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KRIOL OF NORTH AUSTRALIA
A LANGUAGE COMING OF AGE

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This book is written
in memory of
Barnabas, Mordecai, Isaac and Douglas,
four great men
who had great patience
with an inquisitive munanga,
and it is
dedicated to
Holt Thompson and Dorothy Meehan,
the first two Anglo-Australians to recognize
the significance of Kriol
to such a degree that
they stood against the tide of opposition
and helped to establish
the Bamyili School Kriol bilingual education program.

Foreword

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These work papers are being produced in two series by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines Branch in order to make results of SIL research in Australia more widely available. In general, Series A contains linguistic papers which are more technical, while Series B contains language learning, anthropology and literacy material aimed at a broader audience.

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Preface

This study was originally a thesis submitted in 1984 for the Master of Arts degree, Anthropology, University of Western Australia. Only minor changes have been made for this publication and no attempt has been made to incorporate more recent information on Kriol research or the Kriol language situation.

This book is based on research carried out since March 1973 when I made my first trip to Ngukurr for a two month language survey. I am indebted to Ian Knowles for making the arrangements for that first trip as well as for providing me with invaluable introductions to key Ngukurr people. Since then approximately half my time has been spent working in direct contact with Kriol and Kriol speakers. This work has been varied, including linguistic analysis, helping to develop the orthography and literacy materials, assisting with various aspects of Kriol school programs, compiling a dictionary, preparing a language learning course, carrying out language surveys, writing articles, helping to produce video programs, translating the Bible with Kriol speakers and working to improve the social standing of Kriol.

During these last twelve years I have resided primarily at Ngukurr — that is the only place I do not live out of a suitcase. I have, however, been physically in residence at Ngukurr for approximately seven years. I have also spent about a year at Barunga [formerly Bamyili], three months on Northern Territory cattle stations, seven months in the Kimberleys and a month looking at Kriol in Queensland.

All of this time has been spent working under the auspices of the Australian Aborigines Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics[1]. Since August 1976 my wife Joy has been my constant co-worker in all that I have done. I owe much to her and my SIL colleagues who have helped me in numerous ways during the last twelve years. Joy has been a great encouragement to me as I have worked on this book. Both she and our daughter Tarsha have displayed much patience with me when my mind and energies were focused on it. I am very grateful to them both for bearing with me.

I am also indebted to many Kriol speakers for sharing their language and culture and lives with me during these twelve years. I owe a particular word of thanks, however, to Andrew Joshua for providing me with my first formal introduction to Kriol; to Mordecai Skewthorpe, Barnabas Roberts and Isaac Joshua for the many patient hours they spent teaching me during my first few years at Ngukurr; to David Daniels for his encouragement over the years; to Charlie Johnson and Silva and Matthew and the others in their camp for always making me feel at home; to Wallace Dennis, along with his wife Dorothy, for being my almost constant companion and guide as I have travelled throughout the Kriol country; to Michael and Dixie Gumbuli and Queenie Brennan for their friendship and help in so many ways; to David Jentian and Danny Jentian for teaching me so much about Barunga; to David and Kathy Douglas for their hospitality at Doomadgee, and to Cessie Rivers for hers at Halls Creek; to Brian Dan Daniels, Mal Wurramara and Tingle Marna for their help on language surveys; to Tommy May for his assistance at Fitzroy Crossing; and to Rodney Rivers for his friendship and encouragement as my translation colleague and his wife Glenys for her hospitality.

I also owe a word of thanks to a number of friends and colleagues who have helped me with various aspects of preparing this book. In particular I wish to say thanks to Greg Bierbaum, Kathy Gale, Phil Graber, John Harris, Stephen Harris, Joyce Hudson, Percy Leske, Peter Mühlhäusler, Sandi Ray, Eirlys Richards, Bruce Rigsby, Anna Shnukal, Margaret Sharpe, Allan and Donelle Steel, and David Trigger for their comments on drafts of various sections of the book; to Janet Cowden for her assistance in the library; to Wilfred Stephen for his cartographic work; to Marilyn Aeschliman, John Fletcher, Bruce Sommer and especially Rosemary Ebenal for their assistance in the word processing department; and to Dorothy Meehan and Gail Forbutt for their many discussions and especially their encouragements as I worked on this project.

This book would not, however, have even been attempted if it had not been for the encouragement given to me to undertake such a mammoth task, by Susan Kaldor my thesis supervisor. I am greatly thankful and appreciative of the tremendous amount of time and energy she has given to me in supervising the writing of this book. It is she who deserves the credit for seeing the project completed.

I would also like to give acknowledgement to my Father and his Son who have enabled me through their Spirit to accomplish what I have done.

John Sandefur

Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABF	Aboriginal Bible Fellowship
AE	Aboriginal English
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
AIM	Aborigines Inland Mission
BECC	Bilingual Education Consultative Committee
C.A.E.	College of Advanced Education
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organization
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs
E.S.L.	English as a Second Language
NSW	New South Wales
N.T.	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
S.A.	South Australia
SAE	Standard Australian English
SAL	School of Australian Linguistics
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
T.E.S.L.	Teaching English as a Second Language
UAM	United Aborigines Mission
VIC	Victoria
W.A.	Western Australia
WBT	Wycliffe Bible Translators

Introduction

In recent years there has been a great proliferation of interest in the non-standard languages and dialects which are spoken widely around the world — an area which had previously been sorely neglected. Large-scale movements of people after World War Two, combined with other social changes around the world, have made governments more aware of the fact that millions of people have a 'non-standard' mother tongue, a fact which they can no longer continue to ignore.

Linguists have become interested in such languages for what they offer for the building of theories concerning language origin, language change and language variation. Of particular interest is the relationship between first language acquisition, second language acquisition and contact languages, and how these relationships reflect on the universal processes involving the use of human language. One of the most important branches of this field of enquiry is the study of pidgins and creoles.

In Australia[2] one such language (Kriol[3]), whose roots extend back almost two centuries, began to acquire the status of a language in its own right during the last decade. The emergence of Kriol as an autonomous language, a status which it is unlikely to have begun to attain without the advocacy and support of sympathetic non-Aboriginal groups and persons, is still in an incipient stage. Being in the fortunate position of witnessing the process of the coming of age of this language, I considered it to be an ideal time to investigate the factors which have been instrumental in its development — factors which may have some relevance to the development of other newly emerging languages elsewhere.

The aim of this book, then, is to identify the language, its speakers, its functions and the socio-political factors influential in its coming of age. Such information will, I hope, be of some interest not only to creolists, but, at the practical level, to government and mission bodies, as well as to the speakers of the language themselves.

In chapter one I review briefly the development of the linguistic field of inquiry relevant to pidgins and creoles, looking especially at the concepts developed to explain the rise and decline of these languages worldwide. Some readers, if they are less interested in the complex linguistic and sociolinguistic issues of pidgins and creoles in general, may wish to start reading at chapter two.

I begin chapter two by tracing the general development of English-related forms of Aboriginal speech throughout Australia and establish the position of Kriol relative to Torres Strait Creole and Aboriginal English. I then proceed to identify the speakers[4] of Kriol and the way in which Kriol is used in their communities relative to other languages present in those communities. In the latter part of the chapter, I attempt to describe the nature of the variation which occurs within Kriol as well as identify some of its dialectal and sociolectal varieties.

Chapter three considers the question of whether or not Kriol is an Aboriginal language. In the first half of the chapter, I not only show that Kriol is used by Aborigines in all aspects of their community life, but also that it encodes an Aboriginal-Australian world view rather than an Anglo-Australian one. The second half of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the value judgements which Kriol speakers place on the language. I document that an increasing number of Kriol speakers, especially among those for whom it is their mother tongue, are positively identifying with Kriol as their own language.

Having identified Kriol, its speakers and its functions, I examine in chapter four the effects of government policies in the development of Kriol. I focus specifically on one particular Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory (Ngukurr) where Kriol is spoken as a mother tongue by four generations. I begin with a general review of government policies towards Aborigines since the early days of colonization. This is followed by a detailed accounting of the socio-political development of the region under study as it has affected language, with particular emphasis on four modern social institutions (administrative, educational, medical and church entities) during the last two decades.

In the final chapter I document the use — although sporadic — of Kriol by the government in communication and education. One of the most significant factors instrumental in bringing about an autonomous status for Kriol has been its use in a bilingual education school program in the Northern Territory. A considerable portion of this chapter is therefore spent in discussing various aspects of the use of Kriol in school and its importance in future educational planning.

CHAPTER 1

THE STUDY OF PIDGINS AND CREOLES

The study of pidgins and creoles goes back to the 19th century pioneering work of Hugo Schuchardt, whom DeCamp (1971a:31, 1977:9) describes as being "the undisputed father of pidgin-creole studies". Schuchardt published his classic work Kreolische Studien in the 1880s. It was not until the 1930s, however, that pidgins and creoles as types of languages were effectively distinguished by Leonard Bloomfield (1933) and John Reinecke (1937, 1938). During the following two decades Robert A. Hall Jr. (e.g. 1953, 1955, 1958) and Douglas Taylor (e.g. 1951, 1956) were primarily responsible for continuity in the studies of pidgins and creoles, with Hall (1962, 1966) popularizing the generally accepted pidgin-creole 'life-cycle' theory.

The recognition of pidgin-creole studies as a legitimate academic field of enquiry was greatly promoted in the 1950s by Robert B. Le Page's linguistic survey of the West Indies and the establishment by him of a research centre for creolists at the University of the West Indies. The emergence of the new discipline was confirmed in 1959 with the convening of the First International Conference on Creole Language Studies in Jamaica. The discipline may be seen as having truly 'come of age' at the second international conference held in 1968, also in Jamaica. Several additional conferences have since been held, one in Hawaii in 1975 and one in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1979.

Until relatively recently pidgins and creoles were not considered to be real languages even by linguists, let alone by members of the general public. At worst, they were considered to be pathologically deviant versions of European languages; at best, just quaint dialects. Today, although the field of pidgin-creole studies is well established and these languages are now accepted by linguists as being natural languages well worthy of scholarly investigation, there is much disagreement on the definition of just what pidgins and creoles are. As DeCamp (1977:3-4) points out,

> linguists all agree that there is such a group, that it includes many languages and large numbers of speakers, and that pidgin-creole studies have now become an important field within linguistics. Yet even the authors of this book would not agree among themselves on a definition of these languages. Some definitions are based on function, the role these languages play in the community: e.g., a pidgin is an auxiliary trade language. Some are based on historical origins and development: e.g., a pidgin may be spontaneously generated; a creole is a language that has evolved from a pidgin. Some definitions include formal characteristics: restricted vocabulary; absence of gender, true tenses, inflectional morphology, or relative clauses, etc. Some linguists combine these different kinds of criteria and include additional restrictions in their definitions. To a creolist, almost everyone else's definition of a creole sounds absurd and arbitrary; yet creolists communicate and collaborate with their colleagues...

Alleyne (1980:2) similarly laments the fact that "creole linguists talk to each other and presumably know what each other is talking about, books are written on the subject, but somehow an acceptable clear definition [of creole] has not been forthcoming".

This chapter provides a general summary of the main definitions and of the terminology and processes proposed for pidgins and creoles.

THE ORIGIN AND LIFE-CYCLE OF PIDGINS AND CREOLES

One of the most generally accepted basic concepts among creolists is that of the pidgin-creole life-cycle which begins with a spontaneously generated pidgin that develops into a creole. A pidgin is generally defined as "a contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers" (DeCamp 1971a:15). Pidgins are typically characterized as having a limited vocabulary, reduced grammatical structures and restricted usage, functioning only as auxiliary contact languages. No one speaks a pidgin as his mother tongue; it is a second language to all who use it.

As regards the origins of pidgins (and ultimately the creoles that develop from them), there are three main competing theories. The first of these has come to be known as 'polygenesis'. Each different pidgin is seen to be the result of a separate act of creation and process of development. There are two main versions of polygenesis, the 'baby-talk' theory and the 'independent parallel development' theory.

The baby-talk theory, which was most fully developed by Bloomfield (1933), attributes the origin of each pidgin to a sort of baby-talk used by masters to communicate with their slaves. The masters deliberately mutilated the standard language by eliminating all grammatical inflections, reducing the number of phonological and syntactic contrasts, and limiting the vocabulary to a few hundred words. According to DeCamp (1971a:19), this theory is easily refuted, although Koefoed (1979) argues strongly to the contrary.

Hall (1962), who has been the most vigorous defender of polygenesis, has developed what is sometimes referred to as the 'independent parallel development' theory. He accounts for the similarities apparent in the ten dozen or so[5] extant pidgins and creoles around the world by arguing that many of them arose independently but developed along parallel lines. A new pidgin is likely to arise in superficial and temporary contact situations (such as a guide meeting a tourist or a shopkeeper meeting a customer) when the two persons involved do not share a common language. The pidgin will draw its minimal vocabulary from both languages, with phonology and syntax being stripped of not only redundancy but some essential features as well. Such a pidgin is suitable for only minimal communication, but it may be expanded and under the right social conditions may develop into a creole. A pidgin (or creole) may develop in a given community either by spontaneous generation or by extension or diffusion of an existing pidgin (or creole) into the community.

By contrast with the hypotheses outlined, Whinnom (1971) contends that it is not the guide and tourist nor master and slave who give rise to a pidgin, but minority speakers in subordinate positions who do not share a common language among themselves. Chinese pidgin English in Hong Kong is not spoken between English and Chinese speakers but between Chinese in the service community who speak a variety of Chinese dialects. It is

rare for members of the European community to learn pidgin, and those who claim to speak it tend to speak only a 'baby-talk' English with bits of Chinese and the real pidgin. The real speakers of the pidgin, the service-class Chinese, treat such an improvised interlingua with contempt. The newcomer from England who overhears his Chinese servants speaking the pidgin to each other is not likely to recognize it as such and may consider them to be speaking Chinese.

According to Whinnom (1971), then, in order for a true pidgin to arise, it is essential that the people who become pidgin speakers come from two or more different and mutually unintelligible language backgrounds; there must also be a dominant language which supplies most of the vocabulary. The dominant language is known as the 'superstrate' language; the subordinate languages as the 'substrate' languages. The superstrate language is the language on which the pidgin (or creole) is 'based' and is sometimes referred to as the 'lexifier' language since it provides the bulk of the lexemes for the pidgin (or creole).

Dissatisfaction with polygenetic theories gave rise in the late 1950s to the 'monogenetic' theory. Whinnom (1956, 1965), Taylor (1956, 1957, 1960, 1961) and others argued that all European-based pidgins (and creoles) have come from a common proto-pidgin: the famous Mediterranean lingua franca Sabir. This theory is based on the notion that 'relexification' from this proto-pidgin took place whenever the language came in contact with another European language. In this process, the vocabulary of the proto-pidgin was replaced by the vocabulary from the dominant European language in each area while the structure of the pidgin remained the same. It was argued by Stewart (1962) that such divergent relexification of a single proto-pidgin could better account for the similarities between the various pidgins (and creoles) than could the convergent restructuring of a whole group of separate languages.

The third currently competing theory on the origins of pidgins (and creoles) is the 'innatist' theory introduced in the 1970s by Kay and Sankoff (1974). This theory, based on the view that human beings have predetermined biological propensities for acquiring language (Todd 1974:43), claims to account for the similarities between pidgins (and creoles) throughout the world by positing linguistic universals which place constraints on the development of these languages. The most thorough development of this theory is Bickerton's (1981) 'human language bioprogram' which attempts to unify creole language origins with language acquisition and general language origins. Bickerton's theory, however, does not deal specifically with the origins of pidgins. Instead, he presupposes their existence and focuses on emergent creoles.[6]

With regard to the life-cycle of pidgins, a distinction is sometimes made between 'restricted' pidgin and 'extended' pidgin (Todd 1974).[7] A restricted pidgin is one which arises as a result of a marginal contact situation. It serves only this limited purpose and tends to die out as soon as the contact which gave rise to it is withdrawn. An extended pidgin, by contrast, is one which proves vitally important in a multilingual area and is therefore extended and used beyond the original limited function which caused it to come into being.

If the interlingual contact situation which caused the pidgin to come into being ends, the pidgin usually also ends, for there is no longer a need for it, and there are no sentimental attachments or nationalistic motivations for preserving a dead pidgin. On the other hand, if the

interlingual contact is maintained for a long time, the subordinate group usually learns the standard language of the dominant group, in which case the pidgin also ends. The only way in which a pidgin may escape extinction is by developing into a creole (DeCamp 1971a:16).

A creole is generally considered to be a pidgin which has undergone 'creolization' by acquisition as a mother tongue by children.[8] In contrast to a pidgin, a creole is "the native language of most of its speakers" (DeCamp 1971a:16). Its vocabulary and syntactic devices are extended and become, like those of any native language, large enough to meet all the communicative needs of its speakers.

In the final stages of the life-cycle of a creole, there are three basic alternatives: (a) a creole may become extinct, (b) it may further develop into a 'normal' autonomous language, or (c) it may gradually merge with the corresponding standard language.

Whinnom (1971:111) refers to this latter process as 'decreolization', a process "which can in time transform a creole into something linked by a smoothly intergrading bridge to the original target-language of the parent pidgin — transform the creole, in effect, into a 'dialect' of the standard".

The concept of dialect itself is not without its difficulties. Dittmar (1976) points out that general linguistics has not been able to theoretically define the distinction between varieties within the one language as opposed to different languages.[9] From a grammatical point of view, there may not exist valid criteria by which a clear distinction between 'variety' and 'language' may be made. On purely linguistic grounds linguists cannot necessarily define two varieties of speech as being two languages or two dialects of the one language. Instead, it appears that "the ultimate decision in applying the label 'language' or 'variety' ('dialect') rests with the members of a linguistic community and is determined by sociopolitical factors" (Dittmar 1976:176).

It is generally assumed that a creole which remains in contact with its superstrate or lexifier language will inevitably begin to decreolize and ultimately merge with or become a dialect of the lexifier language. There are, however, some contradictions about this in the relevant literature. Bickerton, for example, seems undecided on the point of the inevitability of decreolization. He contradicts himself by saying, on the one hand, that "decreolisation is a phenomenon which is found wherever a creole language is in direct contact with its associated superstrate language" (1980:109) and, on the other hand, that "clearly, after creolisation, a creole language may or may not undergo decreolisation" (1980:112).

VARIATION IN PIDGINS AND CREOLES

The variation in pidgin and creole systems, whether caused by decreolization or other processes, poses challenges to linguistic description. Several approaches to the description of this variation in speech have been made.

Tsuzaki (1971) argues for the description of Hawaiian English in terms of a scheme of three coexistent systems: an obsolescent pidgin, a creole, and an English dialect with standard and non-standard varieties. These three systems are overlapping, rather than completely independent, sets of basic structures. The drawback of this scheme is the difficulty of making definitive delineations among the component systems.

Bailey (1971), in her study of Jamaican creole, speaks of two poles at opposite ends of a continuum. All performances which occur within the continuum are considered to belong to one or the other of the two end poles. Use is made of a weighted scale and a contrastive analysis of a speech sample to determine its basis in and departure from the two end poles. She has taken this approach to analyzing the continuum on pedagogical grounds, claiming that "the pedagogue must work with neat, clearly defined patterns of behaviour" (1971:341).

Craig (1971) also considers the continuum in the West Indies to have two divergent or polar norms, but, unlike Bailey, he considers the intervening area to be an 'area of interaction'. This area is referred to as an interaction area because its existence is dependent on the cross-influences from the two extremes. There are two main types of interaction which help create the continuum: 'simple mixing' and 'mutation with mixing'. In simple mixing, different speakers use different combinations of the contrasts provided by the two relatively widely separated systems represented by the poles. In mutation with mixing, the original contrasts are mutated in various ways, sometimes through interference of one system with the other, before being mixed.

DeCamp (1971b) also accepts the two poles to account for the language situation in Jamaica, but he analyzes the intervening range as rule-governed behaviour in terms of a qualitative scale. He refers to the continuum as a 'post-creole continuum', with creole being at one end and the standard language at the other. This continuum is linear, linguistically defined, and does not include the multidimensional sociological correlates of variation. A speech community in which such a continuum is in operation is a post-creole speech community in contrast to 'diglossic' creole areas such as Haiti.[10]

DeCamp's approach of an implicational scalable continuum of variation has been more widely accepted than the other approaches, although there is some dispute over his choice of terminology. Bickerton (1980:110), for example, rejects the prefix <u>post</u> "since this suggests that the original creole must have vanished or become unrecognisable, and this may or may not be the case". A number of writers (e.g. Bailey 1973, Washabaugh 1974, Bickerton 1975, Akers 1977, Rickford 1979) have since refined the concept of DeCamp's implicational scalable continuum. Bickerton's (1975) approach will specifically be discussed later.

The creole continuum is generally described, following Stewart's (1965) terminology, in terms of a number of lects. The 'basilect' is the variety of creole that is the most distinct from the superstrate language and the 'acrolect' is the variety of speech that is the closest to the superstrate language. The basilectal and acrolectal extremes of the continuum are linked by a number of intermediate varieties called the 'mesolect'. The mesolect is sometimes further specified as lower mesolect (that part of the mesolect closest to the basilect), upper mesolect (that part closest to the acrolect), and mid-mesolect (that part equidistant from the basilect and acrolect). These various lects do not refer to discrete objects but rather represent sectors of the continuum which blend into one another so that no non-arbitrary division is possible.

Although the above are the commonly expressed definitions and concepts relative to pidgins and creoles, they are by no means universally and unambiguously accepted by all creolists. Alleyne (1980:2), for example, claims to have been campaigning for a long time for a re-examination of some of the basic definitions of the terminology, much of which we have

inherited from the 19th century. The problem, however, is not simply one of terminology. If it were, it could be resolved by writers such as Bailey (1974) who have attempted to clarify some of the terminology. Rather, as Givón (1979b) has so vividly put it, most of the problem lies with the "conceptual scenery".

A number of writers have attempted to side-step the issue by substituting the seemingly broader and emotionally less loaded term 'contact language' for either pidgin or creole. Givón (1979b:4) argues, however, that "no language exists which is not in some sense a 'contact language'". Every new generation engages in linguistic re-analysis as a matter of course during language acquisition. The young interact daily with the old and their speech bears the marks of this linguistic interaction. Assuming a newborn child possesses a universal grammar, he acquires his 'first' language by going through a succession of re-modellings of this initial grammar through his daily interaction with a specific linguistic environment. The language the child acquires, therefore, is a contact language. In Givón's view, the only language that could possibly be a non-contact language is Universal Grammar.

PIDGINIZATION AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PIDGINS

Pidgins are generally considered to arise through the process of 'pidginization'. Exactly what pidginization is, however, is not clear. Whinnom (1971:91) approaches pidginization from the biological perspective of hybridization, claiming that "the biological and linguistic processes of hybridization are closely comparable if not mechanically identical". In his view, primary linguistic hybridization is the breaking up of a language into dialects. Secondary hybridization refers to the inter-breeding of distinct species and is exemplified linguistically by the interlanguage spoken by a second-language learner. A true pidgin, Whinnon claims, emerges through tertiary hybridization, a situation which can only arise when a barrier with the parent species has developed (i.e. the target language is removed from consideration).

Hymes (1971d:70) sees pidginization as "a complex process, comprising the concurrence of several component processes". These component processes are simplification or change in the complexity of outer form, reduction or change in the scope of inner form, and restriction or change in the scope of use. He goes on to define pidginization as "that complex process of sociolinguistic change comprising reduction in inner form, with convergence, in the context of restriction in use" (1971d:84).

In Samarin's (1971) view, the fundamental characteristic of pidginization is reduction or simplification. This simplification need not be drastic nor is it necessarily a purely linguistic phenomenon. Pidginization is "any consistent reduction of the functions of language both in its grammar and its use", with change in function preceding change in form (1971:126). Samarin notes that function reduction is what is indicated by the term 'trade language'.

Hymes (1971d:70) notes that many scholars disagree with Samarin's stand of equating pidginization with simplification. Simplification is certainly characteristic of pidginization, but pidginization is not mere simplification. According to Whinnom (1971), pidginization is neither arbitrary simplification nor mechanical mixing, but an adaptation or selective change to certain ends. The processes of simplification and mixing are common, but their concurrence so as to result in the crystallization of a 'true' pidgin is very rare.

Ferguson (1971:145) points out that one of the problems is that "there is little agreement on what constitutes simplicity". Hymes (1971d) agrees that simplicity of form should not be confused with simplicity of content. Simplification of outer form may not necessarily mean a simplification of inner form. He goes on to note that the reduction or simplification of outer form may help to minimize the grammatical knowledge a person needs to have in order to decode or encode a message. Such simplification maximizes the role of the lexicon of the language, which is the sector of the language that the outsider is most likely to encounter and find easiest to acquire. "In this respect, the heart of pidginization is a focus on words and their order in situational context" (Hymes 1971d:73).

Koefoed (1979) distinguishes two major kinds of simplification, the second of which takes two forms. 'Learner's simplification' is a feature of imperfect learning that results from an effort to learn a model language. 'Model simplification' is a conscious attempt by speakers of the model language to simplify the model language. There are two forms of model simplification. One is 'spontaneous simplification' in which model speakers simplify their language according to their own notions about what makes their language difficult. The other is 'imitation simplification' in which the model language is simplified by imitating learners' errors. All of these forms of simplification are at work in pidginization along with two kinds of interference. 'Negative interference' has a 'filter' effect in that a feature of the model language is not present in the pidgin due to its absence in the learner's language. 'Positive interference' is the survival of a feature from the learner's language in the pidgin despite its absence in the model language.

Samarin (1971) claims that the process of pidginization is not restricted to the development of pidgins. Pidginization is also involved in the loss of memory, not of a medical or psychiatric nature, but in the sense of losing the knowledge of and feeling for one's former existence (i.e. 'disculturation'). Further, pidginization is involved in a variety of restricted codes, as opposed to elaborated codes. These include such varieties of speech as jargons and secret languages, special avoidance (e.g. mother-in-law) languages and glossolalic languages. They are distinguished only by their different genesis. "Pidgins result from language learning situations whereas restricted codes are part of the shared and learned behavior of a social group" (Samarin 1971:133).

Characteristics of Pidgins

Samarin (1971:118) argues for the need to distinguish between the salient features and the substantive features of pidgins, claiming that "there has been little concern with distinguishing between superficial features and defining characteristics". The salient or superficial features of pidgins are those which help us recognize most pidgins but do not distinguish them from other types of languages. The substantive features, on the other hand, are those which characterize all pidgins and essentially only pidgins and thus define pidgins as distinct from other types of languages. The search for the substantive characteristics is still continuing, with much debate along the way. Most proposed characteristic features for pidgins are relegated to the list of salient features: they occur in pidgins, but they are not unique to pidgins.

A list of typical features of pidgins may be compiled from some of the significant contributions to the relevant literature (Bynon 1977, Clyne

1975, DeCamp 1971a, Goodman 1967, Hall 1966, Hymes 1971c, Koefoed 1979, Leachman and Hall 1955, Mühlhäusler 1974, Samarin 1971, Schumann 1978a, Smith 1972, Stewart 1962). The characteristic which seems to be most widely accepted is that of simplification, although as noted above, just what simplification entails is not entirely clear.

The 'classic' statement of the features of pidgins maintains that pidgins are not the native languages of any of their speakers, are greatly simplified and much less complex than normal languages, are limited in their vocabularies, reduced in their grammatical structures, and restricted in their functions. Pidgins are said by some to be characterized as having no codified set of grammatical and lexical norms which are formally accepted and learnt by users. In addition to having a limited lexical inventory, the vocabularies of pidgins are characterized by a high rate of borrowing, with the vocabulary coming mostly from one language. Some writers characterize pidgins as being variable in pronunciation and exhibiting a reduced number of phonemic contrasts.

Pidgins are often characterized as deriving their sentence structure from a language different from the one from which they borrowed the bulk of their vocabulary, although the structure of the pidgin is distinct from both languages. Details of grammatical features considered to be characteristic include a drastic reduction in redundancy and an absence or elimination of number, gender, function words such as definite articles and prepositions, tense markers, passive and other auxiliaries, pronoun subject, the copula, and certain grammatical transformations such as passive constructions and inversion in questions. Morphologically, pidgins typically have a loss of inflectional systems, with word order tending to replace inflectional morphology. Juxtaposition may be used in topic-comment constructions and to indicate possession. Invariant pronominal forms derived from the most stressed variants are typically used, and the subject is often recapitulated by a pronoun. Pidgins characteristically use one form as the normal negator, make use of a so-called all-purpose preposition, and use a striking amount of reduplication or iteration.

CREOLIZATION AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CREOLES

Alleyne (1971) has long questioned the adequacy of the notion of a creole as being the 'nativization' of a pidgin. The acquisition of a pidgin as a first language by children may not necessarily lead to the expansion of that language if a second language is acquired at school age and the infant creole is developed no further and is abandoned. On the other hand, the pidgin may be expanded in structure and function through use as a lingua franca apart from first language acquisition. What is important, says Hymes (1971d:79), is "status as a primary language (functionally) in a community. Autobiographical priority, as first language learned, is a possible route to primary status, but neither necessary nor sufficient."

Hancock (1980) prefers not to acknowledge a distinction between pidgin and creole and considers stabilization to be more significant than nativization in the formation of creoles. Evidence for this is the fact that little difference exists between the Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea of native speakers and non-native speakers, and some of the most conservative stable Krio in Nigeria has been spoken by Kru seamen for over a century without having supplanted their native tongue. By stabilization Hancock (1980:65) means the establishment of linguistic conventions whose manifestations will be predictable for at least ninety

percent of any speaker's performance. He sees the process of stabilization as being adult-initiated rather than child-initiated as is nativization.

Bickerton (1980:112) maintains that creolization is "a virtually instantaneous process taking place in the minds of the first generation of creole speakers." He argues (1979) that the process of creolization begins abruptly and lasts for only that short period of time during which a child's innate grammar is activated but not blocked by the language of his caretakers. A person is born with a kind of blueprint or bioprogram of language in his head. This innate or universal language, which is highly specified with regard to a core of syntax and semantic items but not lexical items, is in fact a person's first language. What usually happens as a child grows up is that he starts to change from the rules of this universal language to the rules of the language of the community in which he is growing. Creolization, in Bickerton's view, is that short-term cerebral affair in which the rules of the child's innate language become operative before the language of the community begins to impress upon him and change the rules.

Washabaugh (1980) strongly disagrees with Bickerton's cerebralist view of creolization on two accounts. First, according to Washabaugh (1980:136), "there is no longer any reason to believe that creolization is an abrupt, once for all linguistic process which coincides with the nativization of a language". Studies by Mühlhäusler (1980) and Sankoff (1980), for example, indicate that aspects of creolization may appear before nativization, while a study by Le Page (1977) suggests that they may occur after nativization provided certain social conditions exist. Further, according to Washabaugh (1980:136), language is a social reality and "it will no longer do to imagine that creole languages are born in the brain." Rather, following Givón (1979a), it must be supposed that distinctively creole grammars arise out of distinctively creole discourse which arises out of creole social life.

Mühlhäusler, who defines creolization as referring "to the kind of linguistic changes that occur when a language becomes the first language of a speech community" (1980:21), also disagrees with Bickerton and points out that creolization can take place at any stage of a developmental continuum. In his view, we can have creolized jargons, creolized stable pidgins or creolized expanded pidgins (Mühlhäusler 1980:32):

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
jargon	jargon	jargon
↓	stabilized pidgin	stabilized pidgin
	↓	expanded pidgin
creole	creole	creole
(e.g. West Indian English Creole)	(e.g. Torres Strait Creole)	(e.g. Tok Pisin)

Characteristics of Creoles

One of the assumptions underlying the common use of the term creolization is that the structure of creoles can be typologically defined. Givón (1979b:19) points out that this assumption implies that "there exist some specific rules of language change which characterize the manner in which non-Creole languages change into Creoles", or that

"there exist some linguistic features which characterize the structure of Creoles as against all other languages". He then proceeds to argue "that the linguistic evidence which claims to support such hypotheses is of rather doubtful validity" (1979b:19).[11]

DeCamp (1971a:25) expresses a similar view when he claims that "there is no certain way of identifying as a creole a language whose history is unknown". His statement implies that the defining characteristic of creoles is based on what they came from or how they came about, not what their structure is. As was pointed out earlier, however, the exact nature of the relation between pidgins and creoles and the process of creolization are still not clearly understood.

A search of the literature provides very few proposed defining characteristics of creoles. DeCamp (1971a) says that, unlike pidgins, the vocabulary and syntactic devices of creoles are large enough to meet all the communication needs of their speakers like any other native languages. Like pidgins, however, creoles tend to minimize redundancy in syntax. Creoles also, like pidgins, almost invariably have low social status. Alleyne (1971) adds that simplification is not a characteristic of creoles.

Givón (1979b) provides us with a list of features which have been proposed at one time or another as being characteristic of the structure of creoles: a relexified or borrowed vocabulary, reduced inflections, 'common denominator' or 'minimal' grammar, and 'optimal' grammar. Givón goes on to argue that none of these features is typologically characteristic of creoles. Many languages, including English, have extensively borrowed from other languages. Massive borrowing does not by itself make a language a creole. Lack of inflections is not unique to creoles either. Creoles tend to follow the structure of their substrate languages,[12] which in most cases are non-inflecting languages. In addition, there is a tendency for all languages which borrow massively from other languages to erode the borrowed inflections. The minimal grammar concept is based on an inadequate understanding of the intricacies and subtleties of the grammar of creoles and not seriously held today. As Hymes (1971d:69) points out, "pidgins cannot be seen as merely combinations or least common denominators, but reflect creative adaptation and innovation". The optimal grammar concept is related to universal grammar, but the notion of universal grammar is not restricted to creoles; it is very much in evidence during a child's acquisition of any language.[13] Changes in the direction of universal grammar may become accelerated during the rise of creoles, but aspects of universal grammar are not exclusive to creoles.

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

All living languages undergo change. The concept of fixity in language is essentially, as Sankoff (1980:139) points out, a "metalinguistic construct in the minds of speakers". Native speakers of a language generally superimpose an idealized fixed and regular 'language' on a mass of irregularity. Contrary to native speakers' perceptions, empirical research has firmly established that the state of 'a language' at any given point in time is a product of a number of ongoing, and often competing, historical processes.

As in other areas of pidgin-creole studies, there is disagreement among creolists on the significance and scale of variation caused by the various ongoing processes of change. Hymes (1971e:299) claims that

"pidgins and creoles challenge conventional forms of linguistic description..." Sankoff (1980:139), on the other hand, argues that the problems posed for linguistic analysis by the nature of variable linguistic data of pidgins and creoles are not different in degree or in kind from the linguistic data encountered in other speech communities.

Bickerton (1980) argues that there are two basic types of language change. The first type proceeds through linguistic re-analysis in which the underlying structure is reinterpreted without overt changes in the surface structure. The second type of change involves overt changes in the surface structure, coming about either through one form or structure replacing another or by some change in the meaning, function or distribution of pre-existing forms or structures.

This second type of change is further subdivided by Bickerton (1980) into 'spontaneous' and 'non-spontaneous' changes. Any change in a language which is not influenced by any factors external to that language is a spontaneous change. Any change which owes its existence to the influence of another language is a non-spontaneous change. Creoles, being natural languages, undergo both spontaneous and non-spontaneous changes. These two types of change, which are sharply opposed to each other, can be formally distinguished when any surface change has taken place. In spontaneous change a pre-existing form or structure acquires a new meaning, function or distribution, whereas in non-spontaneous change a pre-existing meaning or function acquires a new form or structure. Decreolization constitutes a special case of non-spontaneous change.

The importance of distinguishing spontaneous changes from non-spontaneous or decreolization changes, according to Bickerton (1980), is that it enables one to preserve the hypothesis that a creole continuum is unilinear, consisting of a single series of sequential changes linking the basilect to the acrolect.

Mühlhäusler (1980) argues for the need for some further sets of distinctions in understanding processes of change. One should make a distinction, he says, between developmental changes and restructuring changes. Developmental changes are those which increase the overall referential and non-referential power of a language, whereas restructuring changes are those which are due primarily to contact with other languages and do not affect the overall power of a linguistic system. These changes can be summarized as follows (Mühlhäusler 1980:22):

DEVELOPMENTAL DIMENSION	
	jargon
	stabilized pidgin
	expanded pidgin -> post pidgin -> superimposed language
	creole ————> post creole -> superimposed language
↓	R E S T R U C T U R I N G D I M E N S I O N

There are some significant differences, according to Mühlhäusler (1980), between the linguistic processes which occur on the developmental and restructuring continua. The developmental continuum is characterized by a gradual introduction of redundancy, the development of a word-formation component, an increase in derivational depth, the development of grammatical devices for non-referential purposes, and the gradual increase of morphological naturalness. The restructuring continuum is characterized by language mixing that leads to unnatural developments, hypercorrection, and an increase in variation with

weakening of linguistic norms. Both continua are largely implicationally ordered, both are determined by complex conditions involving various levels of grammar and pragmatics, and both result in new systems.

Dreyfuss (1977) has tried to equate the development of a post-creole continuum with language death. Indeed, there is a wide-spread view that mixture between an English-based creole (or pidgin) and English automatically leads to a form of language which is closer to English and hence results in the death of the creole. This 'levelling' process in creoles is what is referred to as decreolization (Bynon 1977:259).

Mühlhäusler (1980), however, argues that this view ignores an important principle of language mixing, namely that whilst the mixing of linguistic subsystems tends to lead to levelling or a kind of common-core grammar, the mixing of separate systems leads to a new intermediate system which may be substantially different from both parent systems. Thus it is that 'anglicized' varieties of urban Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea are equally unintelligible to speakers of conservative rural Tok Pisin and speakers of English. Mühlhäusler (1980) also points out that levelling appears to occur when different but lexically related pidgins or creoles mix, a fact often overlooked when considering the historical development of individual pidgins in isolation.

DECREOLIZATION

The concept of decreolization is of particular relevance to the study of creole in North Australia. It is well documented, as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, that this variety of Aboriginal speech had passed through the pidginization-pidgin stage of development by the turn of the 20th century and subsequently underwent creolization, being firmly established as a creole by the middle of the century. The relevant question being asked today is whether or not it is now undergoing decreolization. Because of the importance of this question, I will take a closer look at the concept of decreolization, in particular as expounded by Bickerton (1975), than I have of the other processes. Bickerton's study deals specifically with the speech situation in Guyana, but his analysis of the processes involved is purported to be applicable to other creole situations as well.

Bickerton argues that the labyrinth of variation in a creole speech situation forms a 'true continuum' that should be described in a unified analysis together with English rather than as several co-existent systems. Such a unitary treatment should be given because, he claims, English-based pidgins and creoles in general are "in some meaningful sense, all English" (1975:21). He admits, however, that such an analysis is not quite possible because of the presence of elements from the substrate or non-English languages, particularly in the original creole. Because "we simply lack sufficient knowledge both about the actual languages involved in the process and about the nature of, and constraints upon, linguistic change and inter-influence in general", he concentrates on "tracing the changes which occur to the basilectal system... and which serve to link it to the system of standard English" (Bickerton 1975:59). In other words, because it is not known whence creoles really come, but it is known whither they decreolize, Bickerton claims that English-based creoles are in some sense completely English.

One of the main axioms of this approach is that an analysis should have an exclusively linguistic base. Social and cultural correlates of

linguistic variation, although interesting, should be discounted, for grammar is independent of context. A speaker's knowledge of grammar is first stored in terms of "purely linguistic information" which is subsequently "exploited" by the speaker for social purposes (Bickerton 1975:185).

The analysis Bickerton proposes is a 'recapitulatory' one in which there is a constant succession of restructurings of the original creole system across the continuum that yields a very gradual transmission of surface forms between the extremes of the basilect and the acrolect. The extreme creole varieties in modern speech would represent survivals from a relatively early stage in the development of the speech.

In such an analysis, the basilect is a phase in a development process through which some creole speakers pass after the language itself has passed through the phase. One of the most striking features of the continuum as one moves up it until the acrolect is reached is its linearity: "one man's hypercorrection is another man's vernacular" (Bickerton 1975:113).

One view of this 'moving up the continuum', which Bickerton (1980:111) refers to as a simplistic "tinkertoy" concept of decreolization, is that there are two distinct dialects or languages, the creole and the superstrate, and the creole abandons those features which distinguish it from the superstrate one after another and immediately replaces each abandoned feature by its superstrate equivalent.

The real situation is more complex, with speakers progressively changing the basilectal grammar so that its output gradually comes to resemble the output of an acrolectal grammar. The degree of closeness to the acrolect that is attainable at any stage is constrained by two factors: a speaker's perception of his ultimate target may be inaccurate, and it appears that for a grammar of one kind to become a grammar of another kind it has to follow a line which is far from straight.

In Bickerton's analysis a distinction is made between the processes involved in the basilect-to-mid-mesolect phase and the mid-mesolect-to-acrolect phase. Change in the basilect-to-mid-mesolect phase consists largely of introducing surface forms modelled on English ones but using them (at least initially) in very non-English ways and only slowly and gradually shifting the underlying semantic system in the general direction of English. Change in the mid-mesolect-to-acrolect phase, on the other hand, consists of increasingly adding English forms to the grammar consistent with their English functions while dropping out altogether non-English forms, or at least 'crushing and distorting' them into patterns which steadily become closer to English ones. The resulting creole continuum is "an unbroken chain from a basilectal level to an acrolectal level whose underlying structure is virtually indistinguishable from that of English" (Bickerton 1975:163).

Bickerton (1975:199) claims that although the ranges of individuals along the continuum differ, especially as regards production, each understands every variety within the creole system. Although it is practically impossible to know what constitutes a speaker's total range, they may be divided into two classes: 'single-range' speakers and 'split-range' speakers. Single-range speakers may be located anywhere within the system and appear to control contiguous lects. One of the unmistakable characteristics of such speakers in Guyana is their tendency to shift lects without any apparent contextual or even topical motivation. Split-range speakers, on the other hand, control lects on

the continuum which are widely separated, without controlling intermediate ones. The outputs of such speakers resemble those of a bilingual speaker rather than those of a person varying within a single language system. In contrast to a single-range speaker, while the split-range speaker's two discrete lects may interfere with one another, shifts from one to the other are sharply and unambiguously marked and readily explicable on social grounds. Some split-range speakers are 'genuine bi-dialectals', capable of switching between the basilect and the acrolect without touching the mid-mesolectal level.

The conclusion of Bickerton's analysis of Guyanese creole, and by implication other creoles in similar situations, is that it does not constitute a language since one of its 'ends' is indistinguishable from English, nor is it a dialect "since dialects are supposedly more homogeneous than the language that contains them" (Bickerton 1975:166). Instead, Guyanese creole is a "dynamic system": a system in that the relationships within it are systematic with no trace of random mixing of elements; dynamic rather than static, since, in part, diachronic changes can be observed synchronically in the continuum.

This dynamic system model is applicable, Bickerton claims (1975:176), not only to other creoles, but to other speech situations as well, noting especially that "in the course of decreolisation, speakers are strung out across the continuum between 'native' creole and 'target' English in much the same way as second-language learners are strung out across the continuum" between first and second languages. The differences between these two types of continua stem primarily from extra-linguistic rather than linguistic factors, notably that creole continuum speakers form a closed community whereas language-learning continuum speakers typically do not. If the creole continuum constitutes a system, then the language-learning continuum between two distinct languages must also constitute a system. Pushing this to its logical conclusion, Bickerton (1975:178) claims that all such systems are in fact "only partial and arbitrary interpretations of the unique repository of System — the human _faculté de langage_ itself".

INTERLANGUAGE

Researchers in child language acquisition generally agree that all normal children follow definable sequences of systematically occurring forms when learning their native language. Differences between the child's developing grammar and the adult's grammar are not due to errors of imperfect learning. Rather, children are constantly creating new rules which eventually lead to the adult's grammar. Second language acquisition [hereafter SLA] is purported to involve a similar process since cognitively it may be governed by the same principles (Herzfeld 1980:156). Within this school of thought, research on SLA has led to the development of the concept of 'interlanguage' (Selinker 1969).

The interlanguage concept implies that the utterances of a second-language learner are part of a separate linguistic system. This system, according to Selinker (1972), reflects the second-language learner's perception of how the target language is constructed. It is not simply a target language grammar with errors resulting from native language interference, but rather a systematic attempt to cope with the inherent irregularities of the target language itself (Herzfeld 1980:156).

In a series of publications, Schumann (1974a, 1974b, 1975, 1976, 1978a,

1978b, 1978c) investigates the implications of pidginization, creolization and decreolization for the study of interlanguage in SLA. He originally suggested that there are important similarities between pidginization and the early stages of SLA and between creolization and the later stages of SLA. The process of pidginization begins, he says, when learners have to acquire and use a second language under conditions of restricted social and psychological control. Such conditions produce an interlanguage which is pidginized in the sense that it is a reduced and simplified form of the target language.

A few writers (e.g. Meisel 1975, Flick and Gilbert 1977) argue vigorously against Schumann's analogy between pidginization and SLA, but Schumann (1978b) maintains that their arguments arise out of their equating the process of pidginization with its end product, i.e. a pidgin language. One's view of the validity of Schumann's 'pidginization hypothesis' of SLA depends on one's definition of pidginization.

Schumann (1978b) later revised his model and eliminated creolization in favour of decreolization, a move supported by Huebner (1976). The linguistic features which develop during creolization through the processes of expansion and complication are not derived from any target language which serves as a model of approximation. The creole, in a sense, creates itself by acquiring features through natural cognitive processes and the processes of natural language development. In contrast, during the later stages of SLA, a second-language learner's pidginized interlanguage complicates and expands in the direction of the target language norm. Since creolization is language creation and SLA is language acculturation, creolization is not a valid model for SLA.

Schumann[14] coined the terms 'basilang', 'mesolang' and 'acrolang' for the SLA continuum to show its parallel with the decreolization continuum. He points out, however, that the basilect and the basilang are "not really analogous" due to the fact that the basilect is a native language and the basilang is not (1978b:377). A speaker acquires the basilect by being born into a community for whom the lect is the native language. By contrast, a speaker acquires the basilang through a process of reduction and simplification of a second language to which he is exposed. Thus the process which produces the basilang is more analogous to pidginization than it is to decreolization. It is, therefore, the mesolang and acrolang stages of the SLA continuum which parallels decreolization.

Anderson (1979:111) argues that Schumann's model of the SLA continuum being analogous to a pidginization-decreolization continuum is inaccurate, for "it is not plausible to have pidginization in some way fade into decreolization in the same way that early SLA gradually develops towards the target language". The counterpart of pidginization, he says, should be depidginization instead of decreolization. He goes on to claim, however, that there are <u>four</u> parallel continua between which similarities exist: a pidginization-depidginization continuum, a creolization-decreolization continuum, an 'early first language acquisition'-'later first language acquisition' continuum, and an 'early SLA'-'later SLA' continuum. He recognizes that there are differences between the various phenomena related to these four continua, but argues that "we shouldn't let them obscure the common processes which underlie pidginization, creolization, first language acquisition and second language acquisition" (Anderson 1979:117). The main feature shared by all four of these continua is the developmental dimension of their later stages.

One of the major differences between the pidgin/creole continua and the language acquisition continua is that the former represent group phenomena while the latter represent individual phenomena. Second-language learners normally do not use the target language for intragroup communication, whereas pidgin/creole speakers form a closed community and use the language for communication among themselves (Flick and Gilbert 1977). In addition, as Valdman (1980:304) points out, in SLA and first-language acquisition, learners are exposed to unrestricted input, whereas in pidginization and creolization they operate with limited and 'defective' data.

In the exposition of his 'language bioprogram' theory, Bickerton (1981) agrees that the processes involved in the development of new languages (i.e. creoles) and the development of language in the individual (i.e. first-language acquisition), as well as the original development of human language, have very much in common. The human species, he claims, has evolved a genetic bioprogram for language which maps the development of language within the species and determines its development in every individual in much the same way as a person's physical development is genetically constrained. The development of creoles and the acquisition of language could derive, he says, from the re-enactment of the original development of human language.

As the discussion in this chapter has indicated, the basic processes involved in the development and decline of pidgins and creoles are neither clearly understood nor universally agreed upon by creolists. The rest of this book focusses on one particular creole, Kriol of North Australia, and some of the general issues summarised above will be discussed in relationship to its development.