, such as paratactic structures rather than subordinating syntax, the use of elements such as *suppose* to separate propositions, and of classifiers such as *piece* before nouns. Some of these features occur widely in pidgins (and creoles), but others do not, and are thus traceable to transfer from Chinese, such as the usage of a classifier in (15). Variation is illustrated below in sentences excerpted from a large unpublished corpus made available by Philip Baker (CPE Corpus, 2004). The pidgin sometimes functions as a pro-drop language (absence of subject pronouns in [9–10, 13]), but sometimes not, using indiscriminately subjective or objective pronouns, since Chinese has no case marking (2004: 11–12) [translation is provided only when the meaning may be unclear]:

(9) This have every poor place, and very poor people; no got cloaths, no got rice, no got hog; no got nothing; only yam, little fish, and cocoa-nut; no got nothing make trade, very little make eat.

(10) No got fowls, have got chicken [. . .] no can tell, must first makee weigh.

(11) Me think have go Pekin.

(12) Suppose he have no got eye, how can him see? Suppose he no can se, how can him walkie?

(13) Suppose cheat a little can do, suppose cheat too muchy no can.

(14) Suppose no gib lice, how can lib?
'If you don't give me rice, how can I live?'

(15) One piece man [. . .] How much piece masts hab got you ship, how many piece guns, shot and powder? How much piece woman, cow childes and bull childes?
'One man [. . .] How many masts have you got on the ship, how many guns, bullets and powder? How many heifers and calves?'

Variation in Creoles

Since creoles are more numerous and better documented than pidgins – but note that many contemporary creoles are called 'Pidgins,' such as Nigerian Pidgin, or Tok Pisin – the remainder of the article will discuss two related issues that have lately dominated the field of creole studies.

First, the reality and structure of the 'creole continuum' is examined. Creoles (like pidgins) were never isolated from their lexifiers. The social background of native creole vernaculars was such that their subaltern speakers were always in contact with the language of dominant social strata, but in differential ways. Some individuals (i.e., house slaves) had better access than others (field slaves) to the target language (TL), which may have been either socially or demographically dominant. Moreover, the available TL was not necessarily the standard (or prestigious) version of the lexifier: it may have been a nonstandard variety of the European language(s), for example, in contacts between slaves and overseers or ship hands, and thus learners of different varieties were likely to interact and use different versions of the TL as *lingua franca*. In addition, demographics (such as relative proportion of European speakers of the TL and Africans in contact) determined the outcome of the creolization process during the formative period (Chaudenson, 1992). The proportions of speakers varied according to the region or the household, which explains the linguistic differences between neighboring varieties – e.g., between Morisyen (in Mauritius) and Réunionnais (Réunion Creole French; in Réunion), both in French-colonized islands in the Indian Ocean; or between Jamaican Creole and Bajan (Barbados), both spoken in English-colonized Caribbean islands. In those two parallel cases, whites outnumbered slaves in Réunion and in Barbados, but the opposite was true in Mauritius and Jamaica. Consequently, Morisyen and Jamaican are more 'creolized' than their counterparts. This designation means that the most basilectal varieties in Mauritius and Jamaica have no equivalents in Réunion and Barbados: Bajan and Réunionnais have more restricted repertoires, ranging only between mesolects and acrolects.

Linguistic variability is to be expected at every stage of the language history. Most previous colonies remained economically dependent on European (or other) nations, even after independence was granted. Because of the continuing contiguity of prestigious and stigmatized varieties – greatly facilitated by the greater availability of education – language stabilization is counterintuitive in any creole context, which does not exclude the existence of a regular creole system. Similarly, single-style speakers are rare, even in remote rural areas. However, some varieties called 'radical creoles' (Saramaccan for example) are assumed to be somewhat stable, restricted to conservative varieties, and not associated with a continuum. This situation may be the consequence of group isolation, as suggested by Atipa in the Guyanais quotation shown above, but it is doubtful that such social contexts still exist. With some rare exceptions, the concept of the creole continuum effectively captures the flexible reality of contact vernaculars.

Secondly, the issue of 'decreolization' – that is convergence toward the dominant language, and concomitant loss of the creole – is re-evaluated. Although pidgins generally disappear, or evolve into more complex varieties, many creoles thrive and retain high covert prestige in their native communities, even as they interact with dominant or official languages.

The Creole Continuum

Since creoles are still overwhelmingly considered by public opinion to be corruptions or distortions of official languages, speakers of those marginalized varieties are bound to acquire some version of the local standard. Literacy is widely available now, and the 'proper' medium of instruction is naturally the official language (e.g., English in Belize; French in Martinique, Portuguese in Cape Verde, etc.). However, the standard model is rarely present in the classroom, as local teachers have variously acquired their own version of the standard, thus contributing to the continued linguistic variability observable in creole areas.

Early pioneering studies viewed creoles as static nonstandard approximations of their lexifiers. This perspective implied that creole speakers consistently used a predictable nonstandard system. But a few innovative analyses of creole variation led the way to a more realistic understanding of linguistic repertoires. DeCamp (1971) in his description of Jamaican Creole was the first to use the concept of continuum as an analytical tool in complex linguistic situation. He referred to a wide range of linguistic options that were available to the creole speaker, as illustrated in variants such as: *mi tel am/a tel im/a told him*, pointing out the lack of clear separation between variants, and the myth that there are only two varieties of language.

Pidgin and creole speakers are constantly fluctuating between two poles, the vernacular, which is appropriate in familiar, at home and in group situations, and the formal standard, which is required in official contexts, typically work and out group situations. But speakers' repertoires are not restricted to two clearly bounded varieties; they spread over a continuum of overlapping forms, whose specific representations are dictated by the social, ethnic, or gender contexts, the competence and adaptability of individual speakers, and other psychological factors. The 'creole continuum' aptly captures the absence of any clear boundary separating the various speech types available within any Creole community.

This continuum can be divided into three broad variety groupings (or 'lects'): 'basilects,' 'mesolects,' and 'acrolects.' Basilects are the most vernacular varieties that linguists have typically described as creoles. Acrolects are often used to refer to Creole speakers' production of the local standard language, yet they are not identical to that standard; they are usually L2 versions of the standard. Finally, mesolects are located somewhere between basilects or mesolects, yet are not imperfect approximations of the acrolect. Mesolects have their own structure and their own *raison d'être*.

Bickerton (1975) was probably the first to complete a comprehensive analysis of the language spectrum for Guyanese Creole (English-based creole), and his novel approach stimulated a number of creole studies that adopted the concepts of continuum, and the related notion of implicational scales, as analytical devices. To cite just a few studies of English-based creoles: Washabaugh (1975), Herzfeld (1978), Craig (1980), Escure (1981), Singler (1984), Rickford

(1987), Crowley (1990), Patrick (1992), Aceto (1996), Smith (2002). Studies of French-based varieties include Ludwig (1989), Chaudenson (1992), Lefebvre (1998), Corne (1999), and many more. Some examples of variability across creole continua are provided below, illustrating variation in lexical semantics, phonology, and morphosyntax in samples taken from two English-based creoles, Ghanaian Pidgin English (West Africa) and Belizean Creole (Central America).

Lexical Semantics

The naming of body parts offers a well-known example of semantic differentiation at the word level. Many creoles display substrate influences in the naming of limbs, with the transfer of African semantic structures into Indo-European lexicon: thus, following Bantu and Kwa practice of using one single word to refer to the whole limb, English-based creoles (Belizean, Jamaican) use *fut* to refer to both 'foot' and 'leg', and *han* to refer to 'hand' and 'arm' (but Nigerian Pidgin used *leg* for both 'foot' and 'leg', though it uses *han* as the generic upper limb term). In Portuguese, creoles such as São Tomé, the equivalent Portuguese words are used with the same semantic range. The same feature occurs in Bislama (also English-based, spoken in Vanuatu), though the substratal influence is Austronesian in this case. When speakers of those creoles switch to acrolects, they then use the appropriate term. For example, a Creole boy (in Belize) said (showing his calf): *Wan shaak bait mi fut hia*, 'A shark bit my leg here,' but in the next minute, he switched to an acrolect: *Main da maskito pan yu leg,* 'Mind that mosquito on your leg' (Escure, 1990).

Education and Lectal Level (Ghanaian Pidgin)

The short dialogue shown below, taken from a radio commercial in Accra, Ghana, illustrates particularly well subjective attitudes toward the varieties available to creole speakers: the creole (Ghanaian Pidgin) is attributed to the uneducated speaker (taxi driver), while the engineer speaks Standard Ghanaian English (acrolect). The transcription represents basilectal features in the driver's speech: phonological features (absence of interdentals, absence of postvocalic /r/, and of /h/), morphosyntactic features (use of preverbal imperfective *de,* unmarked past, relativizer *we*, single preverbal negative element). On the other hand, the engineer uses 'flawless' English grammar (but Huber's audio version reveals acrolectal phonetic variants):

(16) **Driver**: ju sabi ma padi adzeman, i de draiv tata bos we in masta bai fo hia
'You know my friend Agyeman, he drives a Tata bus that his master bought here'

(17) **Engineer**: The Yellow Cab Company Ltd?

(18) **Driver**: jes, i no de bring am fo sevisin en mentenans, en i de poches in spepas fo evriwea.
'Yes, he doesn't bring it here for servicing and maintenance, and he buys his spare parts from everywhere'

(19) **Engineer**: Is this Tata vehicle on the road?

(20) **Driver**: No, i de brok daun plenti-plenti.
'No, it keeps breaking down. (Huber, 1999: 271)

Lectal Variation (Belizean Creole)

A few texts drawn from an unpublished Belizean corpus by Escure (1990) illustrate the extensive range of the creole continuum, starting with the most extreme lects, basilects and acrolects, then addressing the elusive mesolect.

Basilect (Nansi Story)

Miss Dolly (a 60-year old woman from Placencia) tells a traditional tale (Nansi story). This story evidences some prominent basilectal features:

- The use of the preverbal aspectual morpheme *de* (e.g., *everibadi de dans* 'everybody dances/keeps dancing') is best defined as an imperfective, as it may have progressive and habitual/iterative functions.
- The nonmarking of past (e.g., *di dans stat tu brok op* 'the dance started to break up.'
- The creole reinterpretation of some old preterites as bare verbs (e.g., *brok* 'break').
- The occurrence of a different preverbal past morpheme *me* (sometimes with anterior value), which helps distinguish between two sequential past events (*di mjusik me de ple* 'the music was playing' as background event to the crowd leaving the dance-hall). Here, the past morpheme is also combined with the imperfective marker indicating continuing action (see Escure, 2004 for a more complete list of basilectal features).

(21)	Dis	da	wan	taim	nou	dei	had
	This	*TOP*	*a*	*time*	*now*	*they*	*had*
	wan	dans	evribadi	de	dans		
	a	*dance*	*evrybody*	*IMPERF*	*dance*		

'Once upon a time, they had a dance, everybody would dance'

(22) bra taiga bra dag bra everibadi
Brother Tiger Brother Dog Brother Everybody
dans Evribadi de dans
so Evrybody IMPERF dance
'Brother Tiger, Brother Dog, Brother Everybody, so everybody would dance'

(23) buldag de dans kou de
bull dog IMPERF dance cow IMPERF
dans evribadi
dance everybody
'the bulldog dances, the cow dances, everybody'

(24) big pati de goun tuwad midnait nou
big party IMPERF go.on towards midnight now
di dans stat tu brokop
the dance start to break.up
'it's a big party, towards midnight the dance ended'

(25) bika wan fait stat evribadi stat tu fait
because a fight start everybody start to fight
'because a fight started, everybody started to fight'

(26) evribadi de tekdun dem bati
everybody IMPERF take. down DET butt
an de kot
and IMPERF cut
'and everybody started to go and they left'

(27) an dat waz di en a di pati
and that was the end of the party
'and that was the end of the party'

(28) bot di mjuzik we me de plei
but the music that ANT IMPERF play
'but the music that was playing'

(29) i go laik dis: zinzinzin. vajalin
it go like this: zinzinzin. violin
da me di mjuzik
TOP IMPERF the music
'it went like that: *zinzinzin* it's the violin that was playing' (Nansi story, Escure, 1990)

An additional example shows how creole marks irrealis modality (unrealized events) through the combination of the anterior marker *me* and the future marker *wan* – a grammaticalized from of the verb 'want':

(30) R. wan tek wan korespondens kos.
R. FUT take a correspondence course
'R. will take a correspondence course.'

(31) i me wan tek it befo i kum awt.
he ANT FUT take it before he come out
'He would have completed it before he graduates.'

(32) i me de plan fu tek it
he ANT IMPERF plan to take it
'He was planning to take it'

(33) da di taim de tem don di kos don.
that the time the term done the course done
'so that by the time the term is over, his course would have been completed.' (Escure, 1990)

Acrolect

The acrolect is a local standard that differs from external standards. Since acrolects are typically the result of late acquisition, probably through school education, inconsistencies are most likely to occur at this lectal level, depending on social factors, such as an individual's relative access to the standard, or psychological factors, such as the speaker's identity and intent to converge toward the standard. The acrolect generally differs phonetically from its lexifier (in the case of Belizean English, it differs from RP-British English). Most common distinctions include the systematic or occasional absence of interdental fricatives, and variation in vowels (for example, lack of distinction between tense and lax vowels). Acrolects generally use standard grammar and morphology, for example, past verbs are now marked, preverbal morphemes are absent, the copula *be* is introduced, and so forth, but more variation occurs in upper mesolects, that vague area between the widely used labels of 'English' and 'broken English.' Thus, nonstandard morphological features may be part of an acrolectal version (for example, absence of copula/auxiliary; lack of 3SG agreement; hypercorrect past inflection, or pronoun variation), as are pragmatic mechanisms (such as the fronting of topics). The following sentence displays both *be* presence (*dei were expectin*) and absence (*would willin*):

(34) Dei we espektin samwan den wu
They were expecting someone then who
wud wilin tu tekop amz
would willing to take.up arms
'They were expecting someone who would be willing to take up arms.' (Escure, 1990)

Newspapers often exhibit similar linguistic features, whether unwittingly or as intended for special effect:

(35) I can **recalled** a very shocking incident [. . .]
One may come to the conclusion that an abundance of ignorance **exist** within [. . .]
This area has long been mean, but never **have** it been so lethal [. . .] Such an attitude gathers strength from its own **existent**, the longer it **persist**, the deeper **it** roots grow. ('Help our troubled & lost generation' *Alkebulan* (Belize), January 21, 1994: 2)

But an article on local politics – discussing the rival political party (PUP) – inserts some basilectal phrases in the middle of a standard text for emphasis (here sarcasm, shown in bold characters in the original text):

(36) [. . .] their plaintive wail when all else fails is victimization, translation: **A fri'ten bad.**
[literally, I frightened bad 'I am afraid']

(37) [. . .] Houses are being built [. . .] **And would you believe it, the PUP bex bout that**. [literally, PUP vexed about that 'the PUP is annoyed about that'] ('The observer' *The People's Pulse* (Belize), April 17, 1994: 14)

Mesolect (The Village Midwife)

Mesolects can be defined as intermediate varieties, but they are not mere approximations of the standard: they have their own internal motivation and place in the social life of continuum users. Individuals who control the whole range of the continuum select the mesolect in well-defined situations – when addressing an older person, or the members of another ethnic group, or dealing with a serious topic. There are issues of respect, of formality, and of identity involved in such choices, so it is not possible to speak of 'basilectal' or 'mesolectal' speakers, except to say that in context A, an individual is a basilectal speaker, but in context B, the same speaker is a mesolectal speaker.

In the following excerpt, Miss Dora, a 75-year old midwife who has delivered all the village babies for the last 50 years, uses neither a basilect not an acrolect. She has native competence in the creole vernacular, but selects the mesolect when recounting her professional activities with her nephew. Characteristics of this mesolect include absence of copula, unmarked past, and an occasional preterite form (*had*) as well as the auxiliary *don't* (instead of simple preverbal negative). Mesolects generally imply avoidance of basilectal morphemes, but this implication is not always the case: at crucial peaks of the narrative, Miss Dora uses the TMA creole morphemes *de* (Imperfective) *me* (Past Anterior), as well as the expression *don ded* 'completely dead', a common use of the perfective marker 'done' to emphasize the finality of death. Note also the creole use of *lef* for 'leave' (*I had to lef dat* 'I had to leave/stop that'), one of a few verbs whose neutral form is a relexified irregular preterite.

(38) Da sem taim tu peshen kum in
At same time two patient come in

(39) wan mada da di ilevent bebi im gat
a mother TOP the eleventh baby she got
en di ada wan da di naint
and the other one TOP the ninth

(40) en de riali nat sapoz tu got bebi da vilidg
and they really not supposed to get baby at village

(41) bot den dei don wan go da haspital [. . .]
but then they don't want go to hospital

(42) wel a had a fait wid di bebi
well I had a fight with the baby
bika di bebi hed kum
because the baby head come

(43) bot di ada paat a di bodi wont kum [. . .]
but the other part of the body won't come

(44) den di aftabat kyan kum
then the afterbirth can't come

(45) a had tu lef dat wan an di ada wan redi
I had to leave that one and the other one ready

(46) a swab shi af [. . .]
I swab her off

(47) an den shi lef wika stil
and then she stay weaker still
de hemoredg
IMPERF hemorrhage

(48) an wen a give shi dat an fainali i kwait dawn
and when I give her that and finally she quiet down

(49) an shi an mai sista me tink di
and she and my sister ANT think the
bebi don ded
baby PERF dead

(50) a do mawt tu mawt bridin an
I do mouth to mouth breathing and
di bebi big bwai naw.
the baby big boy now

'Two patients came in at the same time. One mother was delivering her eleventh baby, and the other her ninth [. . .] They are not really supposed to deliver in the village, but they don't want to go to the hospital [. . .]. Well I had to struggle with the (first) baby because its head was coming out, but not the rest of its body [. . .] then the afterbirth wouldn't come [. . .] I had to leave that one (first mother) to go to the other one who was ready (to deliver) [. . .] I cleaned her (second mother) up [. . .] (first mother) remained weak, and was still hemorrhaging [. . .] When I gave her (herbs) she (first mother) finally settled down. She and my sister thought that the baby was already dead [. . .] But I did mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and the baby is now a big boy.' (The Village Midwife, Escure, 1990)

Decreolization

Schuchardt's 'life cycle' concept (1883) became DeCamp's 'postcreole' continuum (1971). This developmental hypothesis suggests that creoles eventually merge with the standard, assuming that the continuum is the result of decreolization (loss of the creole). However, the data presented above suggest that the acquisition of acrolects or near-standard varieties – obviously facilitated by access to education and standard speakers after emancipation – does not necessarily entail concomitant loss of basilectal segments. Individuals, with few exceptions, are generally found to control a wide repertoire. Empirical studies show that they don't lose their native variety just because they have acquired a new one – no more than L2 acquisition would entail loss of L1, except in extreme situations leading to language death.

The ability to handle alternate codes has been explained in terms of the 'dual standard,' or the 'covert' vs. 'overt prestige' dichotomy: as subaltern groups gain access to education, they become increasingly motivated or obligated to learn the standard as a means of improving their social position. Creole values may thus be overtly despised but secretly respected, whereas the values of the high-status group are overtly respected and secretly despised. As is the case in any multilingual context, individuals make linguistic choices that reflect their allegiance or close associations with either the dominant social group (usually speaking standard varieties), or the peer group, or both. The 'linguistic market' sociological model of linguistic production and expression also captures the relation between linguistic system (*l'habitus linguistique*) and linguistic market (*le marché linguistique*) (Bourdieu, 1982).

Such perceptual differences still mirror the historical colonial bias and the shift to a new social order. They also explain why creole languages offer such a wide range of linguistic possibilities. The linguistic spectrum captures the multiple nuances required in various human contact situations. The very nature of its flexibility ensures that **all** varieties remain active and operational, and contradicts the view that there is an ineluctable move toward the standard, since native (basilectal) values are highly prized, though covertly.

According to this perspective, decreolization is not diachronic change (although regular change naturally occurs), but rather repertoire extension and code switching. There is no postcreole continuum if the creole is still vigorous, as in Belize, or Haiti, or Papua New Guinea. There is a postcreole situation when the creole has lost most of its speakers, as in Louisiana, in which the confusion of the French-based creole with Cajun (a French Canadian dialect), the import of French teachers from metropolitan France, the dominance of English, and generally the low status of black speakers have probably contributed to the receding state of Louisiana Creole.

Conclusion

The field of creolistics has expanded considerably as new sociohistorical sources have redefined our understanding of the early stages of language genesis and development, and as more empirical field studies have offered testing grounds for theoretical and sociolinguistic models of language use and language development. Subfields of linguistics (historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and theoretical linguistics more specifically) can benefit from the current state of knowledge in pidgins and creoles. New creoles encapsulate the linguistic effects of the violent social history that most of humanity has been subjected to. Language development is closely dependent on the economic and political features of the societies in whose context they emerged, and current linguistic variability serves to illustrate further the correlation that exists between linguistic structures and social aspects. Creole speakers use polylectal systems, rather than monolithic grammars, and this aspect should be highly relevant to theoretical models that focus on abstract generalizations but overlook the human language ability to juggle multiple systems.

See also: Anguilla: Language Situation; Anthropological Linguistics: Overview; Antigua and Barbuda: Language Situation; Barbados: Language Situation; Belize: Language Situation; Bickerton, Derek (b. 1926); Bislama; Cape Verde Islands: Language Situation; Cape Verdean Creole; Context, Communicative; Counterfactuals; Cultural and Social Dimension of Spoken Discourse; Discrimination and Language; Gullah; Guyana: Language Situation; Hawaiian Creole English; Identity and Language; Jamaica: Language Situation; Louisiana Creole; Mauritius: Language Situation; Morphology in Pidgins and Creoles; Nigeria: Language Situation; Papua New Guinea: Language Situation; Pidgins and Creoles: Overview; Prestige, Overt and Covert; Style and Style Shifting; Tok Pisin; Variation in First Language Acquisition; Variation in Second Language Acquisition; Vernacular.

Bibliography

Aceto M (1996). 'Variation in a variety of Panamanian Creole English.' Ph.D. Diss.: Austin: University of Texas.

Bickerton D (1975). *Dynamics of a creole system.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu P (1982). *Ce que parler veut dire.* Paris: Fayard.

Chaudenson R (1992). *Des îles, des hommes, des langues: essais.* sur *la créolisation linguistique et culturelle.* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Corne C (1999). *From French to Creole: the development of new vernaculars in the French colonial world.* London: University of Westminster Press.

CPE Corpus (2004). Chinese Pidgin English corpus. (Unpublished).

Craig D (1980). 'A creole English continuum and the theory of grammar.' In Day R (ed.) *Issues in English creoles.* Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag. 111–132.

Crowley T (1990). *From Beach-la-mar to Bislama: The emergence of a national language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DeCamp D (1971). 'Towards a generative analysis of a post-creole creole continuum.' In Hymes D (ed.) *Pidginization* *and creolization of languages.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 349–370.

Escure G (1981). 'Decreolization in a creole continuum: Belize.' In Highfield A & Valdman A (eds.) *Historicity and variation in creole studies.* Ann Arbor: Karoma Press. 27–49.

Escure G (1990). Corpus of Belizean varieties. (Unpublished).

Escure G (2004). 'Belize and other Central American varieties: morphology and syntax.' In Schneider E (ed.) *A handbook of varieties of English: The Americas and the Caribbean.* The Hague: Mouton. 315–342.

Herzfeld A (1978). 'Tense and aspect in Limón Creole: a sociolinguistic view towards a creole contimuum.' Ph.D. Diss. Department of Linguistics, University of Kansas.

Huber M (1999). *Ghanaian Pidgin English in its West African context.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Lefebvre C (1998). *Creole genesis and the acquisition of grammar: the case of Haitian Creole.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ludwig R (ed.) (1989). *Les créoles français entre l'oral et l'écrit.* Tübingen: Gunther Narr Verlag.

Parépou A (1885). *Atipa.* (Ré-édité 1980). Paris: Editions Caribéennes, Collection UNESCO d'oeuvres représentatives. (Sêrie créole.)

Patrick P (1992). *Urban Jamaican Creole.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Rickford J (1987). *Dimensions of a creole continuum.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schuchardt H (1883). *Kreolische studien v. Über das Malaiospanische der Philippinen.* Vienna: Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien.

Singler J (1984). 'Variation in tense-aspect-modality in Liberian English.' Ph.D. Diss. Los Angeles: University of California.

Smith G (2002). *Growing up with Tok Pisin: contact, creolisation and change in Papua New Guinea.* London: Battlebridge.

Washabaugh W (1975). 'Variability in decreolization on Providence Island, Colombia.' Ph.D. Diss. Chicago: Wayne State University.

(1994). 'Help our troubled & lost generation.' *Alkebulan.* (Belize), January 21, 2.

(1994) 'The observer.' *The People's Pulse.* (Belize), April 17, 14.

Variation in Second Language Acquisition

I Tsimpli, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

The linguistic behavior of the L2 speaker is commonly believed to differ from that of the native speaker. The differences involve several aspects of language: grammar, pronunciation, and social and pragmatic features of language use. Moreover, these differences are both qualitative and quantitative, especially in early stages of L2 development. Grammatical, phonetic, and pragmatic deviations from the target L2 are obvious in learners with relatively little exposure to the second language. On the other hand, in advanced stages of second language development, the L2 learner may even attain native-like performance at least in the domain of grammar use (Birdsong, 1992; Epstein *et al.*, 1998; Sorace, 1993, 2000).

Throughout L2 development – perhaps with the exception of beginning stages – the learner's behavior generally includes target-like uses, whose frequency increases with time. In advanced stages, the comparison between the native speaker and the L2 speaker of that language becomes considerably more difficult. Empirical research on L2 grammatical development has shown that even advanced L2 speakers may differ from native speakers of a language in the degree of (in)consistent use of target forms, or in the (in)consistent application of grammatical constraints on the use of L2 grammar (cf. Coppieters, 1987; Hawkins *et al.*, 1993; Sorace, 1993, 2000; White and Genesee, 1996). This variation is also termed 'optionality' or 'variability' and refers to the performance data of the individual L2 speaker.

This notion of variability seems to be distinct from the notion of individual variation or individual differences. These terms aim to describe variation among L2 learners who have been grouped under the same level of L2 performance, on some independent measure of evaluation (e.g., a placement test). The degree of individual variation among L2 learners has also been used as a criterion for distinguishing first from second language development. Child L1 learners follow a relatively uniform developmental pattern and attain a mature level of competence in their native language. In the generative linguistics tradition, this uniform, fast, and effortless process of L1 development, together with the uniformity of the outcome referred to as native speaker's competence, are viewed from the same theoretical perspective: the innateness hypothesis for language acquisition. The lack of uniformity in the outcome of L2 acquisition, on the other hand, gives rise to alternative hypotheses regarding the nature of the cause. Several possibilities have been offered, which are addressed below. In