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**WORK PAPERS OF SIL-AAB**

**Series A Volume 10**

**KRIOL OF NORTH AUSTRALIA  
A LANGUAGE COMING OF AGE**

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**Summer Institute of Linguistics  
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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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## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT IS KRIOL?

An English-related contact language came into existence almost as soon as the first British settlement in Australia was established. Only eight years after the commencement of settlement at Port Jackson [now Sydney], David Collins (1798:544) published a book in which he commented on the type of speech then current between the settlers and the Aborigines:

Language indeed, is out of the question, for at the time of writing this, nothing but a barbarous mixture of English with the Port Jackson dialect is spoken by either party; and it must be added that even in this the natives have the advantage, comprehending, with much greater aptness than we can pretend to, every thing they hear us say.

With the spread of settlement into other regions of Australia, this contact language (or other similar ones) also spread so that by the early part of the 20th century pidgin had gained wide usage as a lingua franca throughout most of outback Australia. The Melbourne *Argus*, for example, spoke scornfully in 1891 of "that ridiculous pigeon English which the whites have used... throughout Queensland... as their medium of communication with the blacks", Spencer (1928) recorded the pidgin proceedings of a court case he observed at Borroloola in 1902, Stanner (1933) made a few comments on pidgin in the Daly River area, and Kaberry (1937:92) described pidgin in the Kimberleys as "an Esperanto of the north [that] makes communication possible."

The presence of pidgin throughout outback Australia by the early part of this century is well attested in the literature of the period. Many writings, mostly autobiographical in nature, contain pidgin in their conversational reconstructions.<sup>15</sup>

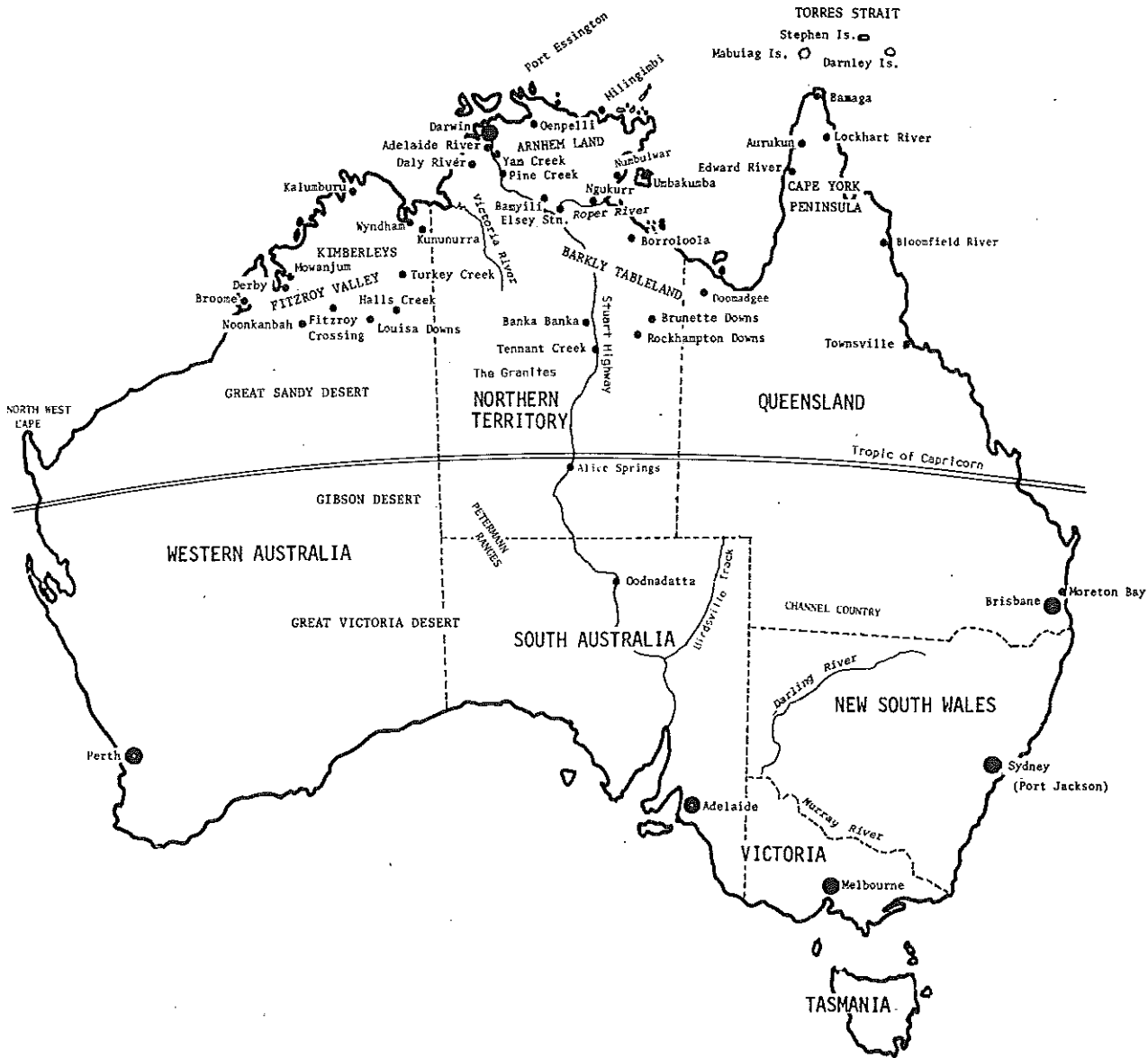
It has generally been presumed that there was (and is) only one pidgin English in Australia — the so-called "Australian Pidgin English" (Hall 1943) — and that this pidgin had its origin<sup>16</sup> in the Port Jackson contact language and was spread primarily through the pastoral industry. Writing in 1904 Favenc commented:

The pidgin talk which is considered so essential for carrying on conversation with a blackfellow is mostly of very old origin... most of it is derived from New South Wales and Victoria. Or it might be better said from New South Wales only, as, when most of it originated, Victoria was not. As whites pushed on and on amongst new tribes, nothing was taken from the local dialects to add to the general pidgin stock, but the original was carried along, mostly by the black boys who accompanied the whites... Taking it all and through, the Murray and Darling and their tributaries have been the birthplace of most of the pidgin in common use.

As settlement spread from Port Jackson to Moreton Bay [Brisbane] and beyond, the Port Jackson pidgin is reputed to have been carried along by "the stockmen and sawyers [who supposed it] to be the language of the natives, whilst they suppose[d] it to be ours, and which [was] the ordinary medium of communication between the squatters and the tame black-fellow" (Hodgkinson 1845; cf. Dutton 1983).

# MAP 1-AUSTRALIA

showing locations referred to in chapters 2 and 3.



From Queensland the pidgin is generally reputed to have been taken into the Northern Territory by the pastoralists, who often brought with them a pidgin they had thought useful in communicating with Aborigines in previous localities. Some pastoralists also brought Aboriginal stockmen, who often spoke a pidgin, with them. As contact with new Aborigines took place as they moved into new territory, this pidgin was introduced as the language of communication (Sandefur 1979:12).

The real situation in the Northern Territory, however, is much more complex. It seems certain that not one but a variety of pidgins arose independently of one another, although there was subsequently much interaction of their speakers. The German explorer Ludwig Leichhardt found pidgin speakers hundreds of kilometres inland from the British settlement at Port Essington some thirty years prior to the arrival of the first pastoralists (Leichhardt 1847:495,522). This Port Essington pidgin survived to later become an important influence on the pidgin of Darwin officialdom through the Port Essington Aborigines employed as assistants to customs officers. Other English-based pidgins also developed around early mining camps and along the Adelaide to Darwin Overland Telegraph Line as well as in the pastoral industry which followed the Overland Telegraph Line into the Northern Territory. Thus, as pidgins were developing along the Queensland plantation coast, pidgins had already developed in the Northern Territory and had begun to stabilize by interaction of the speakers (Harris 1984).

The development of pidgins in North Australia was not limited to contact between Europeans and Aborigines. Vaszolyi (1979:254) makes the claim that pidgin in the Kimberleys "has not sprung primarily from Anglo-Australian versus Aboriginal interaction, but rather from the multicultural bustle of northern Australian ports (such as Broome, Derby, Wyndham and Darwin), where Aborigines mixed with Malays, Chinese, Japanese, Philipinos [sic], Thursday Islanders and a variety of other ethnic groups." A similar claim is also made by Sayer (1944:45).

What Vaszolyi and Sayer fail to point out, however, is that the inherent linguistic skills of multilingual Aboriginal speech communities meant that Aborigines very rapidly developed pidginized forms of English when they first encountered the English language. It does not matter whether the language in which they came in contact was the full English language (as might have been the case at Port Essington) or an English-based pidgin (as might have been the case with the Chinese miners or the Queensland cattle drovers who thought all Aborigines understood pidgin English). The result, in circumstances of restricted communication, is essentially the same: a pidgin develops (Bickerton 1977:51). As North Australia became increasingly multicultural around the end of the 19th century, Aborigines entered that complex linguistic context as people already possessing a pidginized form of English (Harris 1984:217).

It is naive, therefore, to speak today of Australian Pidgin English as though there were only one pidgin with only one point of origin. Not only has there been diversity in the origins of Australian pidgins, but there has been diversity in the subsequent development of those pidgins as well. Throughout most of Australia pidgins have been replaced by Aboriginal dialects of English, while in most of North Australia they have developed into creoles.

It has only been recently acknowledged (e.g. Aboriginal Languages Association 1981, Dixon 1980, Sandefur 1983e, Black and Walsh 1982) that there are two major creoles in North Australia: Torres Strait Creole (referred to by some writers as Torres Strait Broken, and used here to

include the associated varieties sometimes called Cape York Creole and Lockhart Creole) in the Torres Strait and the north and northeastern part of Cape York Peninsula, and Kriol in the northwestern corner of Queensland, northern half of the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys in Western Australia. Both of these creoles have at least four generations of mother tongue speakers (Shnukal 1981, Sandefur 1981a, Aboriginal Language Association 1981). In the next section I will take a brief look at the relationship which exists between these two creoles. I will then discuss in some detail the relationship between Kriol and varieties of Aboriginal English.

#### KRIOL AND TORRES STRAIT CREOLE

Kriol and Torres Strait Creole have much in common. Both may have some of their historical roots in the pidgin of the 19th century Queensland sugarcane plantations. Both are spoken by Aborigines and thus share some common sociological features. Both are 'based' on English and therefore draw most of their lexical items from the same lexifier language. Both are referred to by Aborigines as pijin. Nevertheless, although they have so much in common, Kriol and Torres Strait Creole are distinct, albeit related, languages. Each of the foregoing points will now be considered.

#### Historical Roots

It has often been presumed that Kriol developed directly from the pidgin that was brought into the Northern Territory from Queensland by the pastoralists beginning in the 1870s (Sharpe 1975, Sandefur 1979, 1981d). As noted above, however, Harris (1984) has substantially presented evidence that challenges this presumption. Clark (1979:49) supports Harris' argument when he claims the pidgin which the stockmen brought from Queensland "merged with the existing Aboriginal pidgin to form the basis of modern Roper River Creole [Kriol]<sup>17</sup>".

It appears that the pidgin from which Kriol developed first began to creolize in the Roper River area of the Northern Territory. In the early 1870s Roper Bar, twenty-four kilometres upriver from the present day community of Ngukurr, was a supply depot for construction crews of the Overland Telegraph Line. From Roper Bar supplies were taken up the Roper valley to the telegraph line at Elsey Station, thence north or south along the line. This route also served as the first of the two major stock routes for the overlanders from Queensland to the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys, with Roper Bar continuously functioning as a supply depot for the overlanders and being fairly regularly visited by ships from Darwin.

By the turn of the century pidgin was well established in the area. In 1908 the Church Missionary Society established a mission on the Roper River which provided a haven of safety for Aborigines in the midst of extremely violent and disruptive times. Up to two hundred Aborigines from several different language groups lived at the mission during its early years, with fifty to seventy children attending school (Hart 1970:154). This new environment of a multilingual settlement solidified the need for a common language for the Aborigines from the different traditional language groups, especially children who became peers attending an English school in an area where a pidgin was well established. Under such social conditions the language began to creolize. The factors involved in the social changes which brought about creolization in the Roper River area will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

Creolization in most of the other communities in terms of when the language acquired mother tongue speakers appears to have been more recent. The Aboriginal community at Barunga, for example, grew out of a World War Two compound, the establishment of which effectively marks the beginning of creolization there (Thompson 1976, Sandefur 1981f). The impetus for widespread creolization was the changes brought about by the war in conjunction with changes in government policy just after the war. The significance of these changes for creolization will be discussed in chapter four.

The Kimberleys<sup>18</sup> were settled from two directions, the east Kimberleys (which includes Halls Creek) from Queensland, and the west Kimberleys (which includes Fitzroy Crossing) from Perth. Pidgin was well established in both areas of the Kimberleys by the early part of this century (Kaberry 1937:92, 1939:x). The pidgin in the east Kimberleys and the pidgin in the west Kimberleys appear to have been different pidgins, with the eastern pidgin being related to Kriol but not the western pidgin (Hudson 1983a:10). In addition, Vaszolyi (1976, 1979), as mentioned earlier, claims that a pidgin developed around the ports from the intermingling of Aborigines with a host of Asian ethnic minorities. This pidgin, however, appears to have had little influence on the pidgins of the inland area (Hudson 1983a:12).

By the 1940s the eastern pidgin had begun to creolize, thus becoming what was later termed Kriol, whereas the western pidgin had not. In the early 1950s a United Aborigines Mission was established at Fitzroy Crossing. The mission school and nearby government school had a policy of forbidding the children to speak their traditional Aboriginal language. In 1955<sup>19</sup> the government sent a truckload of Aboriginal children whose mother tongue was Kriol from Moola Bulla station near Halls Creek to the Fitzroy Crossing hostel. The hostel children were in immediate and direct contact with these new arrivals and apparently learnt Kriol from them (Hudson 1983a:14).

The parents of the Fitzroy Crossing children, who already spoke the western pidgin, were working on cattle stations in the area and were not influenced by the language of the Halls Creek children as were their children. Today their children, some of whom are now in their thirties, speak Kriol as their mother tongue, while they [the parents] continue to speak the western pidgin as a second language. Since Kriol arrived at Fitzroy Crossing, there has been limited contact with the Kriol speakers at Halls Creek. As a result, Kriol in the two communities has continued development somewhat independently, thus creating two distinct dialects (Hudson 1983a:15). Details of the development of Kriol in other communities has yet to be studied.

Torres Strait Creole, on the other hand, has its roots firmly entrenched in Beach-la-mar or Early Melanesian Pidgin, the English-based pidgin that was well established in the South Seas by 1860 (Bani 1976, Clark 1979, Crowley and Rigsby 1979, and Shnukal 1983a, 1983b). Beach-la-mar became the lingua franca of the 60,000 or so South Sea Islander indentured labourers who were brought to Queensland to work the sugarcane plantations during the second half of the 19th century. Some South Sea Islanders who spoke Beach-la-mar were brought into the Torres Strait region in the second half of the 1800s, some as missionaries with the London Missionary Society but most as labourers in the pearling shell and trepang industries. In addition, some non-repatriated indentured labourers from the sugarcane plantations later settled in the Torres Strait. By 1898 the pidgin was well established on Mabuig Island (Ray 1907). The pidgin also spread to the Aboriginal people on the north

and northeastern coasts of Cape York Peninsula, largely, it appears, through the sandalwood and diving industries.

The historical connection between Kriol and Torres Strait Creole rests in the pidgin used by the indentured labourers<sup>20</sup> of the Queensland sugarcane plantations. It is this pidgin that Clark (1979:49) claims was carried by stockmen to the Northern Territory where it became the basis of Kriol. It is debated among researchers, however, as to whether or not this pidgin was passed from the indentured labourers to the Aborigines of the Queensland sugar area. Reinecke (1937) was the first to raise the question of the relationship of the two but was unable to find enough evidence to answer the question. Flint (1971, 1972) and Wurm (1971a) argue that the pidgin was not passed on to Aborigines. Baker (1945) put forth the unsubstantiated claim that the relation went the other direction, with Aboriginal pidgin being passed on to the indentured labourers. Dutton and Mühlhäusler (1984) and Mühlhäusler (1981) agree with Baker, noting that the Aboriginal pidgin could have been passed on to the labourers who worked on pastoral stations in the inland, although no solid historical evidence supporting this view has yet been located.

The historical relationship of Kriol and Torres Strait Creole, therefore, is very tenuous. Even though further historical research may prove conclusively that the plantation pidgin is a major stock of Kriol, the fact remains that the development of Kriol since the flood of overlanders during the 1880s has proceeded independently of Queensland and Torres Strait Creole and the two languages have since diversified in their development.

### Sociological Features

Both Kriol and Torres Strait Creole are spoken as a mother tongue by Aborigines. Although north Queensland Aboriginal culture is not identical with that in the Northern Territory or the Kimberleys, there are many cultural similarities and affinities between the two groups. However, the unifying effect of such cultural affinity is far outweighed by the distinctive influence of Torres Strait Islander culture upon Torres Strait Creole.

Torres Strait Creole was developed initially among Islanders and later spread to Aborigines. The language began creolizing among Islanders before it did among Aborigines, with four generations of Darnley and Stephen Islanders now speaking it as their mother tongue (Shnukal 1983a:175). Of the twenty thousand or so people who speak Torres Strait Creole, the vast majority are Islanders.<sup>21</sup> Socially, the creole spoken by Islanders is distinguished from that spoken by Aborigines. The extent and significance of linguistic variation between the two groups of speakers has yet to be determined (Shnukal 1981). The distinctive Islander ethnic element of Torres Strait Creole, however, clearly distinguishes it from Kriol.

### Lexical Differences

Because both Kriol and Torres Strait Creole have English as their lexifier language, it is to be expected that the bulk of their lexemes would be the same or similar. A cognate count of lexical forms would indicate a high degree of mutual intelligibility, but a semantic analysis of the lexicon would most likely show great diversity between the two languages due to the cultural contexts in which the languages



have developed. A semantic analysis of some Kriol lexemes is provided by Hudson (1983a), but no such analysis is yet available for Torres Strait Creole, the only accessible material being a small word list (Crowley and Rigsby 1979).<sup>22</sup> Thus a lexical comparison of Kriol and Torres Strait Creole is, at this stage, not possible.

Crowley and Rigsby (1979:205-206) list nine non-English-derived words which are in use in Torres Strait Creole [The reader is referred to the glossary in Appendix 1 for a note on the spelling and etymology of creole examples cited throughout this book.]:

food, eat	<u>kaikai</u>
ear	<u>talinga</u>
know	<u>savi</u>
child, baby	<u>pikanini</u>
whiteman	<u>migolo</u>
blossom	<u>kansa</u>
cook under ashes	<u>kapamari</u>
sarong	<u>lava-lava</u>
sweet	<u>susu</u>

Of these nine, only savi and pikanini, which are used universally throughout the world in pidgins and creoles, are used in Kriol. Sharpe (1975:2) reports that Kriol speakers in the Roper River area recognize kaikai, but it is seldom if ever used in Kriol, and then only by old people.

A number of lexical items of the earliest Australian pidgin (such as gabarra 'head', wadi 'tree', binji 'stomach', jidán 'camp, stay' and yuwai 'yes') are used in Kriol, but they apparently do not occur in Torres Strait Creole. Such differences support the argument that the two had different origins (i.e. Kriol from early Australian pidgin and Torres Strait Creole from Melanesian pidgin via the Torres Strait) (Clark 1979:45).

### Grammatical Differences

There are many aspects of the grammar of Kriol and Torres Strait Creole which are similar, but many of these similarities are language or creole universals. It is not possible to give a detailed account of the similarities and differences between the two languages due to the lack of a detailed analysis of Torres Strait Creole. A fairly lengthy sketch of the syntax of Torres Strait Creole as spoken by Aborigines at Bamaga is, however, provided by Crowley and Rigsby (1979). Only a brief outline of syntactic differences will be given here. The Torres Strait Creole examples and analysis given below are taken from Crowley and Rigsby (1979).

In Torres Strait Creole when the subject of a clause is a noun or noun phrase (as opposed to a pronoun) the concord particle i, which is unmarked for number, typically precedes the predicate: Dog i singaut. 'The dog is barking.' Plenti maan i kech-im fish daun lo riva. 'Some men are catching fish down at the river.'

Kriol does not have a concord particle, although it does have a somewhat similar pronominalized copy. When the subject is brought into focus by topicalization (Hudson 1983a:45), it is formally indicated by a pronominalized copy which agrees in number with the subject: Tharran munanga im longwan. 'That European is tall.' Dubala boi dubala bin gajimbat yarlbun. 'The two boys got some water lily seeds.'

Both Torres Strait Creole and Kriol have a number of aspect and tense words which function as pre- and post-sentence modifiers. Modifiers which are identical or have variant forms in Torres Strait Creole and Kriol include:

Pre-sentence modifiers:

Torres Strait Creole:	Kriol:
<u>mait</u> (dubitative)	<u>maitbi</u>
<u>baimbai</u> (distant future)	<u>bambai</u>

Post-sentence modifiers:

Torres Strait Creole:	Kriol:
<u>gen</u> (repetitive)	<u>gin, igin, gigin</u>
<u>yet</u> (continuative)	<u>yet</u>
<u>pinis</u> (completive)	<u>binij, olredi</u>

Modifiers which are distinct in Torres Strait Creole and Kriol include:

Pre-sentence modifiers:

Torres Strait Creole:	Kriol:
<u>stil</u> (continuative)	—
<u>oredi</u> (completive)	—
<u>klosap</u> (immediate future)	<u>tideina</u>

Post-sentence modifiers:

Torres Strait Creole:	Kriol:
<u>traï</u> (attemptive)	—
<u>nau</u> (inceptive)	—
<u>wanwan</u> (sequentive)	<u>na</u>
— (distant future)	<u>bambai</u>
— (immediate future)	<u>tideina</u>
— (frustrative)	<u>najing</u>

For example, Torres Strait Creole: Mait i kam fa luk mi. 'He might come to see me.' Ol kaikai wanwan. 'They ate one after the other.'; and Kriol: Tideina im andi gaman. 'He is coming very soon.' Ai bin lugubat im najing. 'I looked for it but did not find it.'

Torres Strait Creole has directional modifiers (go and kam) which have no counterpart in Kriol: Win bin teik-im peipa go. 'The wind blew the paper away.' Ol bin bring-im kaikai kam pinis. 'They have already brought the food.'

Crowley and Rigsby (1979:191) list only two verbal modifiers for Torres Strait Creole, go (future tense) and bin or bi (past tense): Im go kambek. 'He will return.' Dog i bin kambek. 'The dog has returned.'

Kriol, on the other hand, has an extensive range of verbal modifiers,<sup>23</sup> including bin as past tense and garra as future tense. The form bi functions in Kriol as a copula rather than a verbal modifier; the form go does not occur as a verbal modifier. For example: Ai bin go la Ropa. 'I went to Roper.' Olabat garra bi hepi. 'They will be happy.' Olabat bin bi hepi. 'They were happy.'

### Distinct Languages

As was noted in chapter one, the distinction between the notions of 'dialect' and 'language' cannot be made on purely linguistic grounds. The ultimate decision in applying those labels rests with the members of

the linguistic communities involved and is determined largely by sociopolitical factors.

Throughout North Australia the label pidgin tends to be applied by all Aborigines to Kriol and Torres Strait Creole as well as to New Guinea Pidgin.<sup>24</sup> The label is also applied to varieties of Aboriginal English which are fairly closely related to Kriol or Torres Strait Creole. As will be discussed in the next chapter, some older Aborigines go so far as to consider all varieties of English-related speech to be pidgin, which in turn is considered by many of them to be English. Many, if not most, Kriol speakers, however, consider Torres Strait Creole and Kriol to be distinct languages. A Kriol speaker from Ngukurr, for example, who helped undertake a Kriol survey in Queensland (Sandefur et al 1982), tries to point out the distinctness of the two when he says:

[We] had a talk to one old man there [on the beach at Lockhart River]. He was talking pidgin English, that island pidgin English... I went to the club and had a talk to some people there. Some speak creole but not really Kriol, but some sort of like New Guinea — New Guinea sort of pidgin English, and they could understand us, what we said, and what we meant, but they couldn't speak [it]. Anyway, [they were] well spoken by English and half spoken by Solomon Island sort of creole.<sup>25</sup>

#### KRIOL AND ABORIGINAL ENGLISH

In addition to the two creoles described in the above section, there are varieties of Aboriginal English spoken in virtually all parts of Australia. The term 'Aboriginal English' [hereafter AE] is used by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982) mainly to denote varieties of English-related Aboriginal speech on a continuum between Standard Australian English<sup>26</sup> [hereafter SAE] and creole. The continuum is composed of "numerous varieties of Aboriginal English imperceptibly merging into each other" (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982:112). Like other non-standard dialects of English, however, AE "has its own characteristic structures and is by no means just random deviation from an expected norm" (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982:110).

#### Varieties of AE and Terminological Confusion

The first in-depth study of the English-related speech of Aborigines was carried out in the 1960s in Queensland (Flint 1968). The results of the study indicated "linguistic variation between the extremes" of a 'low' form and a 'high' form, the latter approximating General Australian English (Flint 1972:152), thus giving the appearance of a post-creole continuum. There were, however, two forms of 'low' extremes. The one was in the Torres Strait Islands where "the informal English is somewhat different from Queensland Aboriginal English" and on the tip of Cape York Peninsula where Aboriginal children "are acquiring the speech habits of the Islands children living on the same reserve" (Dutton 1970:153). This latter point implies that the Aboriginal children are moving away from the more English-like AE variety of speech in favour of the so-called 'lower' Islander creole variety of speech. The other 'low' extreme was in "one far north-western community" where the 'low' form differed in certain respects from AE elsewhere in the state (Flint 1972:157). These two linguistically different 'low' extremes are what are known today as Torres Strait Creole and Kriol respectively.

During the 1970s a similar study was undertaken of the English-related speech of Aborigines in Western Australia (Malcolm 1979, Kaldor and Malcolm 1982). This study showed, as did the Queensland study, that AE is not a single homogeneous variety of speech. Although there was considerable variation between children in a given locality, it was possible to identify a large number of features which kept reappearing. Some of these features were widespread throughout Western Australia, with some of them being common to AE in other states. Other features were characteristic of specific regions of Western Australia. A few features were restricted to particular localities.

Kaldor and Malcolm (1982) occasionally include creole under the label of Aboriginal English to distinguish it from traditional Aboriginal languages and to point to the fact that its vocabulary is mainly English-based. They point out, however, that "creoles are languages with their own specific grammatical/semantic properties..." (1982:110). Eagleson (1982a:20) somewhat similarly points out elsewhere in the same volume that "the creole must be seen as a distinct language." There is, however, much confusion in the literature on the definition of terms and the identification in the field of the varieties of speech to which the terms are applied.<sup>27</sup> Some writers consider creole to merely be a variety of AE which is far removed from SAE. On the other hand, some consider any variety of AE which has relatively recently become the mother tongue of a group of children to be a creole.

Most varieties of AE are typically conceived of as geographical varieties or dialects. A conference on education, for example,

recognized that most of the children in the Kimberleys Region have some knowledge of the sounds and structure of English woven into distinctive patterns of their own community and called variously "Derby English", "Broome English" etc. under the general name of Aboriginal English (Brumby 1975:[23]).

Some varieties of AE are linguistically very close to or are identical with "white non-standard" Australian English (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982, Eagleson 1982b). Eades (1981, 1982, 1983) points out, however, that the sociolinguistic rules of usage of such varieties of AE are distinctively Aboriginal.

Very few studies of AE have distinguished between varieties of AE which are spoken as a first language and AE which is spoken as a variety of English-as-a-second-language or interlanguage. Varieties of first-language AE are distinct dialects spoken as the mother tongue and used as the primary language for intragroup communication. Everyone who speaks this type of AE is, therefore, a fluent speaker of at least one dialect of English. This type of AE would include, for example, 'Neo-Nyungar' in the southwest of Western Australia (Douglas 1976), 'Baryulgil Banjalong Australian' in northern New South Wales (Fraser 1980), possibly the Darwin sociolect mentioned by Jernudd (1971:22) and those spoken on settlements in Queensland (e.g. Palm Island and Cherbourg) where detribalized Aborigines live (Readdy 1961, Dutton 1964b, 1965, 1969).

One of the very few studies that is specifically identified as concentrating on the English Aborigines speak as a second language is provided by Elwell (1979). This type of AE, or English interlanguage, consists of a variety of utterances, standard or otherwise, which are produced by learners of a second language as they attempt to speak the target language but fail to achieve native speaker fluency. The proficiency they achieve varies greatly. Elwell found that in Milingimbi

in the Northern Territory, the Aboriginal speakers' proficiency in speaking English ranged from "no English at all" to a form closely approximating SAE, with relatively few speakers at either end of the range. Most speakers of this type of AE fall on a continuum between a basilect extreme of 'no English' and an acrolect extreme of SAE.

The grammar of this interlanguage type AE consists of several kinds of constructions. These include 'fossilizations' generated and perpetuated by Aborigines themselves, fossilizations reinforced by non-Aboriginal people through their attempt to speak the mother tongue of the AE speakers, relatively systematic rule-governed non-standard features, sporadically occurring non-standard features, and features common to SAE (Elwell 1979:101). Elwell (1979:100) points out that it is completely inappropriate to refer to such AE as creole since no one speaks it as their mother tongue, nor is such AE a pidgin for it is not a stabilized form of English that is used as an auxiliary contact language.

The major reason the literature fails to generally distinguish between these two types of AE probably lies in the theoretical and practical difficulties of making the distinction. It was pointed out in the preceding chapter that linguists are still trying to develop a theoretical framework which would enable us to describe variation in language adequately. Practical difficulties in making distinctions between these two types of AE are largely related to the collection of data. Douglas (1976:15), Flint (1972:154-155) and Sandefur (1982a) have all noted problems in collecting data on the English-related speech of Aborigines. One of the problems is that the presence of an outsider results in the modification of an Aboriginal person's speech. In the presence of a non-Aboriginal person, speech is normally shifted in the direction of SAE. The difficulty then lies in separating the shifted speech from normal speech.

Elwell was able to focus on the interlanguage type AE without this difficulty because every Aboriginal in the community she studied spoke a traditional Aboriginal language as their mother tongue. Every use of English, therefore, was a shift from their normal speech and easily identified as English interlanguage. In most studies of AE, however, the normal everyday speech of Aborigines is an English-based variety of speech. In such situations, English interlanguage is not easily separated from their first language.

### Historical Relationships

One of my arguments in this book is that Kriol is a language distinct from, albeit related to, AE. Part of this argument rests on the fact that Kriol has no historical connection with most varieties of AE. There is, for example, no direct historical relationship between Milingimbi AE and Kriol. Milingimbi AE is not a decreolized form of Kriol, nor have the two speech varieties developed from the same or related pidgins. The only link between them is that (a) both are spoken by Aborigines and (b) both are 'based' on English. The result of (a) is that both Kriol and Milingimbi AE have in common some Aboriginal semantic structures, and the result of (b) is that both languages have in common most of their lexical forms (although not necessarily the semantics of the lexemes) since their lexemes are derived for the most part from English. The placement of Kriol and Milingimbi AE on a post-creole continuum could only be done on the basis of a typological comparison with a selected linguistic norm (i.e. SAE). Such a continuum, however, could not be considered to be an historical decreolization continuum, for Kriol and Milingimbi AE are spoken by two totally separate and distinct speech communities.

The historical development of other varieties of AE has received very little attention. It has generally been assumed that most varieties have come about as a result of decreolization. Kaldor and Malcolm (1982:78), however, point out that

it is not clear, at the present stage of knowledge about Aboriginal English, whether a full cycle of pidginisation - creolisation - decreolisation did, in fact, occur everywhere in Australia, including places where there is no trace of a creole today. In many areas there may have been a transition from pidgin to a non-standard form of English closer to Standard Australian English without an intervening creole stage.

It appears that some varieties of AE have developed, not through decreolization of a creole, but through 'depidginization' of a pidgin, a process which has received very little attention from creolists.

Depidginization is mostly associated with studies of second language acquisition and generally refers to "the gradual and progressive acquisition" of the target language (Anderson 1980:275). It is analogous to the later stage of SLA, at least in the view of those who accept the validity of the pidginization hypothesis of SLA as discussed in chapter one. The process of depidginization, within that framework, is not limited to operating on a pidgin language as such. In parallel with Mühlhäusler's (1980:32) claim that creolization can take place at any pre-creole stage of a developmental continuum, so depidginization can begin to operate at any pre-pidgin stage. In the SLA context, the process of depidginization flows from the process of pidginization whether or not a stabilized pidgin emerges.

Elwell's (1979) study shows that not only have some varieties of AE not developed through decreolization of a creole, but they have not developed through depidginization of a pidgin either. It appears, for example, that AE at Aurukun in Queensland has not been derived from a pidgin (or creole) (Sayers 1980). The Nyungar AE spoken in the southwest of Western Australia similarly "shows no evidence of historical connection with other pidgin traditions in Australia or elsewhere" (Clark 1979:63). The conclusion is plain enough: most varieties of AE are clearly distinct from Kriol historically.

### Grammatical Distinctness

Most varieties of AE are also distinct from Kriol with regard to their grammatical structures. A comparison of Nyungar AE (Douglas 1976) or Sydney urban AE (Eagleson 1982b) shows very few grammatical similarities with Kriol other than those which Kriol shares with English. It should be pointed out, however, that the features of urban AE

are not distinctively Aboriginal in origin or nature. These are precisely the same features that characterise non-standard white English... They are certainly characteristic of the speech of a large section of the white population among whom the urban Aborigines live and with whom they have most contact (Eagleson 1982b:138).

Some varieties of AE share features with Kriol which are not features of 'non-standard white English'. These varieties tend to be spoken in the

same area as Kriol (Flint 1971, Kaldor and Malcolm 1982). The distinctively Kriol grammatical features which are found in (children's)<sup>28</sup> AE are discussed below. Except where noted, the varieties of AE referred to are in Western Australia as described by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982). References to AE in Alice Springs are based on research by Sharpe (1976b, 1977). The AE examples cited below, which are written with an impressionistic modification of standard spelling to enable the reader to recognize words easily, are quoted from Kaldor and Malcolm (1982). Some of the Kriol examples from the western dialects<sup>29</sup> have been quoted from Hudson (1983a).

Possessive is marked in Kriol by blanga or fo [fo is not widely used in the eastern dialects]: Det dog fo im bin go longwei. 'His dog went a long way.' It is often marked in AE in central and east Kimberleys by for: 'e said you are new teacher for us; and sometimes by a derivative of belong in northern areas: Yvonne bong apple 'Yvonne's apple'.

The determiners wanbala or wan [wan especially in the Fitzroy Valley dialect] is used in Kriol in place of a, an: Ai bin luk wanbala dog. 'I saw a dog.' In AE one is extensively used in place of a, an statewide and occasionally in Alice Springs: My daddy went to Derby to hire one car.

As regards pronouns, im and i are used in Kriol [i especially in the western dialects] for all genders in the third person singular: I bin boldan. 'She fell down.' In AE he and 'e tend to be used statewide for 'he, she, it' but only occasionally by some children in Alice Springs: this old woman he started packing up. The Kriol pronoun system includes dual/plural and inclusive/exclusive distinctions. These pronouns are sometimes used in AE in the Kimberleys: yupala shut up first; mintupela fall down dere la back ('You guys shut up first; the two of us fall down there in the back').

Kriol adjectives normally occur with the suffix -wan or -bala: Ai bin luk dubala bigwan. 'I saw two big ones.' AE in rural areas usually adds one to adjectives which follow the noun: we get five sheeps fat one. Numerals and adjectives in AE in the central and east Kimberleys may have the suffix -pala or -pela; in other areas the form -fella occurs mainly with numerals and pronouns.

The Kriol prepositions la and langa are used to indicate a variety of locational relationships: Imin dirriwu la riba. 'He dived into the river.' AE in the Kimberleys uses la or longa for a variety of locational relationships in addition to the English prepositions: 'e did kickim with the foot la head. Kriol uses garra to express the relationship 'with': Wi bin siyim garra orla kid. 'We saw her with her children.' AE in the Kimberleys also uses got or gotta to express 'with': we always play got blocks.

Past tense in Kriol is indicated by the use of bin: Melabat bin dagat. 'We ate.' AE in the Kimberleys, in some desert regions and along the northwest coast use bin as the regular marker of past tense: after that, nurse bin come in and give us good hiding. Children from camps around Alice Springs often use bin for the past tense in contrast to the other children who use the English inflection.

Kriol marks transitivity by the suffix -im or one of its variants: Olabat bin kilim gowana. 'They killed a goanna.' In AE there is a strong tendency in the Kimberleys to mark transitivity by the suffix -im: we seeim buffalo got big horn.

Continuous aspect is indicated in Kriol with the suffix -bat: Olabat bin kukumbat yem. 'They were cooking yams.' Some AE speakers in the Kimberleys distinguish continuous from non-continuous aspect through the use of the suffix -bat: 'e bin tellimbat R. to go in that place E. bin drown '[he] kept telling R. to go to the place where E. went under.'

Future tense is indicated in Kriol by garra or gona [gona is not used in the Fitzroy Valley dialect]: Ai garra kukum dempa. 'I will cook the damper.' In AE in the Kimberleys and Alice Springs, gotta occurs interchangeably with gonna to express future tense: an' mela new teacher gotta come ('and our new teacher will come').

Existential constructions in Kriol use i garra or dei garra, among others, to form existential clauses: I garra wan big eligeida la riba. 'There is a big saltwater crocodile in the river.' AE mainly in the northern areas uses 'e got to form the existential: 'e got plen'y banana tree dere.

Kriol forms yes-no questions by adding a special question intonation to a statement construction, often adding a question tag as well: Imin go tharrei, indit? 'He went that way, didn't he?' AE in the northern and desert regions frequently forms yes-no questions by adding a special question intonation to a statement construction, often adding the query word eh: He can walk to Newry, eh?

The features described in the foregoing are summarized below.

SUMMARY OF FEATURES COMMON TO KRIOL AND ABORIGINAL ENGLISH			
Feature	Kriol form	AE form	AE location
possessive	<b>fo, blanga</b>	<b>for belong</b>	Kimberleys Kimberleys, northern area
determiners	<b>wan, wanbala</b>	<b>one</b>	all areas
pronouns	<b>im, i</b>	<b>he, 'e</b>	all areas
adjectives	<b>dual/plural -wan -bala</b>	<b>[same] one</b>	Kimberleys rural areas
prepositions	<b>langa garra</b>	<b>pala, pela longa gotta</b>	Kimberleys Kimberleys Kimberleys
past tense	<b>bin</b>	<b>bin</b>	Kimberleys, desert, northwest coast
transitivity	<b>-im</b>	<b>-im</b>	Kimberleys
continuous aspect	<b>-bat</b>	<b>-bat</b>	Kimberleys
future tense	<b>garra</b>	<b>gotta</b>	Kimberleys
existential	<b>i garra</b>	<b>'e got</b>	Kimberleys, northern area
questions	<b>[intonation tag]</b>	<b>[same]</b>	Kimberleys, desert, northern area

#### ONE GRAND ABORIGINAL ENGLISH SYSTEM?

All of the varieties of speech discussed in the foregoing sections should, according to some views (e.g. Bickerton 1975), be treated as forming a single linear continuum. To consider them to be dialects of the one language, let alone three distinct 'languages', would be



tantamount to arbitrarily and inaccurately parcelling up a unitary system. A unitary approach, however, takes no account of social and cultural correlates or the historical origins of the varieties of speech. To analyze such a diverse range of varieties as a single unidimensional continuum which totally ignores the sociolinguistic and historical components of the situation "cannot begin to do it justice" (Haynes 1979:338).

I have already noted that the historical development of Kriol has no direct connection with many of the varieties of AE spoken in Australia today. The origins of varieties of English-related speech of Australian Aborigines are so diversified that it would be impossible to identify a single creole as the basilect. The only link between Kriol and Torres Strait Creole and all varieties of AE is that they are all based on English as their lexifier language and any decreolizing influence they undergo is therefore in the direction of English. To consider the linguistic variation of Kriol, Torres Strait Creole and all varieties of AE as forming one synchronic, dynamic system results in the abstraction of a purely linguistic system which has little direct relation with actual "flesh-and-blood speakers", to use Bickerton's (1975:203) term.

It should be pointed out, however, that Kriol does have direct connections with some varieties of AE. As a result, if consideration is restricted to the Kriol speech community rather than encompassing the Australian-wide English-related Aboriginal speech community, then the question needs to be asked: Does not the total variety of English-related speech of Aborigines within the Kriol speech community form a single dynamic system which consists of a unified linear continuum connecting Kriol at the basilectal end and SAE at the acrolectal end? Before that question can be answered, however, the term 'Kriol speech community' must be clarified.

#### THE KRIOL 'SPEECH COMMUNITY'

There is much disagreement among researchers as to the meaning and usefulness of notions such as 'speech community' and 'language community'. Rigsby and Sutton (1982) especially question the appropriateness of applying such terms to Aboriginal Australia, claiming that they only obscure analyses and descriptions. They argue that what should be used are the primary social anthropological terms that appropriately characterize the social structure and organization, whether traditional or not, of the people being described. Kriol, however, is spoken by such a diversity of traditional groupings of Aborigines that none of the anthropological terms typically applied to Aboriginal society, such as 'land-holding group' and 'local residence group', are broad enough to cover the area in which Kriol is in use. Even the use of the term 'community' in the Australian Aboriginal linguistic context is questioned by Rigsby and Sutton (1982:13) because of the "denotative and connotative baggage of its more general social science definition".

According to Himes (1968), the concept of community in social science has two different although related emphases. Some social scientists employ the term to refer to an area of consensus and a field of communication. In this usage, a community is a psycho-social field structure which both facilitates and harmonizes social action. Other social scientists employ the term to refer to a definite human collectivity located within a delimitable geographical area. Himes (1968:150) formulates a working definition that fuses these two emphases into a single statement:

The concept community refers to a functionally interdependent human collectivity, residing and acting within a delimitable geographic area, persisting through time, sharing culture that establishes an area of consensus, and maintaining systems of communication and organized activities.

An eclectic definition such as Himes' is not without problems in North Australia. If the focus were upon the delimitable geographic area, many communities could be identified by their 'gazetted' physical boundaries. If the focus were upon shared culture and common consensus, two communities which would cut across most geographically defined communities would be identifiable very quickly: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

It is precisely because of conflicting applications that some researchers argue that the term community should not be used at all. The term is, however, a useful one in describing certain major social groupings within the area in which Kriol is spoken provided that a workable definition may be found.

In its popular usage by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the area in which Kriol is spoken, the term community normally refers to a geographically definable collectivity of people. The whole of North Australia is sparsely populated. Taken together, the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia cover some five and a half million square kilometres with a total population of just under three and a half million. The three capital cities account for more than fifty percent of that population, resulting in a population density in the 'outback' of about one person per every three square kilometres. Virtually all of the outback population live in geographically delimited communities. Many of these communities are gazetted, some with town development plans directing their physical development. All of them have names and are recognized as basically independent communities by members of not only the community itself but surrounding communities as well. It is in this sense that I primarily use the term community in this book, i.e. to refer to a geographically delimitable and identifiable collectivity of people.

### Aboriginal Community

In North Australia the term community is used in a further, more specific sense. It often refers specifically to an Aboriginal settlement in contrast to an incorporated town. Following this colloquial usage, the second way in which I use the term in this book is to refer to a residential collectivity of Aboriginal people in a delimitable locale. Such a community may be an isolated Aboriginal settlement, but it may also be a community within a community.

The common element in both uses of the term community is delimitable locale. When the distinction between the two uses is significant, I refer to the first as simply 'community' while specifying the second as 'Aboriginal community'. In many cases the two are the same; in a few cases there are several Aboriginal communities within the one wider community.

Part of my reason for defining community primarily in terms of locale is that the site of a community serves as a focus of psycho-social orientation. Berndt (1961:17) points out that language and locality "are sometimes taken as referring in combination to 'tribal' affiliation".

One aspect of this affiliation is the consideration of a specific locale as 'home'. Among Kriol speakers there is a very strong tie with the community in which a person grows up. When a Kriol speaker moves away from the community in which he grew up, he still maintains a close link with that community psychologically. Although he may be away physically for many years, he will still identify as being from that community. He sees the community, however, not in terms of the man-made structures, but rather in terms of the locale. He identifies with the kantri or land on which the community is located. This becomes particularly clear when the community in which a person grew up is no longer in existence. Only the land on which the community was once located remains and the socio-psychological tie the person has with it. It should be pointed out, however, that the Kriol speaker's notion of 'home' is not limited to the kantri in which he grew up, but is often expanded to embrace the larger stretch of kantri in which he may reside in later years (cf. Berndt 1961:21).

### The Problem of 'Speech Community'

The term 'speech community', which has been extensively used in the sociolinguistic literature, is just as difficult to define as is the term community in general. Silverstein (1972) identifies three significant parameters that are useful in defining two basic types of speech communities. The first parameter, taken from Meillet (1926), is the intention to speak the same language. Members of a community have the feeling or 'know' that they speak the same language. The second parameter, taken from Bloomfield (1933), is the sharing of a common grammar by members of a social group. The third parameter, also taken from Bloomfield (1933), is the interaction of a group of people by means of speech. This third parameter does not require a shared grammar.

A community in Silverstein's (1972:46) framework is considered to be a 'language community' when the first two parameters are present, i.e. people consider themselves to speak the same language and they share substantially the same grammar. Where these two parameters are absent but communicative interaction nevertheless takes place, the community is a 'speech community'. This distinction between language community and speech community is motivated by the parallel distinction between language, which is a cultural and mental phenomenon, and speech, which is a behavioural and actional phenomenon (cf. Rigsby and Sutton 1982:13).

We have seen that community as defined primarily in terms of shared culture and consensus cuts across the boundaries of geographical community. Similarly, language community and speech community as defined by Silverstein also cut across geographical community. The majority of the Aboriginal population in most of the geographical communities in the area in which Kriol is spoken would form, in Silverstein's terms, a (Kriol) language community. Similarly, the non-Aboriginal people in all of those communities would form an (English) language community. Communication between the two groups would then form the basis of a speech community. Most geographical communities, all regions of the area in which Kriol is spoken, and the whole area itself could form speech communities of various levels. Indeed, at the highest level, the whole of Australia could be considered to form a speech community. Going the other direction, within a Kriol language community there would also be traditional language communities. Community defined in terms of speech thus lacks specificity and hence usefulness.

In this book I will therefore avoid the use of terms such as speech community, language community and linguistic community. Instead, I will talk about speech and language in the context of primarily geographically definable communities and areas. In respect of the latter, it is helpful to describe the global aspects of the use of Kriol in terms of three types of linguistic areas which have relatively definable boundaries (Laycock 1979:92):

(1) 'communication area' is the area in which a speaker can still manage to communicate by the use of any languages he knows;

(2) 'language currency area' is the area in which a single language is effective for communication purposes; and

(3) 'language area' is the area in which a particular language is the first language learnt and/or is the primary language of the majority of the population.

### Kriol Communication Area

The communication area for Kriol speakers varies from speaker to speaker, depending upon the individual's linguistic knowledge and ability. Many Kriol speakers are fluent speakers of fairly standard English. For them the communication area is essentially the English-speaking world, and indeed some have travelled overseas. It should be mentioned, however, that some Kriol speakers who can speak English fluently restrict their potential communication area through shyness or lack of confidence in their performance of the non-Aboriginal social graces. When placed in a 'foreign' environment, which does not necessarily mean an overseas environment, they 'refuse' to speak. This same non-communication can also take place in their home communities in the presence of non-Aboriginal Australian who are not sensitive to cross-cultural communication problems.

The communication area is also enlarged or restricted for individual Kriol speakers depending upon their knowledge of traditional Aboriginal languages. This is especially so regarding the northeast Arnhem Land languages and the Desert languages. A few Kriol speakers have enlarged their communication area through knowledge of languages other than English and Aboriginal languages. For example, a Kriol speaker employed by the Main Roads Department in Western Australia as a grader driver learnt to speak Greek from the Greek grader drivers he worked with. Such knowledge, however, is rare.

### Kriol Language Currency Area

In talking about the language currency area of Kriol, one needs to add some restrictions to the definition proposed in the foregoing section.

All Aboriginal communities and virtually all Kriol speakers have some interaction with non-Aboriginal people. For many individuals this may, in the main, be limited to the checkout person in a store and health sister at a clinic. For the community as such, interaction is often via the community council with government officers relating to the financing and servicing of the community, e.g. personnel from the departments of Aboriginal Affairs, Community Development, Welfare, Social Security, Health, Education and Essential Services. Council members and employees

are usually involved with direct communication with these non-Aboriginal persons. Children in most communities are also in contact with non-Aboriginal people, i.e. school teachers. In addition, most Aboriginal communities have non-Aboriginal residents in or adjacent to the community.

The majority of non-Aboriginal people who have interaction with Kriol speakers do not speak Kriol, and Kriol is not effective for communication with most of them. Neither is English an effective medium that non-Aboriginal people can use for communication with the majority of the Aboriginal residents of many of these communities.

It is impossible, then, to say that Kriol has a language currency area if the definition of the term is interpreted as being the area in which a single language is effective for communication purposes for everyone in the area. To be applied to Kriol the term needs to be qualified by restricting the communication purposes to between and with Aboriginal residents in the area.

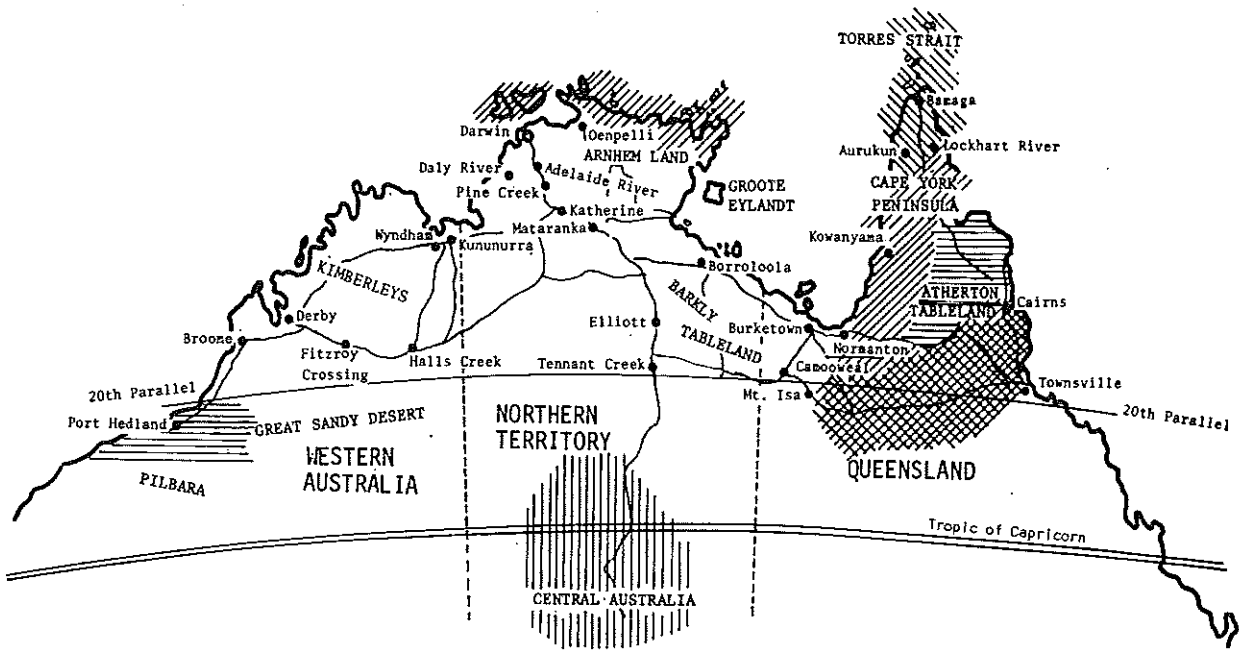
A qualification should probably also be added to the term 'a single language'. In some Aboriginal communities Kriol is understood but not spoken by the residents. A Kriol speaker visiting such a community can speak Kriol to residents and be understood. The speech of the community in many cases is a creole or a variety of AE which the Kriol speaker may not be able to speak but does understand (Sandefur et al 1982). In such a situation, two languages may be used in a conversation, but the Kriol speaker is able to communicate by speaking only Kriol. The qualification, then, is that the Kriol speaker need only speak a single language in order to communicate.

With the above two qualifications, the language currency area for Kriol, as shown on Map 2, can be said to be most of that area north of the 20th parallel. The evidence indicates that Queensland communities south and east of Mt. Isa are excluded from the Kriol currency area. The situation with communities in the northern half of Cape York Peninsula and in the islands in the Torres Strait is unconfirmed, although most are presumed to be excluded. There is some unconfirmed evidence to indicate that some of the communities on the islands off the north coast of the Northern Territory and in northeast Arnhem Land as well as some of the Cape York communities may be included in the Kriol currency area. Some of the Aboriginal population of communities on the Atherton Tableland and northeast coast of Queensland as well as the northern Pilbara area of Western Australia appear to understand Kriol, but as a whole these areas are not included in the Kriol currency area. Unconfirmed reports indicate that much of central Australia, however, may be included in the Kriol currency area.






### Kriol Language Area

The Kriol language area, as is understood at present, is shown in detail on Map 3. Throughout the area shown on the map, Kriol functions as a primary language in most Aboriginal communities. Communities in which Kriol is not a primary language are not included on the map, although they are physically located within the general geographical area the Kriol language area covers. It should also be noted that not everyone in all of the communities in the Kriol language area is a Kriol speaker. Non-Aboriginal residents are, of course, mostly speakers of standard or non-standard Australian English. Further, there are many Aborigines who are not Kriol speakers, especially in the towns (e.g. Wyndham and Darwin). These non-Kriol-speaking Aborigines will be discussed later.

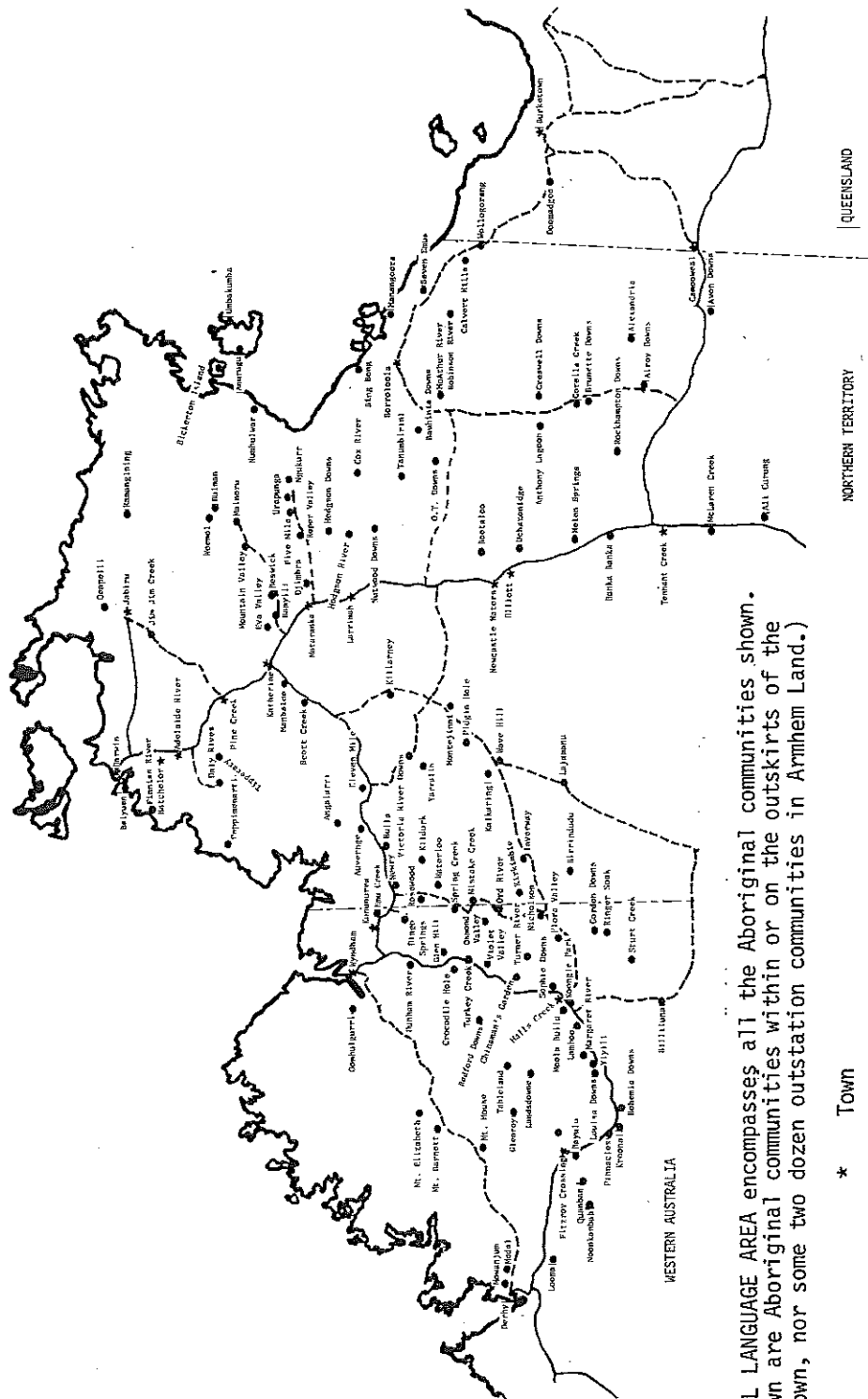
# MAP 2- THE KRIOL LANGUAGE CURRENCY AREA



The KRIOL LANGUAGE CURRENCY AREA includes virtually all the white area north of the 20th parallel. Shadings represent areas of uncertainty as follows:

-  Evidence indicates is excluded.
-  Unconfirmed, but presumed to be excluded.
-  Unconfirmed, but evidence indicates is included.
-  Unconfirmed, but reports indicate may be included.
-  Individual knowledge of Kriol, but communities excluded.

# MAP 3 - THE KRIOL LANGUAGE AREA



The KRIOL LANGUAGE AREA encompasses all the Aboriginal communities shown. (Not shown are Aboriginal communities within or on the outskirts of the towns shown, nor some two dozen outstation communities in Arnhem Land.)

- \* Town
- Aboriginal Community
- Main Highway
- Secondary Highway

As Map 3 indicates, there are over 250 Aboriginal communities in the Kriol language area. These communities exhibit much diversity in their makeup. They range from isolated communities of less than two dozen people to 'aggregate' communities with a combined population in excess of a thousand. Some of the smaller isolated communities have no resident Europeans. On the other hand, some of the Aboriginal communities are part of a wider town-type community of which the majority of the population is non-Aboriginal. Some Aboriginal communities are run by an elected council, while other communities are run by a 'self-appointed' individual, in many cases an Aboriginal, but in some cases a non-Aboriginal person. Some communities have government services such as school and clinic provided, whereas others do not.

In spite of the great diversity exhibited by the communities in the Kriol language area, it is possible to categorize the communities on the basis of their origin and development. Such a categorization helps to highlight major differences in the social structure of the communities — differences that have an influence on the use of Kriol. To a degree this categorization also correlates with the major patterns of movement of people between communities and their networks of communication. It should be noted, however, that rapid changes are presently occurring in many of these communities. In some cases, communities have undergone complete restructuring; in others, whole communities have been moved to a new location.

There are four main types of communities in the Kriol language area: (a) cattle stations, (b) missions and settlements, (c) outstation or homeland centres, and (d) towns. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

### Cattle Stations

With the entrance of the non-Aboriginal people taking up residence on the land, settled communities of Aborigines quickly developed. The first such communities were mainly in association with cattle stations beginning in the late 1870s. Every station utilized Aborigines as stockmen, in the first four or five decades often attempting to eradicate the 'wild blacks' who could not be 'pacified' and 'harnessed' as labourers. Typically, relatives of the Aboriginal stockmen took up residence near the station homestead and were given rations by the station, with some of the women working as domestics. This led to the development of today's cattle station communities.

The cattle station communities are typically small, ranging from a single extended family to several hundred residents. With few exceptions the vast majority of the population on cattle stations is Aboriginal. English-speaking non-Aboriginal people have always been numerically a minor part of the population, although until recently they have always held a dominating position over the Aborigines. With so few English speakers there has been little effective influence exerted on the Aborigines as a whole to acquire SAE.

In general the Aborigines on cattle stations are mainly of one or two traditional language groups, and they originally tended to use Kriol (or its pidgin forerunner) for communication with outsiders, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, rather than among themselves. As a result, creolization in these communities tended to take place at a relatively late date. As mentioned earlier and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, social changes brought about by World War Two and the



government assimilation policies in the early 1950s provided a major impetus for creolization. Two of the main factors affecting creolization were an increasing participation in cattle droving during the 1950s and into the 1960s as well as increased efforts at providing schooling for the children. The result is that in a fairly wide area of North Australia, middle-aged and older Aborigines speak a traditional Aboriginal language as their first language and Kriol as their second, whereas the children now speak Kriol as their first language, usually with a passive knowledge of the traditional language (McConvell 1982:66).

Cattle station communities in general continued to be given rations by and provide a labour pool for the non-Aboriginal-owned and operated stations until the late 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s several events took place which significantly altered Aboriginal community life on these stations. The first was the 1967 Referendum which gave citizenship to Aborigines. In conjunction with this was the granting of award wages and social security benefits to Aborigines. Aboriginal stockmen could no longer be employed for the price of 'handouts'. Added to this was the slump in the cattle industry in the early 1970s. The combined result was that many cattle stations could no longer afford to employ Aboriginal stockmen. Many of the owners then did not wish to maintain an Aboriginal community presence on the station.

In some cases the Aboriginal community remained on the station maintaining their old lifestyle. At the other extreme, however, some Aboriginal communities were physically forced off the station. With the additional factor of the move for Aboriginal land rights in the 1970s, many of the Aboriginal communities on cattle stations are now situated on a block of land excised from the pastoral lease. Aboriginal communities which are not located on their own land are generally not officially recognized as communities by the government. In several cases, some of the Aborigines have chosen to remain on the non-Aboriginal-owned cattle station rather than move to the newly established independent Aboriginal community. This has resulted in the existence of two Aboriginal communities in relatively close proximity (e.g. Louisa Downs and Yiyili). In a few cases, the Aborigines purchased the cattle station outright and are now running it as their own station (e.g. Noonkanbah and Dunham River). In virtually all cases, direct contact and domination by English-speaking non-Aboriginal people has diminished during the last decade, thus reducing exposure of Kriol speakers to SAE and decreasing its influence on their use of Kriol.

Until the last decade or so relatively few cattle station communities had direct access to schooling. Today, however, many have a small school provided by the government, particularly in the Northern Territory. A few have established their own independent community schools (e.g. Noonkanbah and Yiyili). The motivation for starting independent schools has varied. Most have been started, at least in part, in an effort to promote traditional language and culture maintenance. At least one such school, however, was started in an effort to reduce the negative influence of town life upon the children.<sup>30</sup> Parents in cattle station communities without schools who desire their children to 'get an education' normally send them to the larger communities, in most cases towns, for schooling. Children who are sent away often undergo a degree of social reorientation. They move out of a more tightly controlled and predominantly traditional-oriented community into a more permissive and promiscuous European-oriented environment. The effect this has on their speech will be briefly discussed in the next chapter.

In many respects, much of the population of cattle station communities has tended to be transient. There has typically always been a seasonal movement of people to and from cattle stations. During the dry season when the cattle were being worked, there would be a high population on the station. During the wet season, on the other hand, when cattle work was at a minimum, a sizeable portion of the population would shift to the towns or missions and settlements.

### Missions and Settlements

The first missions in the Kriol language area were established some three or four decades after the first cattle stations, with government settlements generally starting to come into operation in the 1940s. The motivation of the church bodies and that of the government in developing these communities differed considerably. Missions were started for humanitarian and evangelistic reasons, whereas government settlements were part of the implementation of the assimilation policy of the 1940s. Missions, in general, were personalized institutions with a large degree of stability due to continuity of staff, whereas settlements tended to be much more impersonal with a high turnover of government staff. Not only were there differences between the two types of communities, but there were also differences between missions run by different church bodies.

In spite of differences in motivation, however, the end results of mission-originated and government-originated development were similar in many ways. Missions and settlements both resulted in the collecting together of Aboriginal people of diverse tribal and language backgrounds. These communities were operated on more institutionalized lines than cattle station communities, with a non-Aboriginal administrator functioning in many ways as an autocratic ruler, although in practice this varied according to the individual administrator. In some of these communities in the past, there were legal restrictions on the personal liberties of Aborigines, with, for example, limitations being placed on movement to and from the community, or on the right to own dogs or guns, or even to wail at funerals (Rowley 1972c:48-61).

Missions and settlements have provided schooling and health care and served as sources of labour for nearby cattle stations. They have been highly institutionalized and have resulted in extensive social restructuring. In most cases hostels or dormitories were operated for children in school, with the children sometimes being separated from their parents while attending the English-only school. Partly due to the multilingual mixture of the population of such communities and the effects of the dormitory system, creolization in missions and settlements has tended to occur relatively soon after the establishment of the communities.

Most missions and settlements have recently become independent Aboriginal communities which are run by all-Aboriginal councils, although most councils retain a non-Aboriginal advisor who sometimes in practice functions much like the old administrator. These communities are generally the larger of the Aboriginal communities, with populations of up to a thousand, and most continue to function as a resource centre for the smaller communities around them.

## Outstation or Homeland Centres

The most recently established of the Aboriginal communities are the relatively small outstation or homeland centres which began developing during the 1970s.<sup>31</sup> These communities have grown out of the movement of Aborigines at mission and settlement communities back to their own country. The resident population of outstation communities, which nationally averages thirty (Coombs et al 1980:16), is usually of a single traditional language group and often consists of an extended family. These communities have a fairly traditional orientation.

The physical amenities of outstation communities are typically very limited. Most of them lack power, running water and adequate housing. In many cases there is no ready access to medical help or supplies. Some outstations in practice function only during the dry season, due in part to inaccessibility during the wet season. Relatively few outstations have a school, and of those which do, it is typically a one teacher school with the teaching being done by an Aboriginal resident of the outstation in a bough-shade 'classroom'.

One would expect traditional language to be strong in outstation communities because of their traditional orientation and single-traditional-language-group composition. Traditional language does, indeed, appear to be more viable in most of these communities than in the larger 'multilingual-mixture' communities. Nevertheless, Kriol still functions as a primary language in these communities, in part because a segment of the population typically speak Kriol as their mother tongue and have only a passive knowledge of the traditional language. More will be said about this situation in the next chapter.

## Towns

There are some twenty towns in the Kriol language area. Most of the towns grew out of what might be called historical accidents rather than being initially planned as towns. Halls Creek and Pine Creek, for example, developed as gold rush centres, Adelaide River and Katherine grew out of telegraph stations, and Mataranka and Larrimah were progressively the end of the railway line and functioned as railway maintenance depots.

A few towns, however, were planned and gazetted as towns from their virtual beginning. Wyndham, for example, was planned because of its suitable location as a port for the east Kimberleys. Not all towns, however, flourished. Urapunga was gazetted in 1887 as a town but never occupied. Maranboy was a flourishing mining town in the early 1900s but has since dwindled to a lone police station.

The origin of the oldest town in the Kriol language area, Darwin, goes back to a settlement at Fort Dundas in 1824. This settlement was soon abandoned and two other unsuccessful attempts were made, at Raffles Bay in 1827 and Port Essington in 1838, before the settlement of Palmerston was successfully established at Port Darwin in 1868.<sup>32</sup>

The origins of most of the other towns go back to the late 1800s or early 1900s, although a few of the towns are of more recent origin. Kununurra, for example, was established in the early 1960s as the service centre for the construction of the Ord River dam project and Jabiru in the early 1970s as a uranium mining town.

Regardless of the causes of their establishment, towns were, and in the most part still are, essentially European communities, with the vast majority of the European resident population in the Kriol language area being concentrated in them. The running of the towns and the amenities they offer are essentially European. In addition, towns can be distinguished from the other types of communities in that towns are public places while the other communities have restricted access.

Most towns, although they developed as centres of European activity, have attracted a resident Aboriginal population. In a few towns (e.g. Halls Creek), the Aboriginal population now outnumbers the European population. In spite of this, however, the town continues to be run by and largely for Europeans.

The resident Aboriginal population of towns today is of three major types. Most Aborigines live in recognized Aboriginal communities within the town. In virtually all cases these communities were originally gazetted as Aboriginal reserves within or on the outskirts of the town, and Aborigines were required without choice to live in them. During the past two decades, however, the reserve system has changed. In most cases the non-Aboriginal-administered reserves have become semi-independent Aboriginal-run communities, the best known of which is probably Bagot in Darwin. These ex-reserves are now in essence socially, administratively and physically autonomous Aboriginal communities within the larger town community. In a few cases the reserves have been completely closed and the residents shifted to other locations.

The second type of resident Aboriginal population in towns is represented by people who live among the non-Aboriginal sector of the town community. They live scattered throughout the town in housing divisions alongside the non-Aboriginal population. In towns where reserves have been completely closed, the government policy has in general been to shift the Aboriginal residents of those reserves into such town housing. The attitude of these people towards Kriol will be discussed in a later section.

In very general terms, the residents of Aboriginal communities within the towns tend to be more traditionally oriented and less fluent in English than are the Aboriginal residents living throughout the town. In most cases the Aboriginal community residents make up the core of the Kriol speakers of the town. They also tend to be the main group that has a knowledge of traditional language. The Aboriginal residents living throughout the town in town housing, in contrast, are mostly of mixed descent and in general are not as likely to be Kriol speakers as are the Aboriginal community residents. It should be noted, however, that these are very broad generalizations.

The third type of resident Aboriginal population in some towns is that often referred to as fringe dwellers.<sup>33</sup> All towns have a number of camping sites which are used by Aborigines. Most of these sites are named and recognized as 'belonging' to specific groups of Aborigines. While most of these sites are used on an 'on-and-off' basis, others are permanently occupied. A fringe dweller is an Aboriginal who regards a named camping site as his home and is regarded by the others as a member of the group that 'owns' that site. Fringe dwellers do not normally have regular employment in town but, at least in Darwin, have established a local economy of their own by providing services to visiting Aborigines (Sansom 1980). The residents of fringe camps are typically 'polyglot', speaking AE, Kriol and in many cases several traditional languages. The language for public use in fringe camps is AE or Kriol, with the 'unauthorized' use of traditional language being regarded as severe transgression.

There is a fourth type of Aboriginal population in towns, but this is a transient population. The towns function as supply and service centres for other communities in the region. Towns are the only communities which offer a full range of amenities. As a result, residents of the outlying communities are constantly coming in and out of town. Many of these transients stay with relatives, either in Aboriginal communities within the town or in town housing, when they come to town. Some of them, however, especially those who come from 'dry' communities to the town to drink, tend to stay in fringe camps on the edge of town. Sansom (1980:9) makes a distinction between 'fringe clients' and 'fringe campers'. Fringe clients attach themselves to established fringe dwellers and are thus afforded protection and companionship, whereas fringe campers camp independently on unoccupied camping sites. The language of these transient people depends on their normal place of residence, which in most cases is one of the Kriol-speaking communities.

#### KRIOL, ABORIGINAL ENGLISH AND ENGLISH — ONE SYSTEM?

It is now possible to return to the mainstream of the argument as to whether or not Kriol, AE and English form a single unilinear continuum system. It was concluded in an earlier section that they could not be considered to form such a system if all varieties of English-related speech of Aborigines throughout Australia were to be included. The question remains, however, as to whether or not they form such a single system if consideration is restricted to the Aboriginal residents of the communities in the Kriol language area as described in the foregoing sections. In other words, within the Kriol language area, do all varieties of English-related Aboriginal speech form a single English system, or do they form several co-existent, albeit related, systems?

As was pointed out in chapter one, some writers (notably Bickerton) reject the concept of co-existent systems. They find it difficult, however, to completely get away from the idea of the continuum linking two systems, namely "the basilectal system" and "the system of standard English" (Bickerton 1975:59). The basilectal system of a creole continuum is the "original system" or the "creole language" which "probably" contained "considerable variation" itself. This original creole system in the case of Kriol is basically the so-called "hypothasised creole mesolect", to use Rumsey's (1983:177) terms, described by Sandefur (1979) and Hudson (1983a), or what Kriol speakers themselves often refer to as "proper" Kriol. Some of the variation within this original creole system will be discussed in the next two sections.

It is well known that the rate of decreolization may vary from speech community to speech community as well as within a single speech community from time to time depending on the social context (Bickerton 1975:131-132). In both the Black American and Guyanese communities, for example, creolization itself had taken place by the early 1700s. Decreolization began to take place by the mid-1700s in the Black American community, but not until the mid-1800s in the Guyanese community.

In the Kriol language area, although pidginization began to take place in most regions in the 1800s, creolization has only taken place during the 1900s. Kriol, therefore, is a relatively 'young' creole. In the Roper River region, creolization took place at the turn of the century; in most other regions within the Kriol language area, it has only taken place since World War Two. As mentioned earlier, many mother-tongue

Kriol speakers are fluent second-language English speakers. If their English fluency is the result of decreolization, then decreolization from the basilect to the acrolect has taken place in the Kriol language area within one generation. Such an interpretation of the situation is dependent, however, upon the acceptance of the second-language-learners' interlanguage continuum and the decreolization continuum as being one and the same.

As was discussed in chapter one, writers such as Schumann (1978b) and Anderson (1979) argue that the processes involved in decreolization and second language acquisition [SLA] are analogous. Bickerton (1975:176) likewise accepts the parallelism of the SLA continuum and the decreolization continuum, claiming that the points of difference between them "seem to stem from extra-linguistic rather than linguistic factors". On a purely linguistic basis, then, the SLA continuum and the decreolization continuum are purported to be identical. In such a case, decreolization becomes redundant.

If one insists on the synonymy of SLA and decreolization with speakers whose first-language is Kriol, one must also accept the same synonymy for speakers whose first-language is a traditional Aboriginal language. In such a case, the interlanguage described by Elwell (1979), which links Yolngu Matha with SAE, results in a Yolngu Matha system that is parallel to a creole system as proposed by Bickerton. If the basilect in such a creole system is, as Bickerton claims, "in some meaningful sense" English, then the basilect in the parallel Yolngu Matha system must also be some sort of English. To avoid such an unacceptable conclusion, extra-linguistic factors must be taken into account and the two processes considered analogous rather than synonymous.

I will seek to show in the following section that the variation linking Kriol and English is the result of an SLA process rather than a decreolization process. The end product of SLA is control of two languages by an individual. The end product of decreolization, by contrast, is always a social community-based process: the loss of one language coinciding with the ascendance of another language. My main argument rests on the fact that Kriol speakers who learn English show few signs of losing their own language.

### Interlanguage Rather Than Decreolization

As was discussed in chapter one, Bickerton (1975) divides creole speakers in Guyana into single-range speakers and split-range speakers. Such a division is significant in the context of Kriol, particularly if Kriol is (in my view, inaccurately) considered to be the basilect of a continuum that consists of AE as the mesolect and SAE as the acrolect. Unlike Guyanese speakers, however, Kriol speakers of both groups shift between lects according to changing circumstances in the social situation, the most significant determinants being the ethnic identity and language background of the hearer.

The vast majority of split-range speakers are mother-tongue speakers of Kriol who also speak English or upper-mesolectal AE, which they learnt as a second-language, usually through schooling. These people still speak their mother-tongue, although many non-Kriol speakers are convinced otherwise. The most important speech-usage rule in operation among Kriol speakers, which will be discussed in the next chapter, is 'English with non-Aboriginal people, not Kriol'. As a result, Kriol is seldom used by split-range speakers in the presence of non-Aboriginal

people. When it is used, however, non-Aboriginal people often think the Aboriginal person is speaking a traditional language because of the unintelligibility to non-Kriol speakers of fluently spoken Kriol.

Such split-level speakers, in a framework such as Bickerton (1975) proposes, would be genuine bi-dialectals, for they switch between the basilect and acrolect (or something approaching these extremes) without touching the mesolect. Note, however, that these Kriol speakers have 'passed through' the mesolectal phase by means of an SLA process rather than a decreolization process. If these two processes are distinct, and if the SLA process operates on speakers of one language while learning a second language, albeit a related language, then these speakers are bilingual rather than simply bi-dialectal. Socially this distinction is supported by a large number of split-range Kriol speakers who consider Kriol to be an Aboriginal language in contrast to the a European language, English.

With single-range speakers the situation is more complex. These speakers can be subdivided into two groups: mother-tongue Kriol speakers and second-language Kriol speakers. Most second-language Kriol speakers are older people who could technically be considered to speak a pidgin from which Kriol developed, since they were speaking it before creolization (primarily in terms of the acquisition of mother-tongue speakers) took place in their community.<sup>34</sup> Some of these people speak Kriol fluently and are indistinguishable from mother-tongue speakers, while others speak it very noticeably less fluently. Older people typically consider Kriol to be English.

Second-language Kriol speakers, however, are not restricted to older people. A number of mother-tongue speakers of traditional languages have learnt Kriol as a second language well after creolization took place. For those who do not speak Kriol fluently, the 'Kriol' they speak is, in fact, a traditional-language-to-Kriol interlanguage. Those who speak Kriol fluently, on the other hand, are genuinely bilingual, switching between their traditional language and Kriol. Second-language Kriol speakers may or may not speak AE or English as well.

The other subgroup of single-range Kriol speakers, those who speak Kriol as their mother-tongue, are for the most part younger than the mid-thirties. The output of these single-range speakers varies, but all of their ranges include the 'basilect' (i.e. Kriol). The degree to which their range extends along the 'mesolect' towards the 'acrolect' (i.e. SAE) depends primarily on the effectiveness of their schooling in English. Younger school children generally have not learnt the distinction between Kriol and English, neither socially nor linguistically. During the first few years of their schooling, their Kriol tends to show some genuine signs of decreolization. Around the third or fourth year, however, they generally appear to become aware of the distinction between Kriol and English and their Kriol 'reverts' to more 'proper' Kriol.

There are many older school children who have not yet reached the 'acrolect'. Some of them never will, for there are many school leavers who have 'fossilized' their English somewhere along the 'mesolect'. These speakers cannot make a clear linguistic split between their 'English' and Kriol outputs even though they generally clearly perceive themselves as switching codes between speaking to whites and speaking among themselves.

Note that with none of the above Kriol speakers has the end product of their 'moving up the continuum' resulted in the loss of their Kriol fluency. In this respect the continuum cannot be considered a 'post-creole' or 'decreolization continuum'. Note also that, unlike the Guyanese continuum, the Kriol variety does not represent a 'survival' from a "relatively early stage in the development" of the speech of Aboriginal communities in the Kriol language area. The time scale of 'basilect-to-acrolect' movement is different for each individual speaker and is an SLA process. One cannot speak of a time scale of basilect-to-acrolect movement for the language itself as is the case in the Guyanese continuum.

#### Decreolization: Perimeter Communities and 'Townies'

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it would not be true to say that no decreolization has taken place or is taking place in regard to Kriol. There are two situations in particular in which decreolization may be in operation: in a few 'perimeter communities' near the boundary of the 'Kriol country', and among, as some Aborigines in the northeast Kimberleys refer to them, 'townie' Aborigines.

In several Aboriginal communities in the Kriol language currency area, particularly in Queensland and the far western Kimberleys, there tends to be an AE which contains many Kriol features but is not Kriol itself. At Doomadgee, for example, Kriol prepositions are used by much of the population about half the time, whereas English prepositions are used the rest of the time.<sup>35</sup> Is this evidence that Kriol has decreolized there? The situation has yet to be studied with any depth, but the historical evidence tends to indicate that Kriol never developed there.<sup>36</sup> Instead, it appears that a variety of AE developed from a pidgin (obviously related to those from which Kriol developed) without the intervening stages of creolization and decreolization.

It is more likely that decreolization is taking place among Aborigines, in particular Aborigines of mixed racial descent, who are living in towns (as opposed to Aboriginal communities) in houses interspersed among Europeans. These Aborigines do not, by any means, form an homogeneous group. It is, therefore, very difficult to make any generalizations about them.

Some of these Aborigines in some of the towns, at least until relatively recently, took offense at being called an Aboriginal. In general, such people were, and mostly still are, aspiring to gain acceptance from Europeans and move into the Anglo community socially. Many of them would have nothing (at least openly) to do with traditional Aboriginal society. In company with Europeans, they typically looked down upon 'full-bloods'. 'Pidgin English' (i.e. Kriol) was (and to many, still is) nothing but a deficient and "bastardized" form of English that should be eradicated.

As a result of such attitudes, combined with living in a largely European environment, in some towns Kriol is not used by many townie Aborigines. Many of them cannot speak, and never have spoken, Kriol. In some cases, neither their parents or grandparents on either side of the family have been Kriol speakers. On the other hand, in some towns, the majority of the townies can speak Kriol. For some, it is their mother-tongue. For most townies throughout the Kriol language area, however, a variety of AE appears to be the primary mode of communication, at least among themselves. If true decreolization of Kriol is taking place, it is most likely among these people.



It could be argued, of course, that Kriol is really part of a post-creole continuum even if only a relatively small number of townies have decreolized. The problem here is in determining how many speakers must begin to decreolize before the whole language is considered to have decreolized, a question impossible to answer with certainty. Admittedly, creolization is a process more available to observation than is decreolization. Even so, the number of speakers who are decreolizing is very small compared to the number for whom Kriol, in a sense, is 'creolizing'. In other words, the Kriol-speaking population overall is on the increase. This is primarily due to better health care — the Aboriginal birth rate is high, infant mortality is going down and Kriol speakers are living longer. In addition the number of communities affected by decreolization is relatively small. Out of more than two hundred and fifty Aboriginal communities in which Kriol is a significant language, only half a dozen or so appear to be affected, and only a relatively small portion of their population at that.

It should be noted that townies who speak a variety of AE are not necessarily involved in decreolization. Unlike the Guyanese situation where no speaker's range can touch both ends of the continuum (Bickerton 1975:188), the range of some of the townie speakers appears to extend across the entire continuum. It may be that their ranges are, in fact, discontinuous. Instead of controlling all variation along the continuum, they may be 'tri-lectal', speaking Kriol, a variety of 'mesolectal' AE, as well as fairly standard Australian English. One such speaker, for example, is eleven year old Tina from Halls Creek. She and her two younger sisters, while on a trip to the Northern Territory, made a recording to send to their friends back home. The recording, extracts of which are quoted below, was made in the home and presence of a non-Aboriginal person in an Aboriginal community.<sup>37</sup>

The first extract is typical of the common everyday speech observed to be used by Tina (and her sisters) on most occasions in her home situation. It represents the speech she normally uses with her peers and family in her own home, and contains the 'classic' features of AE as described by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982). In the first extract quoted below, Tina begins by telling her peers back home what she and her sisters (M. and D.) are doing at that moment. After the break in the text, she starts telling them about some disobedient teenage girls.

M. is layin' down here. She just relaxing. Me and D. is sit'n down working hard talking... You know all 'a big big girls. Dey be stupid. Dey don listen to they mother and that...

In observations made of the speech of Tina (and her sisters), there appears to be two main features that trigger a switch to Kriol: a Kriol-speaker listener who cannot switch to AE, and a 'bush' setting or topic. In the extract quoted below, Tina has clearly switched to Kriol. She was telling her story to the same peers as in the first extract, but the topic had switched to a trip out bush. In the extract, the double hyphen [--] represents the lengthened vowel of the durative aspect.<sup>38</sup>

Yu no mibala wi bin go--at langa bush la Benjobo en wibin gidim bi--gismob shugabeg. Ai no bin go. Mai greni bin go en imin bringimbek ful la biliken. Ai bin dagat langa i--m, idimbat, en ai bin idimbat...

('You know, we went out bush to Banjo Bore and we got a lot of wild honey. I didn't go. My grandmother went and she brought back a billycan full [of honey].<sup>39</sup> I ate it, eating, and I was eating...')<sup>40</sup>

The third extract, quoted below, represents Tina's switching to English. The initial trigger was an English storybook which she picked up to read. She followed this by starting to make up her own story. After an interruption she shifted the taperecorder in an attempt to get a candid recording of her aunty, who can only speak English.

Oh, well, I'll read some of this... I'd like to tell you a story about C... She squealed a little bit, but you couldn't hear her... Well, I could just put this [recorder] over here at the door and listen. Aunty Glenys! [laugh] Ah, she didn't want to talk. She just laughed.

One other possible decreolization situation deserves to be mentioned. There are a number of cases of mother-tongue Kriol speakers having 'lost' their language by moving out of 'Kriol country', especially at a young age, and living in a southern European environment for a lengthy period of time. These people no longer have any active recollection of Kriol. They could be considered to have decreolized only if 'memory loss' is equated with decreolization (Samarin 1971:130). Several such speakers who have recently moved back into a Kriol-speaking Aboriginal community have been observed to go through the process of re-learning their mother-tongue as a second language.

### Government Policy Strengthening Kriol

I have tried to show that Kriol on the whole does not appear to be decreolizing and disappearing through merger with English in any Aboriginal communities within the Kriol language area. To the contrary, in some communities its strength as a mother-tongue is increasing. At Numbulwar, for example, where it has been in existence as a second-language for the majority of the population for several decades, it is now gaining mother-tongue speakers at the expense of the traditional language, Nunggubuyu (Harris 1982:50). If decreolization were taking place, it would be expected that the children would be learning English (or at least a variety of speech closer to English than is Kriol) as their mother-tongue rather than Kriol. English is taught to all children in the school, but its effect on Kriol is minimal, resulting not in decreolization but in Kriol-English bilingualism.

One of the significant factors involved in the unintentional spread and strengthening of Kriol has been government policy. From the late 1930s until the early 1970s the Australian Government policy towards Aborigines was one of assimilation, part of the implementation of which was strong efforts at 'anglicizing' the speech of Aborigines. In many cases particular vehemence was directed towards eradicating the so-called deficient pidgin English (i.e. Kriol).

Such policies are now known to have had an effect opposite to that intended. One of the main effects appears to have been to greatly increase creolization, and therefore the spread of Kriol, at the expense of traditional languages. If the policies had been successful in achieving their aims of eliminating or at least significantly weakening the social divisions separating Aborigines and Europeans, widespread decreolization would indeed most likely have set in where creolization had already taken place.

A change in the early 1970s to a self-determination policy and the consequent rise in Aboriginal identity and pride in one's Aboriginal cultural heritage, along with the 'assurance' of separate communities

for Aborigines who desire them, have strengthened the social divisions separating Kriol and English. The new government policies appear to be having a definite opposing effect upon decreolization tendencies. Although only time will tell, it is likely that the tremendous social changes during the last decade, if they continue developing in the direction they are heading, will lend little encouragement to decreolization. I will discuss the effect of government policies upon Kriol in greater detail in chapter four.

#### VARIATION WITHIN KRIOL

It was noted in an earlier section that 'considerable variation' exists within Kriol itself. This variation often appears to Europeans to be very ad hoc. Sharpe (1975:3) comments, for example, that a nursing sister at Ngukurr gave up trying to learn Kriol because it seemed so "very variable, both with different speakers and with the same speaker on different occasions". There is much variation in Kriol, but virtually all of it is systematic and explicable variation.

It would appear best to consider Kriol to be a dynamic continuum system, for Kriol does not consist of "a fixed number of parts which hold invariant relations with one another" (Bickerton 1975:166). Note, however, that I am not referring to Kriol as a post-creole or SLA continuum system. Kriol is a continuum in the sense that there are a number of subsystems within it which are linked together by gradation rather than being discrete; it is dynamic in that it is not a static, invariable language; it is a system in that it does not consist of a random mixing of elements. With this understanding of the continuum nature of Kriol, I will now discuss some of the variation which occurs within the language itself.

There are two basic types of continua which form the Kriol system. These two types could be referred to as dialectal and sociolectal continua. Dialectal continua are those which have essentially arisen through separation caused by physical conditions (Cripper and Widdowson 1975:167). Sociolectal continua, which are the more fundamental of the two types, have been determined by social conditions rather than geographical ones. In this and the following section, I will discuss various aspects of these two types of continua.

#### A Folk-Linguistic Perspective

Some linguists maintain a distinction in North Australia between (adult) pidgin and (youth) creole, in most cases primarily on the basis of second or first language learnt. Jernudd (1971:20) provides us with what is perhaps the most perceptive analysis of the distinction:

The youth Creole is linguistically different from Pidgin. Creole is typologically closer to English than Pidgin since it has a similar phonology (although particularly the intonational characteristics are closer to Pidgin) and a more English vocabulary. Its syntax is basically a Pidgin syntax. Pidgin has preserved an Aboriginal-type phonology... [school children] use Pidgin to adults, Creole among themselves. Their Pidgin is in effect a modified Creole.

The Kriol speaker's own view of the situation, however, tends to be quite different from that of most linguists. In the perception of most

Kriol speakers themselves, and the way I use the term throughout this book, the name of the language is not synonymous with its English etymon. 'Kriol' is not simply 'creole' in a different orthographic system. Rather, the referent includes both '(youth) creole' and '(adult) pidgin'. As far as Kriol speakers themselves are concerned, there is only one language, one basic continuum, and all speech is adjudged in reference to it. In their view, pidgin and creole are not discrete varieties, the one spoken as a second language in contrast to the other which is spoken as a first language. Instead, they are overlapping and interacting sections of the continuum of one language.<sup>41</sup>

According to the Kriol speakers' folk-linguistic system,<sup>42</sup> Kriol speech and features in Kriol speech can be either 'heavy' [hebi] or 'light' [lait] or, with a lot of overlap, 'proper' [prapa]. Their use of these terms is somewhat analogous to the general use of basilect, mesolect and acrolect. Heavy features are typically 'closer' in some respect to traditional Aboriginal languages in contrast to light features, which are typically closer to English.

There are, however, two basic differences that distinguish their use of terms from the technical terminology. Firstly, 'light' does not equate with English; it equates with 'English-like', which is often very far removed from Standard Australian English. Even when it is (almost) identical with English, light Kriol is still Kriol, not English, at least as far as most mother-tongue Kriol speakers are concerned. Secondly, while 'proper' basically equates with mesolect, the distance spanned by the typical mesolect is greater than that spanned by 'proper', for the mesolect normally represents a link between sections of the continuum. In the Kriol folk-linguistic system, 'heavy' and 'light' are almost contiguous first-level ranges, with 'proper' being an overlapping, rather than linking, second-level range. 'Proper' selects features within both first-level ranges instead of being a middle range separating the heavy and light ranges. The relationship of the Kriol system relative to a post-creole continuum is illustrated in the diagram below.

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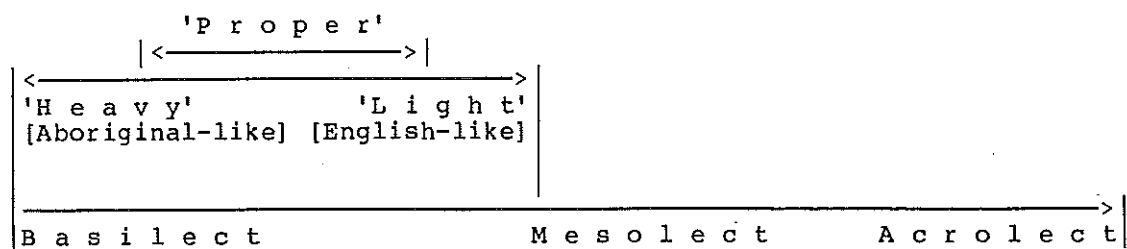
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THE KRIOL SYSTEM RELATIVE TO A POST-CREOLE CONTINUUM

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The clearest example and most common operation of this folk-linguistic system is in regards to the phonological continuum (Sandefur 1979:27-52). It is also this continuum that causes Europeans the most consternation when having to deal closely with Kriol, especially in the context of literacy. The extreme heavy phonological subsystem is virtually identical with that of traditional Aboriginal languages. Typically this means, for example, no affricates, no fricatives, no contrastive voicing with stops, no consonant clusters within a syllable,

but five points of articulation for stops and nasals. The extreme light subsystem, in contrast, includes virtually all the contrasts which occur in English. Note, however, that unlike the heavy subsystem which 'eliminates' all of the non-Aboriginal contrasts of English, the light subsystem does not eliminate the non-English contrasts of the traditional language.

Words composed of sounds which are common to both subsystems remain constant throughout the continuum (e.g. mani 'money' is mani regardless of position on the continuum; it's neither heavy nor light, simply 'proper'). Some sounds move from heavy to light in one step (e.g. heavy brog 'frog' moves directly to light frog). Opinion is divided among Kriol speakers as to which is 'proper' Kriol. In the Ngukurr dialect, which is the oldest and most 'conservative', brog is generally considered 'proper'. A number of sounds, however, take several steps to move from heavy to light (e.g. heavy ding 'thing' becomes ting before becoming light thing; or heavy mawuj 'mouth' becomes mawus before becoming light mauth). The middle form, in both cases, is generally considered 'proper' Kriol.

The last example hints at a complication to be expected, i.e. in most cases sound changes do not operate individually. Rather, several sound changes typically operate implicationally within a given word as one moves along the continuum, resulting in the majority of Kriol words having several alternate pronunciations (e.g. jineg, jinek, sinek, sineik, sneik 'snake'; buludang, bludang, blutang 'blue-tongue lizard'). Typically, one of the middle forms is considered to be 'proper' Kriol, with the others being heavy or light respectively.

Except for the extreme heavy and light variations of some words, most Kriol speakers control virtually all pronunciations in their active everyday speech. No Kriol speaker speaks with a consistently light pronunciation. There are, however, some Kriol speakers who tend to have consistently heavy pronunciation in Kriol. These are mostly mother tongue speakers of a traditional language who speak Kriol as a second language and who speak no (Aboriginal) English.

With few exceptions, every stream of Kriol speech will contain some words with heavy pronunciations and some with light pronunciations. Within the same conversation and even within the same sentence, it is not uncommon for Kriol speakers to use more than one of the pronunciation alternatives. Note, for example, Agnes:

Orait, wi bin silip. Ailibala jei andi gu na, weya taid bin gaman. Dei andi go floting na. Ola bin blotblo--t raidap langa lil ailen. Jeya na. Dei bin flot mowa. Ani naidam imin gaman det bout, det jepani bout. O, bigwan. Imin kam garra - garra bigmob jepani, mijamet biginini la jet bout. Dei bin baindim na. Det jirribala bin baindim jet bout. "Heil Big bout jeya. Melabat go luk." Dei bin - Aisik bin laijat, la im barnga dubala. "Wi go luk. Gaman." Dei bin gu na. Dei bin gu--flotflo--t. Jeya gulijap na jei bin go...

('Alright, we slept. In the morning they were going to go, when the tide came in. They were going to go canoeing then. They paddled right to the little island. They reached it. They canoed more. But it was at night that the boat came, that Japanese boat. Oh, it was big. It came with - with lots of Japanese, just like [a swarm of] children on the boat. Then they discovered it. Those three men discovered that boat.

"Hey! There's a big boat there. Let's go and look." They - Isaac said to his two cousins, "Let's go and look. Come on." Then they went. They paddled. Right up close to it they went...')

Many of the words<sup>43</sup> are invariant (e.g. 'past tense' bin, 'to' langa, 'many' bigmob). With some words, however, Agnes was consistently heavy in pronunciation ('three' jirribala, 'near' gulijap, 'find' baindim, 'there' jeya). With other words she alternated between heavy and light pronunciations ('paddle a canoe' blot and flot, 'go' gu and go, 'they' dei and jei, 'that' jet and det). Note also that she not only alternated between heavy and light pronunciation, but between heavy and light forms of some pronouns ('they' ola and dei, 'we' melabat and wi). In addition, she alternated between heavy and light grammatical forms ('canoeing' flotflot and floting). These last two examples, of course, indicate that the heavy-light continuum is not restricted to phonology, but is also applicable to syntax, lexicon and semantics, although it is not applied as thoroughly by Kriol speakers to these areas.

### Development and Modernization Variation

The applicability of the folk-linguistic system to the grammar and lexicon of Kriol is primarily related to what Mühlhäusler (1980:22) refers to as developmental continua. These continua are the results of processes of development and expansion through which the overall referential and non-referential power of a language increases. The heavy features of Kriol developmental continua are generally those which have historically developed earlier and which result, as mentioned above, in some linguists wanting to make a distinction between adult pidgin and youth creole. As with so many aspects of Kriol, no thorough study has yet been made of these developmental continua, and they will only be briefly mentioned here.

Developmental continua, according to Mühlhäusler (1980), are characterized in part by such changes as the 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 in morphological naturalness.

As Kriol has spontaneously developed, for example, the means of expressing plurality have increased, thus introducing some redundancy. At the turn of the century<sup>44</sup> in the Roper River area, plurality could be expressed by the use of a pre-positioned quantifier such as bigmob or by the use of the post-positioned 'pronoun' olabat ('third person plural'): Mi bin luk bigmob buligi. or Mi bin luk buligi olabat. 'I saw lots of cattle.' The use of the post-positioned pronoun is beginning to fall into disuse, with most Kriol speakers rejecting it in written literature even though many still use it orally. The same 'pronoun', however, is commonly used in a pre-position, often with a shortened form: Jeya olabat munanga. or Jeya ola munanga. 'There are the Europeans.' Reduplication is also used in some cases to indicate plurality. In particular, several human nouns have developed reduplicated or partially reduplicated forms which may be used with or without a quantifier: Jeya munamunanga. or Jeya ola munamunanga. 'There are the Europeans.'

Another example of the development of Kriol is in the expansion of its word-formation component.<sup>45</sup> Again, at the turn of the century in the Roper River area, intensification could be indicated in two ways, either

by reduplication or by the use of a pre-positioned qualifier: Imin bigwanbigwan, or Imin brabli bigwan. 'It was very big.' Today, in addition to these two means, intensification can be indicated by the addition of two suffixes: Imin bigbalawan, or Imin bigiswan. 'It was very big.' Neither of these two forms, however, has yet acquired acceptance by the whole community as being 'proper' Kriol.

Kriol has also spontaneously developed a number of grammatical devices for non-referential purposes. For example, emphasis or focus can be indicated by use of the particle na, by front shifting, by tagging, or by the use of appositional phrasing (Sandefur 1979:92, Hudson 1983a:45-48). The introduction and spread of such devices is not instantaneous and uniform throughout any given community, much less the entire Kriol language area. As a result, the development of such changes through time and space takes on the form of a continuum.

There are, in addition to such developmental continua, and in a sense operating in opposition to them, what Mühlhäusler (1980) refers to as restructuring continua. These are continua which result from "changes due to contact with other languages which do not affect the overall power of a linguistic system" (Mühlhäusler 1980:22). Such continua are characterized in part by language mixing that leads to unnatural developments, hypercorrection, and an increase in variation resulting in a weakening of linguistic norms.

Most of the variation in Kriol appears to be developmental in nature rather than restructuring. As this book seeks to document, the spontaneous changes which have taken and are currently taking place are mostly resulting in a strengthening of linguistic norms. There is, however, some restructuring taking place. For example, particularly in the Kimberleys, the future/potential tense-mood auxiliary free form garra is being replaced in some contexts by the more English-like bound form -l, as in ail 'I'll' instead of ai garra.

In chapter four I will seek to show how social changes and government policy during the last few decades have added an acceleration factor to the development of Kriol. Although most of this accelerated development of Kriol was not planned, the changes are resulting in the modernization of Kriol. Modernization is "the development of intertranslatability with other languages in a range of topics and forms of discourse characteristic of industrialized, secularized, structurally differentiated, 'modern' societies" (Ferguson 1968:28). There are three main aspects of modernization: (a) the expansion of the lexicon, (b) the development of new styles and forms of discourse, and (c) the assignation of new functions or 'role definition' to the language (Ferguson 1968:32, Kaldor 1977:242).

Most of the planned modernization of Kriol has revolved around the Barunga [formerly Bamyili] school Kriol bilingual program, the SIL Kriol Bible translation project, and to a lesser degree some of the courses taught by the School of Australian Linguistics.

Planned modernization at the Barunga school has involved primarily the redefining of the role of Kriol in regards to education in the community and the developing of literary<sup>46</sup> styles of Kriol by Aboriginal literacy workers. Some lexical expansion relevant to the school program has also taken place, primarily as a by-product of turning over classroom teaching responsibilities to Kriol speakers. As Aborigines have moved into the classrooms and become involved in program planning, they have begun to develop in Kriol, in Hallidayian terms, a school register. Other aspects of the Barunga program will be discussed further in chapter five.

The work of SIL in the modernization of Kriol has focussed primarily on raising the social standing of the language through the dissemination of information about the language situation and on encouraging the development of the literary mode of the language. With regard to the latter, SIL has especially pushed for the standardization of written conventions across the various dialects.<sup>47</sup> In the translation project SIL has sought, not to overtly introduce expansions to the lexicon, but rather to utilize the existing terminology that has been spontaneously developed over the years by Kriol-speaking Aboriginal Christians and pastors.

The School of Australian Linguistics, primarily as a by-product of its courses, has helped raise the status of Kriol. The school has also undertaken what is probably the most formal attempt at lexical expansion to date. Working with Kriol-speaking linguistic students in 1979, they developed some Kriol linguistic terminology.<sup>48</sup>

The work of these three institutions in the modernization of Kriol was obviously not aimed at increasing variation in Kriol. The limited amount of variation that did arise out of their work was unintentional and restricted to the orthography and spelling of Kriol as individual workers sometimes found their own solutions to spelling problems. As appendix three indicates, however, even in matters of orthography and spelling, the above institutions have cooperated in trying to establish a set of standardized conventions and thus limit variation in the written language.

Most of the modernization of Kriol which has been taking place has been spontaneous rather than planned. Many Kriol speakers themselves, without the aid or encouragement of outsiders (i.e. linguists and non-Aboriginal teachers) have been attempting to extend the role and expand the lexicon of Kriol to enable them to discuss aspects of modern topics with others in their community (Sandefur 1982c). It is well known that a speaker of a 'non-modern' language<sup>49</sup> who receives his education in a 'modern' language is often unable to think or talk about modern topics in his own language because his own language lacks, not simply the substantive words, but the concepts and notions of processes as well. Through his education in a 'modern' language, he has learnt to express "ideas and sensibilities perhaps never before expressed" in his own language (Passin 1968:448). The response of many Kriol speakers in this situation has increasingly been to try and develop means of expression for those new concepts in Kriol. This has come about primarily as a direct result of the Aboriginalization of Aboriginal communities, which will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

The spontaneous modernization of Kriol is the cause of much of the large range of 'mixed' variation that exists in Kriol today. This range of variation, in a sense, is the consequence of a 'deanglicization' process that is involved in spontaneous modernization. As bilingual Kriol speakers learn new concepts in English, they attempt to communicate many of the concepts in Kriol because of the social situation and their relevance to the 'non-bilingual' Kriol speakers in their communities. The move from English to Kriol in discussing new concepts is not made through a clean switch from the one language to the other, but rather through a process more akin to code-mixing. There are definite indications, however, that over a period of time the speech of the 'educated elite' on a particular topic moves from being heavily laden with anglicized forms to being more fully 'proper' Kriol.

As with planned modernization, the lexical expansion of spontaneous



modernization is not having a uniform effect over the whole of the Kriol language area. The main barrier tends to be state boundaries. The Kriol-speaking 'educated elite' from various communities in the Northern Territory have a fairly high contact rate among themselves, at least within their own academic circles (e.g. education, health, church and government). There are fewer Kriol speakers in the 'educated elite' circle in Western Australia than in the Northern Territory and virtually none in Queensland. Because of the government and educational systems of the various states, the 'educated elite' from the Northern Territory and Western Australia have very little contact with each other. As a result, new concepts in Kriol are not being diffused as rapidly across state boundaries as they are within the states.

The role definition aspect of modernization will be discussed in detail in chapter five in the context of government policies and educational planning.

### Dialectal Continua Variation

By comparison with the sociolectal continua, the variation involved in the dialectal continua of Kriol are not nearly as complex. The traditional concept of discrete dialects has been questioned in recent years by many linguists studying variation in language, but as Labov (1980:382) points out, "the assumption of a continuum without breaks or relative discontinuities is as unjustified as the assumption of discrete boundaries".

Relatively little work has so far been carried out specifically on dialect documentation. One fact, however, appears to be certain: there are no discrete boundaries between the dialects of Kriol. The bundling of isoglosses, combined with differences in the distribution and frequency of grammatical rules and forms (Loflin and Guyette 1976:52) as well as social attitudes, provide an indication of dialect centres. Such features yield little information about dialect 'boundaries', which tend to be continua linking major population/service centres.

One of the most significant factors contributing to dialect differences in Kriol is the traditional Aboriginal language environment. As noted earlier, Kriol is spoken in over two hundred and fifty Aboriginal communities. There are over a hundred traditional languages and dialects which have an influence on Kriol and Kriol speakers. Although all of those traditional languages have many features in common, each is distinct.

The influence of individual traditional languages on Kriol is most readily observable in the Kriol lexicon. Many words have been borrowed from local traditional languages, but most of them are only used in the Kriol of that local area. For example, manuga 'money' [from 'stone'] was borrowed from one of the languages around Ngukurr. It is commonly used at Ngukurr, and known by Kriol speakers in the communities immediately surrounding Ngukurr, but it is virtually unknown by Kriol speakers elsewhere. Some borrowed words, however, have become regionalized. Gajinga 'damn it' [originally a reference to the genitals] is also from a local Ngukurr traditional language, but it is now used by Kriol speakers throughout the Roper River and Barunga areas. It is used in the Ngukurr area as a swear word, following its original usage, while in the Barunga area it carries very little negative connotation. Marluga 'old man', on the other hand, which was also borrowed from a traditional language, is known throughout almost the entire Kriol language area.

A more subtle influence which traditional languages exert on Kriol is in phonology. Kriol does not have only one extreme heavy subsystem. Where traditional languages differ, the phonological subsystems differ. In the Ngukurr area, three-vowel systems were prominent, so go was originally pronounced gu; in the Barunga area, five-vowel systems predominated, so go was go. The influence of these extreme heavy subsystems, however, is not simply a feature of the past nor limited to older, 'heavy' speakers. They continue to exert several types of influence upon virtually all Kriol speakers in their respective areas. In the case of the Ngukurr three-vowel system, all Ngukurr Kriol speakers today say go some of the time, but most of them also say gu and consider gu to be 'proper'. It is, in fact, one of the features usually cited by Ngukurr speakers, as well as Barunga speakers, to exemplify the distinctiveness of Ngukurr speech.

The operation of the phonological continuum discussed earlier is dependent, to a degree, on two 'external' factors: the influence of traditional-language phonological systems in determining heavy Kriol, and the form of the English etymon to which light Kriol is targeted. The route that a given word takes as it becomes lighter depends on the latter, and its starting point on the former. For example, the 'devoiced' stops in most traditional languages are predominantly realized by their voiced allophones. In heavy Kriol, therefore, 'talk' is dog; in light Kriol it becomes tok. 'Dog', on the other hand, is dog in both heavy and light Kriol. In those cases, however, in which the devoiced stops are predominantly realized without voicing, 'dog' is tok in heavy Kriol and becomes dog in light Kriol, whereas 'talk' is tok in both.

It should be pointed out that the influence of traditional-language phonology no longer necessarily reflects geographical distribution. For example, most Kriol speakers in Halls Creek are either Gija people or Jaru people. The Gija language has lamino-palatals, whereas the Jaru language does not. Because of the influence of the two languages, it is possible to distinguish Kriol speakers from the two groups by the presence or absence of lamino-palatals in their Kriol speech.<sup>50</sup>

## VARIETIES OF KRIOL

The dialects of Kriol can be divided basically into regional dialects and local dialects. Regional dialects are spoken by residents of a number of communities over fairly large geographical areas. Most of these communities are relatively small cattle station or outstation communities which cluster around a larger settlement or town community that functions as a service/supply centre for the communities. Until the relatively recent increase in mobility and travel, the networks of communication were for the most part limited to the major centres and their satellite communities. The regional dialects of Kriol have thus been distinguished in terms of the major centres of the geographical regions, with the boundaries having received little research attention. These dialects have arisen in part because the historical development of each major centre and the emergence of Kriol in it has taken place relatively independently of other centres (Hudson 1983a:15).

In studies carried out to date, three dialects have received virtually all the attention: Roper River (Sharpe and Sandefur), Barunga (Steffensen and Sandefur) and Fitzroy Valley (Fraser and Hudson). Other communities which appear to be centres for regional dialects are Halls Creek<sup>51</sup>, Daly River and Belyuen. In addition, it appears that the Turkey

Creek-Wyndham-Kununurra 'triangle', the Barkly Tableland area, and possibly the Victoria River district, represent regional dialects. The dialects in the Kimberleys are sometimes collectively referred to in this book as the western dialects, and the dialects east of the Stuart Highway as the eastern dialects. These dialects are distinguished primarily on the basis of differences in phonology, lexicon, grammar and social attitudes.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the regional dialects, there are also local dialects. These have received very little specific attention. It has been noted, however, that the Kriol of the cattle station communities in the Roper River area tends to be more conservative than that at Ngukurr.<sup>53</sup> For example, cattle station residents more frequently use some of the words which have become archaic and seldom used at Ngukurr, such as minolabat 'we-inclusive' and melelabat 'we-exclusive' as compared with the more 'modern' melabat 'we'. The residents of many of these smaller satellite communities have not had the degree of exposure to the non-Aboriginal 'world' as have the major communities through education and media exposure. This restriction to broader exposure may in part be the cause of their more conservative speech.

Communities whose residents are largely descendants of one traditional language group tend to incorporate more localized traditional language words into their Kriol. The inclusion of such words is a major marker of local dialects. Most such words are usually understood but rarely used by speakers of dialects other than the 'donor' dialect.

### Social Attitudes to Dialects

Social attitudes to the various dialects vary. There have not been any comprehensive studies on such attitudes and therefore only brief mention of this topic will be made here. Jernudd (1971:20) notes that the 'pidgin' spoken at Bagot community in Darwin was often referred to as "Roper pidgin (from Roper River)". Roper River is often attributed with being the source of Kriol spoken in other areas of the Northern Territory, and as discussed elsewhere, creolization does appear to have first taken place there (i.e. at Ngukurr). If a person wants to study 'proper' Kriol, he is often directed by Kriol speakers in the Northern Territory to Roper River. In some Kriol-speaking communities, the residents do not claim Kriol as their language but say they are speaking the language from Roper River.

The Ngukurr (Roper River) and Barunga communities are at times in social competition with each other. Ngukurr has tended to have the higher prestige among Aborigines, with Barunga struggling to gain Ngukurr's position. In talking about each others' dialects, Ngukurr speakers typically make a plain statement that "Barunga speaks different". When asked for specific examples of the differences, virtually all replies are limited to a few pronouns which are different and a few words which are pronounced differently:

We say melabat ['we'] and Barunga says mibala,  
we say yumob ['you'] and Barunga says yubala,  
we say alabat ['they'] and Barunga says olabat,  
we say gu ['go'] and Barunga says go,  
we say numu ['no'] and Barunga says nomo.

It is interesting to note that Ngukurr speakers often use the forms go and nomo in place of the older forms gu and numu, but they seldom admit

to doing so. Very few other specific examples are ever given. However, because Barunga has traditional connections with the Maiali people of the Oenpelli area, the Barunga dialect is sometimes described as being half Kriol and half Maiali.

Barunga speakers, on the other hand, when asked about the Roper dialect, typically make the same reply as the Ngukurr speakers do except that they laugh after every example they give: "We say mibala and Roper says melabat. Ha! Ha! Ha!".

Speakers of local dialects in the Roper River area who maintain the use of some of the more archaic forms are looked down upon by some speakers from Ngukurr. They are sometimes described as maiya ('uneducated, backward'). This term is applied not only to language, but more generally to behaviour as a whole.

In the Kimberleys, Halls Creek has the reputation of being the centre for Kriol. Like Ngukurr in the Northern Territory, Halls Creek is the community in which creolization appears to have first begun in Western Australia. Being a town rather than a settlement, however, there is a large segment of the total population which does not speak Kriol and the demand for English is very high. Some Kriol speakers, therefore, say that the real centre for Kriol is not Halls Creek, but rather Louisa Downs to the west of Halls Creek.

### Sociolects

In addition to dialects, there are also a number of sociolects of Kriol. Some sociolects involve deliberate modifications by the speaker according to the social context. Such factors as the relation between participants, the roles the participants perform, the subject matter of the communication, and the purpose of the communication are related to sociolect variation.

The sociolects of Kriol which adults most often comment on are those used by young people. Adults tend to deprecate these sociolects. Young people in the larger Aboriginal communities tend to be very 'flash' or bodji in their styles, showing much interest in the trendy European youth lifestyle. The effects of this show up clearly, for example, in their dress style (more so with young males than females) and in changing habits of dating. It also significantly affects their speech. Young people tend, for example, to develop idiomatic expressions which are unknown to the adults. As a result, they can speak with each other around adults and yet shield their conversation from them. This variety of speech is described by some adults as strit tok ('street talk') and is generally considered by them to be a perversion of good Kriol.

Many young Kriol speakers leave home for two or three years to attend high school. They are usually selected from among the students who have performed well in their primary education in their home communities. While away from home receiving further education, they often develop a fairly European/English lifestyle. In addition to students who leave home for study, some adults also move into a European environment for a variety of reasons for a period of time. Upon returning to their home community, many of these people often try to maintain their newly acquired European lifestyle. This, however, is usually socially unacceptable in their home community. A person who attempts to live such a lifestyle is often ridiculed for trying to be a munanga ('European') and is reminded that he is a blekbala ('Aboriginal') and should sidan

('live') like a blekbala. A person who persists in living like a munanga may even be ostracized by his relations.

The attitude of trying to construct and maintain a European personal and social identity manifests itself in language. In some cases Kriol speakers take on the negative attitudes which are typically held by Europeans. Some refuse to speak "that rubbish" and insist on using English. Others speak a heavily anglicized Kriol. The speech of either of the above types of speakers is generally frowned upon by other Kriol speakers in the community, sometimes being referred to as hai ('high') or flesh ('flash'). People who insist on using this 'flash' variety of speech are usually ridiculed for doing so. In discussing such ridicule at Mowanjum, for example, one Kriol speaker pointed out that "some people always say, 'Who do you think you are? You want to be a whiteman or what?' or 'What do you want to be, a high rank or a top brow?'" (Sandefur and Sandefur 1979a:113).

The Kriol speech of Aboriginal people in Broome and Kalumburu has yet to be specifically studied. Their speech may in fact not be Kriol as such but a variety of Aboriginal English closely related to Kriol. Many Kriol speakers in the Kimberleys consider the speech of these two communities to be Kriol, but Kriol with a different accent. Kalumburu is a very isolated community that developed as a Spanish Benedictine mission, and people from Kalumburu are sometimes characterized as speaking Kriol with a Spanish accent. Broome, on the other hand, is unique because of the mixed ethnic character of the town. Brumby (1975:[26]) notes that "the 'Broome children' - those of mixed racial descent - are a linguistically unique group". It would appear that the Broome residents of mixed descent speak their own sociolect variety of English rather than Kriol with an accent.

One other variety of Kriol should be mentioned here: the munanga Kriol. There are, in fact, two main types of munanga Kriol. In their survey of the Kimberleys, Sandefur and Sandefur (1980:33) noted that

while there are some whites who speak fluent creole [Kriol], mainly by virtue of having grown up in a creole-speaking environment, most whites who claim to speak creole fall into one of two groups. The first group is those who have made a real attempt at learning to speak creole as a second language but have not yet reached fluency. In the technical sense, they speak broken creole<sup>54</sup> [or English-to-Kriol interlanguage]. Those in the second group, while thinking that they speak creole, in fact speak some sort of 'simplified' English.

Brennan (1979:32) refers to this latter type of speech as a kind of "baby-English" or "mock Kriol" that insults Aborigines. This type of speech is not a simplified yet grammatically correct and well-phrased type of English. Rather, it is a stilted, reduced form of English speech that has little in common with Kriol. It can be considered Kriol only in the sense that the intention of the speaker is to imitate the Kriol speech of the Aborigines as he perceives it.

#### KRIOL AND TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

Much has been said in the preceding sections about the relationship of Kriol to other varieties of English-related speech in Aboriginal communities. To fully appreciate the strength and significance of Kriol, however, one needs to understand something of its relationship to traditional Aboriginal languages as well.

Three categories of speech are generally recognized by most Kriol speakers: pijin, inglish and langgus. The label langgus is generally used by Kriol speakers to refer to traditional Aboriginal languages in contrast to inglish and pijin. There is, however, an increasing number of Kriol speakers who include Kriol in the category of langgus instead of pijin.

Langgus is a generic term, with each specific traditional Aboriginal language having its own name. When the European settlement of Australia began, there were an estimated 260 distinct Aboriginal languages with numerous dialects spoken on the continent by some 500 to 700 'tribes' ranging in size from 100 to 1500 persons (Powell 1982:15). Many of these languages and dialects have become extinct, some because the tribes which spoke them became extinct. Traditional Aboriginal language 'genocide' is virtually complete in Tasmania, the southwest of Western Australia, and in the area bounded by Adelaide, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne (Grassby 1977:1). Other traditional languages are becoming extinct due largely to the effects of linguistically heterogeneous settlement life. Although about 150 languages are still known, only about fifty are described by linguists as being "healthy" and in no immediate danger of extinction (Brandl and Walsh 1982:72).

Some traditional languages in the Kriol language area are still in very active use.<sup>55</sup> Most of them, however, are on the decline or have become extinct or virtually extinct.<sup>56</sup> Descriptions of many of the traditional languages in the Kriol area are readily available.<sup>57</sup>

The vast majority of the traditional languages in the Kriol language area which are still spoken, are spoken fluently only by older people. In many communities throughout the Kriol currency area, relatively few Aborigines younger than thirty can fluently speak a traditional language (Chadwick 1975:ix, 1979:65, Crowley and Rigsby 1979:162, Glasgow 1984, McKay 1975:1, Morphy and Morphy 1981:22, Muecke 1978, Richards 1982a:43, Tsunoda 1981:17).<sup>58</sup> Many if not most of these younger people do, however, have a passive knowledge of 'their' traditional language. There are indications,<sup>59</sup> at least in the Fitzroy Valley, Victoria River and Barunga areas, that some young adults develop a speaking competence after leaving school and moving into the adult world.

It appears that in some communities it is generally socially unacceptable for children to speak a traditional language, although adults expect them to have a passive knowledge of it.<sup>60</sup> Children may speak traditional language in school while role-playing, but in general they will not speak it outside such a context. Children at Noonkanbah, for example, will speak Walmajarri at school but not outside the school except for teacher games where the Walmajarri teacher is mimicked (Richards 1982a:46). There is a parallel to this in regard to the use of English between children. They will often freely use English with each other, instead of Kriol, while role-playing, but generally not at other times.

In many cases parents or grandparents will not speak the traditional language with the children. Adults at Rockhampton Downs, for example, say they do not use traditional language with children until they get "a bit grown up" (Glasgow 1984:129). This is often the case even with adults who lament the fact that their children or grandchildren do not speak their traditional language. Hudson and McConvell (1984:36) note that "it is not easy to find out why people do this." Questioning adults as to why they do not speak the language to the children when they claim they want the children to learn the language brings a variety of

responses, typically: "It doesn't sound right to use it with them."  
"They don't understand it." "It's the school's job to teach it to them."  
or "They've got to learn English first."

### Baby-Talk and Child Language

In many languages a special speech style is employed in talking to infants and young children (Ervin-Tripp 1973:328, McConvell 1982:65). Kriol is seen by some people as being a kind of child language or baby-talk (McConvell 1980, Hudson and McConvell 1984). It is argued that because adults speak Kriol to their children instead of a baby version of their traditional language, Kriol is therefore baby-talk or a children's variety of language.

When the first generation of mother tongue Kriol speakers emerged, Kriol could conceivably have been considered to function as a child language since only the children would have used it for all aspects of communication while their parents would have primarily used their traditional language among themselves. As the first generation grew into adults, however, they did not 'grow out of' their so-called child language. When they themselves become parents they continued to use Kriol among themselves just as their own parents had continued to use their traditional language among themselves. With each succeeding generation the age-limit for the use of Kriol as a so-called baby-talk version of traditional language was raised. The ultimate conclusion of such a baby-talk view would therefore be that pensioner-aged mother-tongue speakers of Kriol have never linguistically matured beyond speaking a baby language. Such a conclusion is patently false. Adult mother tongue speakers of Kriol speak an adult language. Not only so, but there exists an actual 'baby-talk style' of Kriol used with infants and younger children.

The baby-talk style or register of Kriol has yet to be specifically studied, so only a brief comment will be made about it here. The most readily noticeable feature of Kriol baby-talk is the modification of certain lexical items. In general an *i* is added to the heavy form of a word and the word then reduplicated. For example, fish 'fish' becomes bijibiji. Such baby-talk forms are not always restricted to use with children, but are sometimes used between adults to refer to baby animals. In other words, bijibiji is sometimes used between adults to refer to baby fish in addition to being used with children to refer to fish in general. There are also a few specifically baby-talk words, at least in some dialects of Kriol, which are used when talking to infants who have not yet learnt to speak, such as nyanya 'goo-goo'. It is this Kriol baby-talk, not adult Kriol, that has taken over the role of traditional language baby-talk.

In some traditional Aboriginal language situations a child would learn his mother's language as his first language. At puberty, he would then learn his father's language, which would possibly be followed by several other languages (Brandl and Walsh 1982:76, Cole 1979:25-26). When he learnt his father's language, it would not replace his mother's language, which was his own mother tongue, for the two served different roles. Nor could it accurately be claimed that his mother's language was a baby-talk version of his father's language. He learnt his mother's language as a child, and in that sense alone, it could be considered to be a child language, but it was not used exclusively with children. It was an adult language just as his father's language was, for to his mother's brother's children, it functioned as their father's language.

The relation between Kriol and traditional languages<sup>61</sup> is much more akin to the relation between mother's and father's languages, rather than between adult language and baby-talk. Both are adult languages in the sense of being fully developed languages which are used by adults with adults, but a person would learn the one as a child and the other upon reaching puberty. Similarly, when Kriol-speaking children reach the 'new puberty' or marker of entrance into the adult world (i.e. reaching school-leaving age), they are then 'able' to learn other adult languages.

#### MULTILINGUALISM IN KRIOL-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

Modern Kriol-speaking Aboriginal communities, following a "long-standing tradition of multilingualism" (Malcolm 1979:191), are basically multilingual in nature. Aboriginal communities within the Kriol language area typically have speakers of several traditional languages as well as Kriol, Aboriginal English and English<sup>62</sup>. Many older Aboriginal adults are "polylingual specialists" (Sansom 1980:33), speaking several traditional languages. Younger people, on the other hand, tend to lean towards bilingualism, speaking Kriol and English but very little traditional language. One of the unfortunate effects of Europeanization for most Aborigines has been a decline in language facility rather than an extension or development of it (Berndt 1961:25).

The role of Kriol in relation to the other languages which occur in the two hundred and fifty plus Aboriginal communities throughout the Kriol language area as indicated on Map 3, varies from community to community. It is possible to divide the communities into four major categories according to the language which holds the dominant position. The dominant language is the stronger or main language, the one which carries more of the weight of the total communicative load of the overall community and is spoken more often and more fluently by more people than the other languages. The dominant code is basically the one which is overheard the most often on the streets and in the camps.

In the majority of the Aboriginal communities in the Kriol language area, Kriol is the dominant language. A recent survey by Glasgow (1984), for example, indicates that with the possible exception of Rockhampton Downs, Kriol is the dominant language in Aboriginal communities in the Barkly Tableland area. There are no known communities, however, in which only Kriol is present. A detailed description of one community in which Kriol is the dominant language will be provided in chapter four.

Various aspects of the pattern of language use in communities in which Kriol is dominant are discussed at numerous places throughout this book. A generalized summary statement, however, is provided here. Virtually every Aboriginal in such a community speaks Kriol, younger ones as their mother tongue and older ones as a second language with varying degrees of fluency. Older people speak a variety of traditional languages as their mother tongues, with some of the middle aged people controlling a traditional language with varying degrees of fluency. Kriol is used by all Aborigines with all Aborigines, with traditional language being used primarily by older Aborigines with other older Aborigines from the same language group. In many cases, the strength of Kriol relative to particular traditional languages within a given community varies from language group to language group. At Ngukurr, for example, Ngandi goes virtually unused while Ritharrngu is used daily by some of those for whom it is their traditional language.



As noted earlier, every Aboriginal community has some contact with non-Aboriginal English speakers. Kriol is generally not used with these people, except by older Kriol speakers who typically consider themselves to be speaking English when they, in fact, speak Kriol. Most Kriol speakers attempt to learn English, usually compulsorily through schooling, and achieve varying degrees of fluency in it. Their English is usually reserved for use with Europeans or in European domains. Their speech is an interlanguage resembling the dialectal or codified mother tongue variety of Aboriginal English. However, Aboriginal English as a mother tongue is normally not present in such communities.

The next numerically largest group of Aboriginal communities in the Kriol language area are those in which traditional language is dominant. One such community, for example, is Umbakumba, where Anindilyakwa is clearly the dominant language, not only among adults but among children as well. Kriol is spoken, however, by many of the people as a second language, being used primarily with relatives and friends in other communities who do not speak Anindilyakwa. Another such community is Noonkanbah,<sup>63</sup> where virtually all adults from mid-twenty up speak Walmajarri fluently. They use Walmajarri as their main medium of communication within the community. Most can also speak Kriol,<sup>64</sup> which they use primarily with Europeans and non-Walmajarri-speaking Aborigines. Some of the young people in their late teens and early twenties speak both Kriol and Walmajarri, but the majority speak Kriol to everyone. Children and young teenagers, even though they are immersed in Walmajarri at home, speak Kriol exclusively, albeit with a heavy borrowing of Walmajarri words. The role of English and Aboriginal English in communities such as Noonkanbah is essentially the same as in communities in which Kriol is the dominant language.

As with so many aspects relating to Kriol, there is not a discrete dividing line that distinguishes between communities in which Kriol is dominant and communities in which traditional language is dominant. Nor is the situation static. Virtually all Aboriginal communities are undergoing changes in social structure, which in turn affect patterns of speech usage. In most communities in which traditional language is dominant, the changing pattern is towards Kriol predominance at the expense of traditional language. Such change is characteristically distasteful and frustrating for the older people who see their language 'dying'.

One community in which the change from traditional language dominance to Kriol dominance is clearly taking place is Numbulwar (Harris 1982:50). Numbulwar was established in the early 1950s as a mission primarily for Nunggubuyu people, but the mission was located on Wandarang land. This arrangement worked well for over two decades, for most of the Wandarang people were living at Ngukurr. After the death of the Wandarang and Nunggubuyu patriarchs who had made the agreement which allowed this system to work, and under the influence of the government's new land rights legislation, the Wandarang people began to reassert themselves at Numbulwar. In the late 1970s many of them, who are all mother tongue Kriol speakers, moved back to Numbulwar. Kriol had been present at Numbulwar as a second language virtually from its establishment, but Nunggubuyu had clearly been the dominant language. With the influx of the Kriol-speaking Wandarang people, however, the situation is changing. Unless some language engineering takes place, such as the school implementing a strong Nunggubuyu language program, Kriol is likely to become the dominant language at Numbulwar within a generation. Already the children are as much at home in Kriol as in Nunggubuyu.

A survey of Queensland showed that in no community was Kriol the dominant language (Sandefur et al 1982). In those Queensland Aboriginal communities in which Kriol is a primary language, a dialect of Aboriginal English is the dominant language. At Doomadgee, for example, it appears that a variety of Aboriginal English which is closely related to Kriol is the primary language of most of the Aboriginal residents. Many of them claim that their everyday speech is Kriol, but overt observation does not bear this out. Some of them can switch from Aboriginal English into Kriol, as well as into English. Their switch into English, as in the other types of communities, is primarily related to Europeans and European domains. There is, however, one section of the population whose primary language is not Aboriginal English — the so-called 'bottom camp' residents. These people, although long-term residents of Doomadgee, were originally from the Northern Territory. The older adults speak traditional language (Garawa or Yanyuwa) as their mother tongue and Kriol as a second language. Among themselves they tend to use traditional language, reserving Kriol primarily for use with anyone else. It has yet to be firmly established what the language of the children from the bottom camps is, but most likely it is the Aboriginal English of their peers from the majority section of the population.<sup>65</sup>

So far no Aboriginal community has been identified in the Northern Territory or Kimberley sections of the Kriol language area in which Aboriginal English is the dominant language, although it may be dominant in some of the far western Kimberley communities.<sup>66</sup> As discussed earlier, however, among townies in some towns Aboriginal English is dominant. It is unlikely that Kriol will become predominant among townies or in those communities in which Aboriginal English is dominant. The present trend seems to indicate that knowledge of Kriol as a second language in such situations is on the decline, although close study has yet to be made. Social factors, such as Aboriginal identity and having Kriol-speaking relatives, may provide enough impetus for Aboriginal English speakers to generally maintain a knowledge of Kriol.

The fourth type of community, which is not an Aboriginal community as such, is one in which English is the dominant language. All of the communities identified to date which fall into this category are towns. It should be noted, however, that English is dominant in these communities because the population is predominantly non-Aboriginal. With very few exceptions, these non-Aboriginal people speak no Aboriginal language and expect Aborigines to speak English to them. Throughout the Kriol language area, however, there are no Aboriginal communities in which English occupies such a dominant position.

#### SUMMARY: WHAT THEN IS KRIOL?

It has almost been taken for granted in this book that Kriol is not a pidgin. It was noted in chapter one that there is little agreement among creolists as to what exactly the substantive features of pidgin are. There is, however, a general consensus among creolists regarding the salient features of pidgin. A variety of speech which does not exhibit these features cannot be a pidgin. There are four 'classic' salient features of pidgin: (a) it is not the mother tongue of any of its speakers, (b) it is restricted in its use, (c) it has a limited lexicon, and (d) it is greatly simplified and much less complex than normal languages.

Without a doubt, Kriol fails to meet the qualifications of being a pidgin. As discussed in this chapter, Kriol is the mother tongue of thousands of Aborigines, in some communities of four generations of speakers. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Kriol is basically unrestricted in its use among Kriol speakers. As regards the feature 'limited lexicon', the only sense in which Kriol has a limited lexicon is in terms of it not yet having 'modernized' its lexicon in order to cope with modern technology and higher education. As regards grammatical simplification, Kriol does show some signs of this feature. However, virtually every process of simplification found in Kriol is of a type which occurs in 'normal' languages as well. Kriol is not an inflectional language, and while it makes little use of such features as gender, number, the copula and passive constructions, these features are not totally lacking. In other areas, such as pronouns and the verb structure, Kriol exhibits a complex structure.

Kriol is a creole, although it was pointed out in chapter one that just as there are problems in defining pidgin, so there are also problems in defining creole. The general consensus, however, appears to support DeCamp (1971a:25) who notes that unless the history of a language is known, there is no certain way of identifying it as a creole. Implicit in his statement is the corollary that a language which develops from a pidgin through the process of creolization is a creole. It is well documented (cf. Harris 1984), as was shown earlier in this chapter, that Kriol did indeed develop from pidgin.

Kriol is not English, and if it were not for the fact that most of the lexical items of Kriol were borrowed from English, no one would raise the possibility of Kriol being a form or dialect of English. The semantic system and world view encoded by Kriol, as will be discussed in the next chapter, are not those of English, nor is the grammatical system of Kriol related only to English (Hudson 1983a, Sharpe 1983). Furthermore, Kriol certainly cannot be seen as an English dialect by sociolinguistic criteria — a point which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

It has been assumed by some writers and members of the general public that Kriol is decreolizing and that merger with English and the resultant 'death' of Kriol is inevitable. This is by no means the case. I have argued in this chapter that, except in possibly two relatively minor situations, Kriol is not undergoing decreolization. This may be due to the relatively 'young' age of Kriol. It has only been during the lives of the still living generations that Kriol has developed into the language it is today, so maybe there has not yet been enough time for decreolization to set in. Sharpe (1974a) and Steffensen (1975) were probably justified in the mid-seventies in projecting 'death-dates' for Kriol. I have pointed out elsewhere (Sandefur 1982a), however, that both of these authors included an 'if-clause' in their predictions: if the sociolinguistic situation on which they based their 'death-dates' remains constant. I will argue in chapter four that the situation has changed drastically in favour of a long life for Kriol.

I have argued in this chapter that the so-called Kriol decreolization continuum is in fact a Kriol-to-English interlanguage continuum. In this respect, contrary to the situation in Guyana (Bickerton 1975:113), one man's hypercorrection is not another man's vernacular. This Kriol-to-English interlanguage itself is not Kriol. Colloquially it would be considered to be English. When an English speaker is learning, for example, Russian, he is normally considered to be speaking Russian even though he is not by any means speaking Russian as a Russian speaks.

The colloquial reference to interlanguage identifies it with the target language, but the first language of the second-language learner is not thereby included. Most Kriol speakers are striving to learn English. Regardless of the English fluency they finally acquire, however, their Kriol still remains essentially as it was before.

I have also argued in this chapter that Kriol is not Aboriginal English. Kriol is related to some varieties of Aboriginal English, and in fact virtually every Kriol speaker speaks a variety of Aboriginal English in the sense of interlanguage. A comparison of the grammars of Kriol and varieties of Aboriginal English, which has only been briefly undertaken in this chapter, indicates that there is a significant gap between them. It has also been shown in this chapter that Kriol is distinct from Torres Strait Creole.

To attempt to describe Kriol as simply a part of a single, linear English continuum, especially without any reference to extralinguistic factors as Bickerton (1975) advocates, is to do injustice to the complexities of the Kriol speaker's competence. A model which places Kriol at the basilectal end of a post-creole continuum with English at the acrolectal extreme is too simplistic to accurately account for all the variation associated with Kriol speakers, both within Kriol itself and between Kriol and the other languages in its environment.

Kriol does indeed represent a continuum in the sense that it is not a static language consisting of a fixed number of elements which hold invariant relations with one another. While acknowledging the existence of a continuum, however, I have argued against regarding it as a post-creole continuum.

What then is Kriol? It is a dynamic continuum system: dynamic in that it is not an invariable language; a continuum in that there are a number of subsystems within it which are linked together by gradation rather than being discrete; a system in that it does not consist of a random mixing of elements. This dynamic system, although still in an incipient stage of attaining full autonomy, is nevertheless a language coming of age. In the remaining chapters of this book I will discuss the socio-political factors which have been instrumental in the development of Kriol's newly acquired autonomous identity.