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**PAPERS ON KRIOL: THE WRITING  
SYSTEM AND A RESOURCE GUIDE**

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## PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION TO  
SERIES B VOLUME 10

Developing an orthography and writing system for a particular language is perhaps the most difficult and sensitive task a linguist may encounter. Not only must he deal with the interpretation of raw data, but he must also take into consideration the emotional and psychological aspects of writing a person's language. People feel very strongly about the way their language is written. When working in a language such as Kriol, the problems are magnified due, in part, to the continuum between 'light' and 'heavy' Kriol and the fact that it is an English-based creole spoken in an Aboriginal culture. In the first two articles of this work paper, the author discusses some of these issues, explains the basis on which decisions have been made, and presents some of the questions still to be dealt with.

The last article is a resource guide giving a description of materials available in and about Kriol. Also included are references dealing with various aspects of Kriol as well as a bibliography of books published in Kriol.



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ASPECTS OF DEVELOPING A WRITING SYSTEM  
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO  
THE REVISION OF THE KRIOL ORTHOGRAPHY

John Sandefur

0. INTRODUCTION

Two main prerequisites for the establishment of a bilingual program in the Northern Territory in which initial literacy is to be taught in an Aboriginal language are (1) an approved orthography for the language and (2) availability of written materials from which to teach (McGill 1980:7). The orthography, of necessity, must precede the written materials. O'Grady and Hale (1974:5), however, have recommended that a finalized orthography should not be an indispensable condition or qualification of a bilingual program.

Kriol has been used in a bilingual school program since 1975, although the production of written materials did not begin until 1976 and the full implementation of the program until 1977 (Meehan 1981). Part of the delay in the implementation of the program was due to the need for careful consideration of the approach to be taken with Kriol literacy and certain aspects of the Kriol orthography.

In many respects the development of an orthography for Kriol is the same as for any other Aboriginal language. Kriol does, however, have some unique features which appear to be problematical. Sharpe (1974:20), in an early report to the Bilingual Education Consultative Committee, pointed out that 'there is no denying that there are problems in devising an orthography' for Kriol.

Most of these problems are related to the 'continuum' nature of Kriol. Kriol is a creole language that has remained in contact with the languages from which it developed around the turn of the century (Sandefur 1981b). It is technically classified as an 'English-based' creole in that English, which was the culturally dominant language from which it partially developed, has contributed the bulk of the lexemes or vocabulary of Kriol (Sandefur and Sandefur 1979).

Kriol has continued to be influenced by contact with the languages from which it developed. This is most easily seen in the phonology of Kriol. Sandefur (1979) has described the phonology of Kriol in terms of a continuum of sounds with an Aboriginal type sound sub-system at one end and an English type sound sub-system at the other. The Aboriginal type sub-system, for example, contains no phonemic contrasts between voiced and voiceless stops, nor between stops and fricatives. The English type sub-system, however, shows contrasts between all of these. In other words, the former has the one phoneme /b/ whereas the latter has the four phonemes /p/, /b/, /f/ and /v/. Kriol speakers in the Northern Territory generally refer to the 'Aboriginal' end of the continuum as 'heavy Kriol' and the 'English' end as 'light Kriol'.

The two end sub-systems are connected by a series of implicationally related 'levelling' patterns. The end result is that a given word may be pronounced several ways. Although most speakers tend to have a few 'preferred' pronunciations out of the total possible, every speaker utilizes several of the variants. Sharpe (1974) tells of a nurse at Ngukurr who abandoned an attempt to learn Kriol because it varied so much. On first appearance it seems that there is no logical system to the variation in pronunciation of words, but in fact the variation is based on some very logical and precise relations between the contrastive sounds of the two end sub-systems. There is, however, one 'external' conditioning factor: the etymon of the Kriol word, especially if it is an English word, determines the route of variation a phoneme in a given word follows along the continuum between the heavy and light contrasts.

No Kriol speaker can be placed at a single point along the phonological continuum. Instead, every fluent Kriol speaker controls a range of the continuum (Sandefur 1983a). It is normal to find in a single stretch of speech words that have been pronounced with heavy phonemes as well as words with light phonemes. It is also very common for a given word to occur in several variant forms from the same speaker in the same conversation. For no speaker does the extreme set of light contrastive phonemes function as the psychologically contrastive system. For a few speakers, however, the heavy set of contrastive phonemes appears to function as the main psychologically contrastive system.

A stretch of speech consisting primarily of the contrasts of light Kriol or the contrasts of heavy Kriol is generally

considered by Kriol speakers as not being 'proper Kriol'. Likewise, speakers whose range on the continuum tends to be restricted towards one of the ends of the continuum are often considered not to speak proper Kriol. Proper Kriol centres on the middle range of the continuum, although it also includes some contrasts from both ends of the continuum.

Developing an orthography for Kriol has to take into account the variation that is inherent in the unique continuum nature of the language. This presupposes an adequate linguistic analysis of the language. As Sjoberg (1966:264) has pointed out, 'to create a scientifically based orthography one must FIRST have a clear grasp of the language's phonology, grammar, and vocabulary'. The problem, however, is that no linguistic theory devised to date can adequately describe the variation of such a continuum. 'The static idiolectal linguistics of the 1960s is rapidly waning, and most linguists now concede that variation must be accounted for in any adequate theory, but there is still no agreement on how to describe the variable speech behavior of even one speaker, let alone an entire community of speakers' (DeCamp 1977:16).

Most of the other 'problems' that Kriol has with regard to developing an orthography are those which other Aboriginal languages have as well. These problems include those related to the three 'lects': dialect, sociolect, and idiolect. Kriol is spoken as a main language by an estimated 20,000 Aborigines in some one hundred and fifty Aboriginal communities scattered over an area that covers a million square kilometres (Sandefur 1983c). Because of the isolated nature of the communities throughout that area, Kriol has developed a number of dialects. Only three of these dialects have thus far received much research attention (Ngukurr: Sandefur 1979; Bamyili: Steffensen 1977, Sandefur 1979; Fitzroy Valley: Fraser 1974, Hudson 1981). In developing an orthography, dialect differences must be taken into account: 'When different dialects present a multitude of different forms it is necessary to make some choices if there is to be any unity of visual impression and if the same printed materials are to be widely used' (Nida 1963:26).

In addition to the geographical dialects, there are also variants of Kriol which some would call social dialects or sociolects. Some social groupings, which do not necessarily conform to geographical groupings, speak different varieties of Kriol. Some of the most significant

of these social groupings for Kriol are based on age. Kriol, like all living languages, is changing: 'Fixity in language is essentially a metalinguistic construct in the minds of speakers. But though speakers construct for themselves 'a language' which is fixed and regular, empirical research has established that the state of 'a language' at any point in time is a product of a number of (often competing) ongoing historical processes' (Sankoff 1980:139).

The Kriol that the older people speak is different from the Kriol that the middle aged people speak which in turn is different from the Kriol that the children speak. An orthography must take into account the sociolects or variation in language between these social groups.

There is also the problem of idiolects. No two speakers of any language speak exactly alike. No two speakers have exactly the same grammar. No one really knows how individuals who do not talk exactly the same way can nevertheless communicate. Linguistics and associated fields of study have yet to provide conclusive insights in this area. 'We have not the foggiest idea how the individual fits into the linguistic community' (Kobson 1973:164). How then can an orthography take account of idiolectal variation? This question remains unanswered.

## 1. THE KRIOL ORTHOGRAPHY

The development of an orthography for Kriol began in 1973 shortly after the announcement by the Commonwealth Government of the bilingual education policy. A small amount of work had been done in 1967 at Ngukurr by Mary Harris (then of the Church Missionary Society) and Margaret Sharpe [nee Cunningham] (then of the Summer Institute of Linguistics [SIL]), but nothing was done in the intervening period and the current Kriol orthography has little direct connection with their work.

Work on the orthography was carried out in 1973 initially by John Sandefur (of SIL), with an increasing amount of involvement by Sharpe (then no longer with SIL). From 1973 until the end of 1975, the orthography was developed by Sandefur and Sharpe with Kriol speaker involvement limited to testing.

In 1976 two Kriol speakers, David Nangan:golod Jentian (then a schoolteacher at Bamyili) and his brother Danny

Marmina Jentian (then head of literature production at Bamyili), became involved in the orthography development. Nangan:golod had had some linguistic training at the School of Australian Linguistics [SAL] as part of his teacher training, and Marmina was being taught by Sandefur to edit Kriol texts for publication.

By mid 1976 several Kriol speakers from the Ngukurr school had also become involved in the orthography development under the direction of Warren Hastings (then a school teacher with some linguistic training). Sandefur and Hastings were encouraging Kriol speaker involvement in the orthography development and coordination between the Bamyili and Ngukurr dialects. At that time it was not known by the white establishment that Kriol was spoken as a major language outside the Bamyili/Roper River district, hence only these two dialects were being given consideration.

In September of the same year David Zorc of SAL became involved. During that month, ten Kriol speakers from Ngukurr studied linguistics under Zorc and others, four of whom were working specifically on the Kriol orthography.

In November 1976 a concerted effort was made to sort out some of the problems with the orthography and coordinate orthography development between Ngukurr and Bamyili. SAL and SIL cooperated with the Bamyili and Ngukurr schools in holding a four week Kriol writers' course. The course was held on site at Ngukurr under the direction of Zorc. Six Kriol speakers from Bamyili, including Marmina, and six to nineteen (the daily attendance being irregular) from Ngukurr participated.

## 1.1 THE 1976 KRIOL ORTHOGRAPHY

The majority decisions of the participants at the Kriol writers' course established the conventions of the current 'official' Kriol orthography. This orthography gives near maximum representation of significant sounds but allows for underdifferentiation in spelling.

There are 38 letters and digraphs in the orthography: 27 consonants, 7 vowels, and 4 diphthongs. There are 16 consonant letters: b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, w and y; and 11 consonant digraphs: ly, ng, ny, rd, rl, rn, rr, rt, sh, th and tj. These are shown on the chart on the next page.

There are 7 vowels represented in the orthography, 2 with diacritics. These are also shown on the chart below.

```

=====
                        VOWELS
-----
                Front   Central   Back
-----
High           i
Mid            e         e:         o
Low           e/a        a         o:
=====

```

There are also 4 diphthongs:

- ai low central to high front
- oi mid back to high front
- ei mid front to high front
- au low central to high back

```

=====
                        CONSONANTS
-----
                Bi-   Labio-  Inter-  Alve-  Retro-  Alveo-  Lamino-  Velar  Glottal
                labio dental dental olar  flexed palatal palatal
-----
vcls           p             t      rt             tj      k
Stops
vcd           b             d      rd             j      g
-----
vcls                               tj
Affricates
vcd                               j
-----
vcls           f      th      s             sh             h
Fricatives
vcd           k      th      s             s
-----
Nasals         m             n      rn      ny             ng
Laterals       l             rl      ly
Rhotics        rr             r
Semi-
Consonants    w             r      y
-----
(NB: 'vcls' means the sound is voiceless; 'vcd' means it is voiced.)
=====

```

In addition to the letters and digraphs, five spelling conventions were decided upon:

1. Words can be spelt the way one speaks, regardless of dialect, idiolect or range on the continuum: 'we' *mibala* at Bamyili, *melabat* at Ngukurr, and *mela* at Elsey; 'sleep' *jilib*, *jilip*, *silip*, *slip* heavy to light range on the continuum.

2. Proper nouns can be spelt as in the original language or as pronounced in Kriol: *Roper River* ~ *Ropa Riba*; *Katherine* ~ *Gajarran*; *Injai* ~ *Hodgson River* ~ *Hadsan Riba*.

3. Words commonly used in forming compound words should be spelt consistently: *taim* 'time', *dinataim* 'lunchtime, noon', *longtaim* 'a long time ago'; *dei* 'day', *deitaim* 'day time', *tudeina* 'right now'.

4. Reduplication of a word can be indicated either by doubling the word or by placing a 2 at the end of the word: *olmen* 'old man', *olmenolmen* ~ *olmen2* 'old men'; *shabala* 'sharp', *shabalashabala* ~ *shabala2* 'very sharp'; *wok* 'to walk', *wokwok* ~ *wok2* 'walking'.

5. Capitalization and punctuation are basically as practised in English.

## 1.2 ETYMOLOGICAL VS. PHONEMIC ORTHOGRAPHY

As was pointed out above, the vocabulary of Kriol is 'based' largely on English. Eighty or ninety per cent of words in Kriol were initially borrowed from English. While some words taken into Kriol from English have remained unchanged, the vast majority have changed at least in their pronunciation, but often in meaning and use as well.

Because such a large portion of the Kriol lexicon has been borrowed from English, a choice had to be made between two types of orthographic systems which could have been developed for Kriol. One was an etymological orthography in which words would have been spelt in Kriol as they are spelt in the languages from which they were borrowed. The other was a phonemic orthography designed to fit the sound system of Kriol itself. It was the latter type that was chosen.

The advantage of an etymological orthography would have been that people who are literate in English could possibly find it very easy to read and write Kriol--especially whites.

The disadvantages, however, far outweighed the advantage:

1. All the problems inherent in learning to read English because of the way English is spelt would have been carried over into Kriol. For example, in English we do not use the

principle of one symbol-one sound relationship. As a result, [f] may be spelt five ways, as in life, rough, half, cuff, and graph.

2. An etymological orthography for Kriol would have added additional mismatches between sounds and symbols, such as the sound [g] in the following Kriol words: /grajim/ 'dig' would have been scratch-him, /gajim/ 'get' would have been cach-him, and /gidim/ 'get' would have been get-him.

3. Not only would the problems of reading English have been carried over into Kriol, but the problems of learning to spell would also have been carried over. 'To cling to the etymological principle would naturally offer very little practical advantage. One cannot expect the users of a language only to be able to spell correctly with the use of a dictionary' (Voorhoeve 1963:69).

4. Advocating an etymological orthography for dialects of English may be acceptable. Flint (1968:8) notes that 'variation in intelligibility [of Aboriginal English] is due more to phonological than to lexical and grammatical differences'. Dutton (1969:20) likewise notes that Palm Island 'Aboriginal English has the grammatical and lexical structure (except for minor differences . . . ) of standard Australian English. Phonologically, however, it has characteristic features which affect its intelligibility for the non-Aboriginal Australian listener.' Kaldor and Malcolm (1981:44) similarly note that 'some varieties of Aboriginal English resemble very closely or are identical with "White non-standard" Australian English'. Kriol, however, is much further removed from English than are Aboriginal dialects of English, with greater grammatical and lexical divergency from English than dialects of English have. The confusion that would have arisen from etymological spellings are easily seen with Kriol verbs. For example, the Kriol word *skeilimaphat* in a certain context refers to the regular weighing of a female infant. An etymological spelling would be certain to obscure the meaning: scale-him-up-about.

5. More important than linguistic considerations are sociolinguistic ones. What are people's attitudes to the written form of the language? Etymological spellings have been used in popular writings such as Jeannie Gunn's Little Black Princess and Douglas Lockwood's I, The Aboriginal. Such an orthography would support the erroneous view that Kriol is a debased, broken, or at best, quaint variety of English. It is interesting to note here that the first



attempts to write down the French-based Creole in Haiti used an etymological spelling system which was later replaced with a phonemic orthography (Valdman 1968:319).

The advantages of a phonemic orthography over an etymological orthography are readily discernable:

1. A phonemic orthography which is designed specifically to fit Kriol avoids the problems involved in trying to make the language 'fit' the system of another language.
2. A phonemic orthography avoids the carry over into Kriol of the inherent problems of the English system.
3. A phonemic orthography is in line with the basic principle of maximum representation of speech and thus leads to an easier road to literacy.
4. A phonemic orthography reduces negative sociopolitical implications by not making Kriol appear as if it were a broken English.
5. A phonemic orthography aids in clearly differentiating English and Kriol to Kriol speakers, thus avoiding confusion for young readers.

There appear to be, however, some disadvantages of a phonemic orthography:

1. Many whites do not seem to like the idea of a phonemic orthography since it makes Kriol more difficult for them to understand. (In actual fact, however, a phonemic orthography helps reduce the chances of misunderstanding by helping the reader not to interpret in terms of English vocabulary meanings.)
2. With a phonemic orthography, people have to be taught to read. Even most Kriol speakers who are fluent in English literacy cannot fluently read Kriol in a phonemic orthography until they have spent some time learning how to do so. In other words, an English reader has to learn the symbol-sound relationship particular to Kriol. (With an etymological orthography, however, there would be a lot of, if not more, relearning or transferring to do for a person to read Kriol with Kriol pronunciations and intonations instead of English ones.)
3. There are problems with a phonetic orthography because of the continuum nature of Kriol. The Kriol word for

'snake', for example, can be pronounced five ways: *jineg*, *jinek*, *sinek*, *sineik*, and *sneik*. How then should it be spelt?

### 1.3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A PHONEMIC ORTHOGRAPHY

Several considerations were kept in mind in developing the 1976 Kriol orthography. Leeding and Gudschinsky (1974:27) had pointed out that an orthography 'should be chosen to make learning to read as easy as possible for the beginner and also to allow the experienced reader to skim and to read new material smoothly'.

It seemed that the development of an orthography for Kriol because of its continuum nature would be dependent upon answering the questions: What 'point' on the continuum should be selected as the 'norm'? Which heavy to light variety of speech should be the 'standard'?

Because of the understanding of the Kriol continuum at the time and the diversity of sociolinguistic backgrounds of Kriol speakers, another question had often been raised: What segment of the population should the orthography be slanted towards? Should it be slanted towards children and those adults whose speech had undergone little 'levelling' towards the light end? It was thought that if this were done the orthography would result in confusion from underdifferentiation of phonemes for bilingual speakers and those whose Kriol had undergone a high degree of levelling. On the other hand, if it were slanted towards literate bilinguals whose Kriol had undergone a high degree of levelling, it was thought that speakers with little levelling (particularly nonliterates) would have had difficulty with reading due to overdifferentiation of phonemes.

On the subject of overdifferentiation and underdifferentiation, Smalley (1963a:10-11) had noted that 'overdifferentiation, when consistently applied, does not usually present a serious reading problem, at least if it is not too extensive. The reader can usually be taught more than one symbol for the same pronunciation. The greater difficulty with overdifferentiation for the native speaker comes in spelling . . . underdifferentiation of the phonemic structure of the language causes a reading problem if the distinctions which are ignored or confused carry an important functional load. If they do not, or if

context helps to carry the load, underdifferentiation may not be at all serious . . . some underdifferentiation may be not only permissible but desirable in practical orthographies.'

An alternative to the establishment of an orthography based on a given speech variety was to develop an orthography which was basically capable of handling a full differentiation of sounds used in Kriol, thus allowing Kriol writers to write as they spoke.

Sharpe (1974:20) had suggested that 'it may be quite workable in any case to allow more freedom of spelling in [Kriol] than in English in advanced reading materials--after all it is only comparatively recently (post-Shakespeare) that standardised spelling irrespective of pronunciation has become such a custom in English (and this custom is happily violated by good authors representing dialect differences on paper).' (For an English example of this, see Xavier Herbert's Poor Fellow My Country. And indeed, the standardisation of spelling in English is not yet complete. The Macquarie Dictionary gives the following words, for example, with alternate spellings: didgeridoo ~ didjeridu; standardise ~ standardize.)

A literate, according to Gudschinsky (1973:5), is a person who 'in a language that he speaks, can read and understand anything he would have understood if it had been spoken to him; and who can write, so that it can be read, anything that he can say'. Most Kriol speakers vary along a wide range of the continuum, both in speaking and hearing. It was thought that they should also be able to control the same range in reading.

Although Kriol involves continuum variation, what Balint (1973:13) said regarding regional dialectal variation of Tok Pisin was noted: 'I have always disagreed with those Pidgin scholars who believe in the strict standardization of Melanesian Pidgin orthography. It seems to me that the most practical and at the same time scientifically feasible method of recording the various spoken forms of the language is through strict adherence to a general phonetic principle. This principle is quite simply the faithful recording in writing of all regional dialect variants of the language.'

As was noted above, the orthography that was decided upon by the participants in the Kriol writers' course does

indeed allow for variation along the continuum as well as between dialects.

#### 1.4

#### THE NEED FOR A REVIEW

Since 1976 further development of the Kriol writing system has been mainly in terms of the practical application of the orthography. The design and production of the Bamyili School primer workbooks by Dorothy Meehan were in strict keeping with the 1976 orthography decisions. Likewise, materials published by SIL and The Bible Society were edited by Sandefur in accord with those decisions.

Kriol writers themselves, however, while being encouraged to abide by the orthography decisions, have not been forced to do so. Kriol students at SAL, for example, in being taught the principles of phonemics, have practised what they were being taught on their own language. The analysis and resultant orthography that different students have come up with have not necessarily been in agreement with the 1976 decisions.

In addition, Kriol writers at Bamyili School, who have produced the majority of the published material in Kriol, have been finding some aspects of the 1976 decisions problematical. Some of the problems involve the balance between overdifferentiation and underdifferentiation of the phonemic contrasts in Kriol. For example, for most writers the distinction between the mid back and low back vowels, symbolised by o and o: respectively, is not psychologically contrastive. As a result, many writers are not sure when they should use o: instead of o. Some are consciously aware that they 'should' be using o: and thus inconsistently 'sprinkle' a few throughout their writings. On the other hand, a few symbols represent several sounds which are psychologically contrastive, such as the letter b which represents both the stop [b] and the fricative [v]. Some Kriol writers have found the lack of certain letters in the 'official' Kriol orthography frustrating, while others have ignored the 1976 decisions and have used the 'missing' letters.

The 'discovery' in 1979 (Sandefur and Sandefur 1980) that Kriol is spoken in the Kimberleys has resulted in the need to reconsider the orthography decisions of 1976. Those decisions were made with consideration being given only to the Ngukurr and Bamyili dialects of Kriol. The other

dialects of Kriol need to be taken into account and the orthography reviewed.

A study of the Fitzroy Valley dialect by Hudson (1981) indicates that few changes are needed in the existing orthography to make it efficient for that dialect. Most of the changes suggested to account for that dialect are, in fact, the same changes needed to resolve the problem areas experienced by the Bamyili writers.

Informally some writers and editors are beginning to make those changes in the materials they handle. No body of Kriol writers and teachers/linguists has, however, met to make any 'official' changes in the Kriol orthography. [NOTE: See the postscript.] The teachers/linguists involved in Kriol literacy and literature production are hesitant about convening such a body until more research has been done on the other dialects and until there are Kriol speakers from those other dialects with reading and writing experience who can participate as members of such a body.

## 2. THE GOAL OF ORTHOGRAPHY DEVELOPMENT

Whether we are involved in the creation of an orthography for a language which has never been written, in the development of a new orthography to replace an old and unused orthography, or in the revision of an existing but inadequate orthography, it is essential to realize that the task at hand is a very complex one which is by no means easy.

What exactly is the task?

It is useful at this point to make a distinction between the orthography and spelling. Most writers use 'orthography' synonymously with 'writing system' to include all aspects of the graphization (to use Ferguson's term (1968a:29) of language. For example, Nida (1963:23) refers to 'alphabets (systems of writing)' and Voorhoeve (1963:61) to 'spelling, or "orthography"'. A few writers, however, make the distinction that is useful here. The Prague School (Garvin 1974:421), for example, points out that 'the codification of the orthography . . . deals on the one hand with an orthographic system, on the other hand with its implementation in detail (that is, for individual words)'. Grimes (et al 1963:114) uses more familiar terms when he talks about the development of 'an alphabet with spelling rules'. This distinction between orthography and

spelling rules is reflected in the 1976 Kriol orthography decisions by the inclusion of the five spelling rules listed earlier.

For the remainder of this paper I will use the term orthography in the restricted sense of the graphization of phonemes. In layman's terms I would refer to this as the alphabet with the understanding, however, that it includes digraphs and not just letters, as well as punctuation which symbolizes suprasegmental phonemes such as stress and intonation. I will use the term spelling rules to refer to the application of the orthography to individual words. Collectively, the orthography and spelling rules form the writing system.

The development of a writing system is a form of language planning. 'Language planning is deliberate language change; that is, changes in the systems of language code or speaking or both that are planned by organizations that are established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfill such purposes' (Rubin and Jernudd 1971b:xvi). Haugen (1966) has shown that in order to be productive, language planners--in our case, writing system developers--need to be clear about their goals and the strategies to achieve them lest attempts at changing language start an avalanche that may get out of hand.

Speech and writing systems are both codifications of language which can be used to communicate the same messages. Fowlison (1968:74) points out, however, that there are two basic differences between them which must be kept in mind as we work from one to formulate the other. Each system uses a different medium for communication, each with different potentialities. Speech conveys meaning through sound, reading through sight. Assuming the message of both is the same, the brain has to put the same interpretation on the two distinct kinds of information fed into it. A written message is much more limited in the supplementary help it can give the receptor than is speech. Help can be built into a written message by such means as word-pictures, photographs or illustrations, but these are much more limited than a speaker's gestures. On the other hand, a written message does not need the redundancy that speech requires because it does not have to compete with noise. This difference in required redundancy shows up in oral versus written discourse structures.

One of the main areas of language planning is language standardization. Standardization is 'the process of one

variety of a language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a supradialectal norm--the 'best' form of the language . . . ' (Ferguson 1968a:31). According to the Prague School an orthography should contribute to the stability of the standard form of a language: 'the stabilization of standard pronunciation is the job of orthophony . . . [and] the stabilization of the grammatical structure of the standard language . . . is enhanced by . . . its [orthographic] codification . . .' (Garvin 1974:422).

Bolinger (1975:468) points out that 'speech is prior to writing not only historically but also genetically and logically.' Genetically we know that speech comes first because blind children have no difficulty in learning to speak but deaf children have great difficulty in learning to read. Shutting off the channels of sight has little effect on acquiring language, but shutting off the channels of sound is almost fatal to it. Logically we can see that speech has primacy because all well-developed writing systems 'cut in' at some point on the stream of spoken language. That is, some writing systems, such as English, are alphabetic, keying their primary symbols to distinctive sounds; some, such as Japanese, are syllabic, keying their symbols to syllables; others, such as Chinese, are logographic, keying their symbols to words.

A writing system, then, is formulated, in a sense, out of speech. The Prague School would have the writing system ploughed back into the speech system to help stabilize the speech system. The Prague School does recognize, however, that 'evolution is unavoidable; the codifying effort should not try to arrest this evolution by artificially and uselessly maintaining or even introducing archaic forms . . . ' (Garvin 1974:422).

Most of us who are involved in developing writing systems for Aboriginal languages for use in bilingual programs have probably given very little thought to the function of the writing system in the terms of the Prague School. Our definition of the task of writing system development has to a large degree focused on the development of literacy skills. We tend to see the goal of writing system development more in the terms of Cochran (1977:9): 'When a language has a good alphabet, people learn to read more quickly. If they do not have to struggle with words spelt strangely then they can really learn to enjoy reading books and writing stories in their own languages.'

What is a good writing system? Unfortunately there is no simple answer.

According to Powlinson (1968:76), 'the obvious goal of orthography formulation is to create an efficient means of writing a previously unwritten language'. 'Above all,' says Bauernschmidt (1980:12), 'it should facilitate accurate and efficient communication of information in written form.' Fishman (1977:xv) notes, however, that 'the creation of writing systems is significant only insofar as it leads to the acceptance and implementation of writing systems'. According to Bauernschmidt (1980:13), 'one test of a good orthography is that the speaker of the language be able to learn to read and write it. Or to put it another way, the orthography must be teachable.' Nida (1963:23) notes, however, that 'it is not what is easiest to learn, but what people want to learn and use which ultimately determines orthographies'. Gudschinsky (1968:3) argues that 'if the end point of what we are doing is for people to be able to read, then the ultimate test of everything is whether or not it can be read'. Pike (1947:213, 215) observes, however, that 'people can be taught to read any alphabet (1) provided ample time is given and (2) provided they desire to read strongly enough . . . A good alphabet with no motivation will not be read; a poor one with good motivation will allow the absorption of much learning even by people who find reading difficult.'

There are five major factors involved in the development of a writing system: linguistic, sociological, psychological, pedagogical and practical. Weaver (1980) points out, however, that there is much disagreement on the relative importance of these factors. Linguistic factors are 'fundamental to the shaping of any orthography--setting the first requirement . . . [but] narrowly linguistic factors are much less important than socio-cultural ones' (Sjoberg 1966:264, 273). Venezky (1970:256), however, disagrees: ' . . . while socio-cultural factors must be considered at some point in the design of a practical writing system, these are subordinate to the linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical variables . . . '

Gralow (1981:8) claims that 'in the past few years the most important development in the science of orthography design has been the widespread realization that sociolinguistic considerations seem to be "the most crucial" of all



considerations'. The importance of sociological factors is not a new idea. Thirty years ago Burns (1953:85) observed that 'social pressures have inevitably far greater influence in the choice of an orthography than the appeal to linguistic accuracy'. Similarly fifteen years ago Shacklock (1967:30) noted that 'various kinds of sociological factors may be even more important than the linguistic factors in developing an acceptable, usable orthography'.

In practice, of course, what we strive to do is find the balance between the various factors. 'This practical alphabet should be chosen in such a way as to obtain an acceptable balance between phonemic principles and general sociological situations' (Pike 1947:208). Somewhat similarly, Gudschinsky (1973:117) implied the necessity of a compromise: 'It is never possible to devise an acceptable orthography in a social vacuum, apart from social premises. Major languages always impinge on minor languages and often force the orthography of the latter to something less than ideal.'

No one would deny the fact that a thorough understanding of the phonological system of the language is indispensable in devising a good writing system. An accurate analysis is the essential first step. But the importance of sociological and psychological factors over purely linguistic ones cannot be denied. As Gralow (1981:9) has observed, 'obviously, if an orthography is not used, it is worthless. If the orthography is not acceptable to the native speakers of a language, they will not want to read.'

As we have seen there is disagreement as to what constitutes a 'good' writing system and which factors are most important in devising a writing system. The two are, in fact, inextricably bound together. If linguistic factors are considered most important, a good writing system is one which closely reflects the phonological structure of the language by providing a symbol for each phoneme. If psychological factors are most important, a good orthography is the one which most closely reflects the native speaker's reaction or attitude toward the structure of his own language. If sociological factors are most important, a good writing system is one which is acceptable both to the speakers of the minority language and to speakers of the official language, especially those involved in education and language planning. If pedagogical factors are most important, a good orthography is one which is easy to teach to a nonreader and also

provides the easiest possible transfer of reading skills between the minority language and the official language. It is seldom that practical factors, such as the ease of typing and printing, are considered most important. These different factors often conflict with each other, and most writing systems are compromises among them (Hollenbach 1978:52).

Probably the most widely used set of criteria for an adequate orthography is that given by Smalley (1963b:34):

1. Maximum motivation for the learner, and acceptance by his society and controlling groups such as the government. Occasionally maximum motivation for the learner conflicts with government acceptance, but usually the learner wants most what is considered standard in the area.
2. Maximum representation of speech. The fullest, most adequate representation of the actual spoken language is, by and large, the ideal. There are a few points of exception here . . .
3. Maximum ease of learning. Many writing systems have failed . . . because they were essentially too complicated for a learner.
4. Maximum transfer. Here we refer to the fact that certain of the alphabet or other written symbols will, when learned, be applicable to the more rapid learning of the trade or colonial languages in the area. Thus, if a new learner learns a certain pronunciation of a certain symbol in his own native language, and if he can use that same pronunciation with the same symbol in the trade or national language, this is a case of transfer. If, however, the same symbol is used with different value in the other writing system, that transfer cannot be made.
5. Maximum ease of reproduction. Typing and printing facilities are a consideration, although they are not of first importance.

One of the problems, of course, is how to measure 'adequacy' in an absolute, objective way. In Powlison's (1968:76) terms, one measures the

'efficiency' of a writing system, a very important measure of which is 'the degree to which it is used by the people for whom it is designed.' Powlison provides four 'characteristics' of an efficient writing system. These overlap Smalley's criteria, and like Smalley's criteria can only be measured in relative terms:

'To be efficient, a writing system must first of all be acceptable to the speakers of the language, those who should become the writing system's principal users . . . it must be readable by them . . . it must also be able to communicate a message to its readers as unambiguously as possible within the limits of acceptability and readability . . . [and the] fourth characteristic . . . is simplicity' (Powlison 1968:76, 80).

### 3. EVALUATING THE KRIOL WRITING SYSTEM

#### 3.1 CHOICE OF SCRIPT

Langacker (1968:62) has pointed out that writing systems differ in two fundamental ways. They differ in their choice of symbols (e.g. English, Greek or Russian letters), and, more importantly, they differ in the kinds of units the symbols designate (phonemes, syllables or words). The Roman alphabet, which is the one English uses, was selected for Kriol.

The selection of the Roman script for the Kriol orthography was a wise one, for several reasons. Cotterell (1978:10) has pointed out that 'fluent reading takes place primarily through the recognition of wholes . . . We seem to do this through the recognition of word silhouettes. We differentiate these silhouettes from one another either by their length or by the various projections of the letters.' Square scripts, such as Hebrew and Ethiopic, are difficult to read because they present a poor silhouette. The Arabic script presents a good silhouette without the vowel signs, but it loses the silhouette when the vowel signs are printed. The lower case Roman script presents a good silhouette because some of the letters remain between the two guidelines, some project above and some project below. As a result, the lower case Roman script is excellent for literacy purposes, but anything written totally in upper

case loses the silhouette and becomes difficult to read. A good silhouette contributes greatly to the readability of an orthography.

Nida (1963:23) has pointed out that 'alphabets (systems of writing) are largely cultural matters, and the value of existing systems of writing which may be known to the people in greater or lesser degree must be taken fully into consideration . . . ' Powlison (1968:76) notes that 'the dominant culture itself may insist that any writing systems developed for culturally dependent groups must conform as closely as possible to its own, but the people of the dependent culture themselves will also want this, unless . . . ' The Kriol speakers who were involved in developing the Kriol orthography in 1976 were exposed to other types of script, but none of them were given serious consideration. No one from the dominant (i.e. white) culture has insisted that the Roman script be used, though with few exceptions it has been assumed that it would be.

The selection of the Roman script for Kriol meets Smalley's criterion of maximum motivation. In his discussion of this criterion, Smalley limits himself to the question of whether or not the orthography being developed should be in the script of the national language. 'I think there can be no question as to the soundness of the basic principle of motivation in the direction of the prestige language of an area . . . This, I feel, is the most important consideration in a practical orthography . . . Without it people may in time turn against a writing system as they become more sophisticated in the culture patterns around them' (Smalley 1963b:36-37).

### 3.2

#### THE USE OF UPPER CASE

Even though the Roman script was selected, there was concern among Kriol speakers that Kriol should not look like English but should have an identity of its own. This was one of the major factors in the rejection of an etymological writing system. Kriol speakers have not, however, been game to venture too far from the Roman script as used in English. For example, Cotterell (1978:10) argues that 'if you use the Roman script it may be advantageous to leave out capital letters altogether. There is no reason why you have to start a sentence with a capital letter or use capital letters for nouns, just because we do.' Indeed, Smalley (1963a:3-4) points out

that upper case letters are unrelated to speech and writing systems that do not distinguish between capital and lower case letters work perfectly well. If the use of upper case letters was eliminated, Kriol would have a more efficient writing system. It would be easier to teach and easier to learn, as there would be only half as many symbols to cope with.

Smalley (1963a:3-4), however, warns that 'Roman orthographies without capitals for minority languages in which the speakers feel cultural insecurity may contribute to the rejection of the system. It appears to them as being substandard, less than completely identified with the prestige writing system.' Unfortunately, Nida (1963:23) is right in his comment that 'when efficiency and cultural prestige are pitted against one another, the latter almost always wins out in the end. It is not what is easiest to learn, but what people want to learn and use which ultimately determines orthographies.'

The capitalisation rule for Kriol established in 1976 states that upper case is to be as practised in English. Some of the English conventions, however, are not being followed in Kriol. For example, the first person pronoun *ai* is not capitalised as is the English *I*, and some writers capitalise the common noun 'name' of personified animals (e.g. *Keinggurru*) whereas English normally would not (e.g. *kangaroo*). The use of upper case in Kriol to mark contrasts in meaning (e.g. *dedi* vs. *Dedi* for 'human father' vs. 'heavenly father' and *god* vs. *god* for 'true God' vs. 'false god') is of doubtful significance to Kriol speakers. Here again, however, pressure from the dominant culture may demand such usage. No standard of usage has yet emerged, but the rules of upper case usage will need to be clearly elaborated to assist in the development of a more unified approach to the formal teaching of writing.

### 3.3

### DIACRITICS AND SPECIAL SYMBOLS

Because of the concern that Kriol should not look like English, the Kriol participants at the 1976 course made several decisions in which Kriol did not follow English conventions. One of these decisions was the optional symbolisation of reduplication by the figure 2, as it is normally symbolised in Malay (Smalley 1963a:8). For example, the Kriol word for 'talking' can be written *toktok* or *tok2*. This symbol, however, has not been used very widely and probably should be dropped, at least from

published material intended for a wide audience. Because it is not used in English, Kriol speakers learning to read Kriol without formal instruction by transferring their reading skills from English find it a hinderance. Unless a person is formally taught what it means, it tends to remain a peculiar puzzle to the reader.

No rule has been specified regarding the writing of a reduplicated word as one word or as two words. The tendency has been for shorter words to be written as one word (e.g. reduplicated *bogi* is written as *bogibogi*) whereas longer words have tended to be written as two (e.g. reduplicated *shabala* as *shabala shabala*). Many readers stumble over the longer words when they are written as one. A suggested rule would be to write one and two syllable words as one word when reduplicated and words with three or more syllables as two words when reduplicated (e.g. *tok* and *bogi* would be *toktok* and *bogibogi*, whereas *shabala* would be *shabala shabala*).

Another non-English decision was the option in cursive writing of indicating the 'tail-n' [ŋ] as either ng or ŋ. The cursive 'tail-n' has not, in fact, been used very often. As with the symbol 2, this is probably due to the need for the symbol to be formally taught, and as the vast majority of Kriol readers to date have 'taught themselves' to read Kriol by transfer from English, it will probably remain mostly an unused option. The cursive 'tail-n' is not used in published material because of the practical problems relating to Smalley's fifth criteria of maximum ease of reproduction.

Cotterell (1978:13) points out that an orthography must be produceable: 'Of course your typewriter can be modified to cover a range of several hundred different symbols which are all available on presses all over the world. But beware. Do not go beyond the signs that are available, because if you do your books will not be printed.' Bowers (1968) speaks of this produceable or practical aspect of the orthography as 'human consumability'. In order to be humanly consumable an orthography 'should be capable of being typed conveniently (without too much back-spacing for diacritical marks) on a standard typewriter suitably adapted, and of being printed at reasonable cost' (Bowers 1968:395). With the exception of the cursive 'tail-n', all symbols in the Kriol writing system are available on normal typewriters.

Several other uncommon characters were considered at the 1976 course, but these were dismissed mainly because they were not available on normal typewriters. There was, however, a decision to make use of one diacritic on two vowels, the diacritic being symbolized by the colon or 'double dot' (:). Several 'above the letter' diacritics were considered but not accepted because of the need to back space and hence slow down production. The double dot diacritic necessitates carriage shifting and hence is not ideal, but its frequency of occurrence is low and thus slows production only slightly.

The use of the two vowels with the double dot diacritic (/e:/ and /o:/) has caused much difficulty. The distinction between /o/ and /o:/ appears to be psychologically significant to very few Kriol readers and writers. Many of the writers know they 'should' be using o:, but they do not know when to use it instead of o. As a result there tends to be a random sprinkling of o:'s throughout their writings. To self-taught transfer readers, the diacritic has no significance; if anything, it acts as a hindrance to their reading. It is recommended, therefore, that o: be dropped from the orthography as it serves very little useful purpose.

The use of the e:, however, presents more of a problem. The e: represents the mid central 'schwa' vowel which is psychologically significant to many Kriol speakers. The use of the diacritic to symbolize the vowel, however, constantly causes reading and writing problems, largely due to its non-English familiarity. A person has to be specifically taught how to use it before it can be mastered, but because relatively few Kriol readers have received formal instruction it tends to be a puzzle. Many Kriol writers also continue to have problems with its use. Interference from the English spelling system indicates that it would be more effective to use the letter r in place of the double dot. This is because most of the English etymons of the Kriol words which contain the schwa vowel are spelt with a vowel plus r (e.g. 'church' and 'world'). If such a suggestion is followed through, with the double dot being dropped in favour of r, a study would need to be made to determine which vowel is best used with the r. Probably, different vowels will need to be used with specific words, depending firstly on the alternate heavy pronunciations of the word in which the schwa vowel is not used (e.g. wark for 'work') and secondly on the vowel of the English etymon (e.g. worl for 'world').

Though some consideration was given to using a script other than the Roman script for Kriol, no consideration was given to anything other than an alphabetic system. The experience of everyone involved in the development of the writing system for Kriol had been limited to alphabetic systems. We unconsciously assumed, as Cotterell (1978:11) so aptly stated it, that the 'Roman script is good because it has letters, not syllable symbols.' In actual fact, the Roman script can be used for a syllabary system of writing, but the complexity of Kriol syllable patterns and the large inventory of phonemes, especially in the light sub-system, would make a syllabary unwieldy. It would be in direct conflict with Powlison's simplicity characteristic of an efficient writing system.

Powlison (1968:76) draws a distinction between the types of symbols used in an orthography and their respective values. In other words, in developing an orthography for an Aboriginal language we may select the Roman script over an Arabic script or syllabary, but what values will we assign to the various Roman letters?

Smalley (1963a:7) claims that 'it seems clear that a writing system which represents the phonemic level (whether on a syllabic or alphabetic basis) is the most efficient basic system because it requires the learning of the fewest symbols to represent the full range of speech.' The phonemic principle which underlies all adequate writing systems is this: every distinctive sound is represented by one symbol and only one in the writing system (Smalley 1963b:38). This is vastly oversimplified, but the point involved is basic. Phonetic writing reflects all the minutia of sound difference which a highly trained ear can detect, whereas phonemic writing represents with the same symbol all of the different phonetic variety which function as the same unit in the sound system of the language. The mother tongue speaker of the language reacts to the phonemes primarily rather than to all of the phonetic variety (Smalley 1963a:6).

The difficulty with Kriol, as pointed out above, is the continuum nature of the phonological system. Linguists have yet to develop an adequate theory of variation in language which can handle the analysis and description of creole continua, and it is impossible to describe the sound system of Kriol in terms of a static set of phonemes. It is desirable for the orthography to symbolise every sound



that is psychologically significant to Kriol speakers. Kriol speakers who are not sophisticated English speakers and readers tend to perceive Kriol as having fewer significant sounds than do bilinguals, even though both speak overlapping ranges of the Kriol continuum. Any orthography will inevitably overdifferentiate for the one group and underdifferentiate for the other.

Sounds in Kriol which are overdifferentiated by the 1976 orthography at the heavy end of the continuum include: /f, th, s, sh, h, e:, o:, ei, au/; for the extreme heavy end /p, t, rt, tj, k/ are also overdifferentiated. Sounds which are underdifferentiated for the light end of the continuum include: /v, z/; for the extreme light end /ɬ, ʒ, l, æ, ʌ/ are also underdifferentiated. The only suggested change to the consonant orthography is the introduction of the grapheme v. The creative writings of Kriol speakers since 1976 have indicated the need for a distinction to be made in the orthography between the voiced bilabial stop [b] and the voiced labiodental fricative [v]. In the 1976 orthography both of these are symbolized by b; with the suggested change the orthography would have both b and v.

It should be noted that the Kriol orthography does not distinguish the voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives [ð] and [θ]; the voiced and voiceless alveolar and voiced alveopalatal fricatives [z], [s] and [ʒ]; nor the laminopalatal stops and alveopalatal affricates [tʃ], [dʒ] and [ts], [dz]. These distinctions are not made primarily because they are psychologically contrastive to very few Kriol readers and writers.

The vowels of Kriol are much more complex than the consonants, due in large part to differences in the vowel systems of traditional Aboriginal languages which have influenced Kriol. Though very few Kriol speakers use only a heavy sub-system, the influence of different traditional language vowel systems is noticeable, especially in the alternate pronunciations of some words. In the Fitzroy Valley the influence of three-vowel systems is such that e and o are sometimes i, a or u (e.g. *redi* 'ready' is sometimes *rudi*). The influence of three-vowel systems in the Roper area as opposed to five-vowel systems in the Bamyili area helps to explain some of the dialect differences between the two areas. Roper speakers tend to say *gu* 'go' while Bamyili speakers say *go*, Roper speakers say *alabat* 'they' while Bamyili speakers say *olabat*, Roper speakers say *numu* 'no' while Bamyili speakers say *nomo*.

In her analysis of the heavy sub-system of the Fitzroy Crossing dialect, Fraser (1974) gives a contrast between a series of short and long vowels. The Kriol orthography, however, makes no distinctions for length. Nida (1963:27) has noted that 'advocating the omission of diacritics to mark tone and stress and length may seem like linguistic heresy to some persons. Actually it is not. We simply need to recognize that for the speakers of a language it is not necessary to mark everything which is meaningful.' In terms of a practical orthography, Hudson (1981:26) has pointed out that a five-vowel system without distinctions for length appears to be adequate for the Fitzroy Valley dialect of Kriol.

The 1976 Kriol writers' workshop decided upon the use of four diphthongs. Continued production of Kriol written materials, however, have indicated a need for some additional diphthongs. The study by Hudson (1981:26) supports this conclusion. It is suggested that three additional diphthongs be recognized (namely, /ou/, /oa/ and /ua/).

If the above suggested changes are incorporated, the Kriol vowel orthography would then be as given on the chart below.

=====			
SUGGESTED KRIOL VOWEL ORTHOGRAPHY			
	Front	Central	Back
-----			
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	
-----			
	<u>ai</u>	low central to high front	
	<u>ei</u>	mid front to high front	
	<u>oi</u>	mid back to high front	
	<u>au</u>	low central to high back	
	<u>ou</u>	mid back to high back	
	<u>oa</u>	mid back to low central	
	<u>ua</u>	high back to low central	
=====			

Very little attention has been given to stress in Kriol. The 1976 course made no mention of it, nor do any statements on the Kriol writing system include stress. This is due partly to the fact that those of us who have been working on the development of the Kriol writing system

come from a writing tradition that does not mark stress. Indeed, Hollenbach (1978:53) has pointed out that one of the problems of marking stress is 'a shortage of available symbols in official languages that use a Roman alphabet'. If stress needs to be marked, how should it be done?

Fortunately, in Kriol there appears to be no need to mark stress. The general tendency in Kriol is to place stress on the first syllable of words (e.g. 'nogudwan 'bad, useless'). Some words retain the stress pattern of the English etymon, especially words in which an initial cluster has been avoided by vowel insertion (e.g. *bi'langgit* 'blanket'). Other words alternate between stress on the first syllable and the stress pattern of the English etymon, again especially words in which an initial cluster has been avoided by vowel insertion (e.g. *'silip ~ si'lip* 'sleep').

### 3.5

#### TESTING A WRITING SYSTEM

A writing system that is based on the phonemic principle, as was pointed out above, depends upon a thorough analysis and understanding of the structure of the language in question. Linguists, however, too often tend to undertake the analysis and subsequent devising of an orthography by themselves. Cochran (1977:11) points out that 'at a time when there are an increasing number of people receiving advanced formal education in countries where there are languages as yet not reduced to writing, or are written inadequately, it is important that nationals become involved in the designing of alphabets for their own languages wherever possible; expatriate linguists should not make all such decisions.'

The need for mother tongue speaker involvement in the development of a writing system too often shows up after the system has been devised by an outsider. Shand (1972:13), for example, provides an analysis of reading problems in a language in the Philippines that were 'due to the fact that our phonemic analysis and orthography do not reflect the actual structure of the language in certain respects . . . ' Arsjo (1981:8) reports a similar inaccurate analysis and orthography in a Papua New Guinea language which they were alerted to because of problems that occurred, not in reading, but only in writing: 'Why didn't the initial phonemic analysis indicate any of these things? Part of the problem was undoubtedly our inability to hear accurately . . . The people's feelings should have

been taken into consideration. Exactly how you do that early in a program we don't know, but that people intuitively know things about their own language that ought to be considered seems fairly certain.'

Two ways of including speakers' intuitive knowledge about their language in developing a writing system are testing and an orthography conference. Unfortunately, testing is often done in an ad hoc manner, as has been the case with Kriol, while an orthography conference is often called after problems have developed, which was not the case with Kriol. The suggestions made in this paper regarding the Kriol writing system are made, not on the basis of objective testing, but on the basis of informal observations of reading and writing problems and discussions with Kriol writers since 1976.

Linguistic problems are not the only reason for needing testing. The linguistic analysis may be accurate, but sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic factors may be the cause of problems. For example, one linguist has advocated the distinction in the Kriol orthography of the 'phonemes' [i] and [ɪ] on the basis of the minimal pair 'sheep' and 'ship'. That phonetic distinction is, in fact, often made by Kriol speakers, but they also sometimes 'reverse' the distinctions; i.e. 'sheep' is usually [ʃi:p], but sometimes [ʃɪ:p]. When the minimal pair was presented to Kriol speakers at the 1976 course as an argument in favour of making the distinction in the orthography, the unanimous response was negative. The Kriol speakers' counter-argument: 'We don't say \*ʃɪ:p for 'ship'. We say *bout*.'

Gudschinsky (1970:24) pointed out a decade ago that 'we urgently need a large number of perceptive and sensitive tests to find out to what extent the orthographies currently in use are in fact adequate.' According to Powlison (1968:85) 'a fairly safe test of orthographical efficiency is whether or not a number of native speakers can read potentially ambiguous forms correctly when certain symbols are omitted. Writing reaction, however, is not necessarily a safe test of the need to use or not use certain symbols.' The Prague School (Garvin 1974:421), however, notes that it is important to study 'recurrent spelling mistakes in order to . . . [detect] the inadequacies of current codification or its unnecessary complexity; when dealing with the orthography one should not forget either the needs of the schools or those of the broad masses'.

Gudschinsky (1970:24) further notes that a question which should be raised when the adequacy of an orthography is being discussed is the method used in teaching: 'It is almost certain that some orthographies which appeared to be too difficult for people to learn to read were not really too difficult at all. The problem lay in the method with which reading was taught . . . In any testing program, reading errors must be correlated with teaching methods as well as with orthography changes.'

In testing the orthography of a Papua New Guinea language, Arsjo (1981:7) found a marked division of opinion between the people who were literate in the language only and those who were also literate in Pidgin and/or English. The testers concluded that the best people to test were the monoliterates rather than the multiliterates because 'they will be in the majority for some time to come.' This is the opposite from the situation with Kriol. The vast majority of Kriol readers are biliterates, having first learnt to read English in school and then taught themselves to read Kriol by transfer. That is likely to remain the major trend with Kriol for a long time to come unless education departments seek to raise the rate of literacy by utilising Kriol. The important Kriol speakers to test are those who speak Kriol as their primary language, preferably those who speak it as their mother tongue. Those who speak it as a second language should also be tested, but the results of their tests should not carry as much weight in revising the writing system as those of first language speakers.

Hollenbach (1978:59) has cautioned that 'different people have reacted in quite different ways to orthographical decisions we made, even though all were native speakers. I would therefore further urge people involved in orthography design to check with several people. It is also well to remember that people often tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than what they themselves think.'

Jones (1978:2) provides a report of an orthography conference in Brazil that 'arose out of the increasing bilingualism of the group coupled with increasing literature in their Kura language. Most of the people learned to read and write Portuguese before they learned to read and write Kura, and in areas of uncertainty each person was making his own adaptation of Portuguese orthography to the Kura written language.' One of the exciting results of the conference was the realisation by the participants that their language, 'while different from

Portuguese, is more valuable to them because it more accurately expresses the way they think. As they realised that the orthography of Kura could be planned to write their language more accurately than Portuguese is written, they became even more proud of their language' (Jones 1978:2).

One of the benefits of the 1976 Kriol course was that the Kriol participants improved their reading and writing skills through the detailed discussions about the orthography. A greater benefit, however, was that the Kriol participants became very possessive about their language and in many cases dogmatic about their decisions. They openly expressed the attitude that Kriol was their language, that they knew more about it than we white linguists did, and that therefore what they decided carried more weight than what we suggested. The Kriol writing system, while involving white teachers and linguists in its development, is the property of Kriol speakers.

### 3.6

#### CONSIDERATION FOR TRANSFER

One of the main problems that Kriol has is the lack of prestige. Many speakers of the language, including those who speak it as their mother tongue, do not express pride in the language. Elsewhere (Sandefur 1979, 1981a) I have pointed out that this is not unexpected from people who have a long history of having their language berated, both officially and unofficially, by whites, with many school children being punished if caught speaking it.

It is usually thought best for a writing system to be designed to enable easy transfer both from and to the national language, especially if the language has low prestige. Bendor-Samuel (1981:24-25) points out that a 'situation calling for careful judgment is that of a community where a number of members have gained some literacy skills in the national language, and where the written form of the mother tongue has very low status. Sociolinguistic factors may cause people to choose to read the Scriptures in the national language with very poor comprehension, rather than in their low-prestige mother tongue with full understanding. In such cases a literacy program designed to raise the status of literature in the mother tongue may well be justified even though a number of community members have already been taught basic reading skills. Such programs will probably focus on the

development and distribution of vernacular literature, rather than on teaching people how to read.'

Most of the discussion about transfer potential of an orthography in the literature, however, deals with transfer from the mother tongue to the national language. 'The next principle to which we want to give consideration is the principle that, having learned to read his native language, a reader should be able to learn to read the trade or national or colonial language of the area with as little difficulty as possible in the transference of the value of the symbols' (Smalley 1963b:44). 'The typical view of missionaries today seems to be that one should choose the alphabet that is used for the national language of the country and the spelling conventions should be such that they would provide an easy transition to the national language' (Ferguson 1968b:259). The only Kriol readers who have transferred from Kriol to English have been the children who have come through the Bamyili Kriol bilingual program. All others to date have transferred from English to Kriol, and the vast majority for a long time to come will be in this category.

The concept of transfer is based upon the observation that 'once literacy is obtained in one language, there is rarely trouble in obtaining it in another language with a similar type of writing system' if the reader also speaks that language (Berry 1977:7). The conclusion usually drawn is that 'the alphabet should conform as closely as is practicable to the trade language' (Pike 1947:212).

In Australia, however, there has also been a general consensus that there should be a uniformity of orthographies for Aboriginal languages, thus promoting transfer between Aboriginal languages. In the early stages of the development of the Kriol orthography, the primary concern was for maximum transfer from Kriol to English. This was because the focus for the moment was the development of a writing system to enable the establishment of the Kriol bilingual programs in the Bamyili and Ngukurr schools. Some consideration was also given, however, to transfer between Kriol and other Aboriginal languages because of the cultural emphasis of the bilingual programs. One aspect of teaching culture was having traditional language classes. It was desirable that children be able to transfer their reading skills from Kriol to the traditional languages.

Transfer from English to Kriol has only recently been given consideration. As adult literacy has begun to be brought into focus, it has been realised that many Kriol speakers can already read English and the number going through school is increasing. In order to achieve wide-spread Kriol literacy with the least difficulty and expense, it is essential to make transfer from English to Kriol as smooth as possible.

When it comes to trying to design a writing system that will provide maximum transfer from one language to another, 'there are always difficulties because of the fact that no two languages are really alike' (Smalley 1963b:45). In the case of two traditional Aboriginal languages, the differences between them may be minimal so as to cause no problems. On the other hand, there may be significant phonemic differences between dialects of the one language to cause major problems. The problem of dialect differences, however, is not generally considered to be a problem of transfer. Kather, as Smalley (1963b:40) points out, it is often a question of the maximum representation of speech. In general, Smalley (1963a:10) advocates the principle of greatest diversity: 'overdifferentiation may be required for certain dialects of a language in order to accommodate a writing system to more than one dialect'. It is this principle of overdifferentiation that problems of dialect differences often have in common with problems of transfer between languages.

The problems of maximising the transfer potential for a minority language orthography are of several types. The first, which is related to the problem of dialect differences, is the mismatch between the allophonic variants of the phonemes of the two languages. For example, in English the voiceless stop /t/ has two allophones, aspirated and unaspirated ([t<sup>h</sup>] and [t]) respectively, whereas the voiced stop /d/ has only the one form ([d]). It would be possible in another language for the aspirated variant [t<sup>h</sup>] to be an allophone, not of the voiceless stop /t/, but of the voiced stop /d/.

A more common problem with English, however, arises from the fact that the English orthographic system contains more than one symbol for a single phoneme. The general principle guiding the selection of a symbol or grapheme is to choose the most common one with the least distributional restrictions (Hollenbach 1978:53). For example, s would usually be chosen over z or c for a voiceless alveolar sibilant. When there is no symbol without distributional



restrictions, sometimes more than one symbol may need to be chosen to represent the one phoneme.

The English vowel system is especially complex in this area. It is because of the English complexities that the Kriol orthography has essentially followed the recommendation of Leeding and Gudschinsky (1974:29) that the five symbols used in English [but not necessarily with their English values] be used . . . ' Problems in transition into English cannot be avoided because of the two distinctly different vowel systems. Use of the recommended symbols, however, will make reading in the vernacular as easy as possible and should help to keep problems to a minimum when transfer is made to English.' This has aided transfer between Kriol and traditional languages, though relatively few Kriol speakers make that transfer. Problems Kriol speakers may experience in vowel transfer from Kriol to English are basically the same as those experienced by speakers of other Aboriginal languages, with the solutions to the problems being similar. The main problems, however, are in the transfer from English to Kriol.

Interference problems are especially noticeable with reading of the Kriol u and a, particularly in one syllable words. For example, bat is often incorrectly read as 'bat' instead of 'but', and but as 'but' instead of 'koot'. A possible solution to this interference problem would be to partially shift the Kriol vowel symbols around, with the addition of an extra vowel. If this were done, a would symbolize a low front vowel [ ] instead of the low central vowel /a/; u would symbolize the low central vowel /a/ instead of the high back vowel /u/; and oo would be used to symbolize the high back vowel /u/. This would, however, lead to further complications with some of the longer words. It may be that simply using oo in place of u for the high back vowel would be the best compromise. A shifted vowel system has not been formally tested, and most informal discussions about a shift have been negative.

If a move were to be made in this area of making Kriol vowels much more like English vowels so as to facilitate transfer, a closer examination would need to be made. Grimes et al (1963:117) have, for example, recommended the following symbolisation for several African languages based on the regularity in English: ee as in the English word bee; ay as in play; eh for the sound in bet (e not being acceptable as it would be read as the sound in be); a as in carpet; aw as in lawn; ow as in know (o not being

acceptable as it would be read as the sound in pot or to); and oo as in boot. One of the problems with such a system, as Grimes et al (1963:118) notes, is that it is not a very economical use of space. With smaller books this may not matter, but with large volumes, such as books of the Bible, it becomes a significant factor.

The complex problems of maximising the transfer potential of an orthography arise when the orthography of the national language provides no exactly equivalent symbol for a phoneme in the minority language. Hollenbach (1978:53) discusses four possible ways to resolve such problems. The first is to combine existing symbols into new digraphs or trigraphs. The same sequence of symbols should not otherwise occur in the minority language and preferably not in the national language either. She says this is usually a good solution sociologically and one that does not hinder the transfer of reading skills. A second solution is to assign a new sound value to a symbol in the national language orthography that is not otherwise needed in the minority language. This solution, however, may cause interference in the transfer of reading skills. A third solution is to introduce a symbol or diacritic that is not part of the national language orthography. This solution tends to be good for transfer, but it is not very good sociologically. A fourth solution is to omit contrasts found in the minority language. This solution, she says, is good sociologically but not phonologically and sometimes causes pedagogical problems because of the lost information.

Smalley (1963b:49), like Hollenbach, discourages the use of invented symbols, pointing out that such symbols destroy 'much of the character of the resemblance to the model language'. When an invented symbol has to be used, it should be readily distinguishable from the symbols already in use. The use of diacritics is often the recommended solution. Normally diacritic marks are placed so as to make them as conspicuous as possible. Nida (1963:29) points out that the Roman script is generally read along the tops of the letters, not along the bottoms. Therefore, with the Roman script, diacritics are usually placed over the letters they modify. In some situation, however, they may need to be made as inconspicuous as possible. This has been the case, for example, with the Mesquital Otomi people in Mexico who 'suffer from considerable cultural insecurity and . . . are quite sensitive about such language problems. The closer their language conforms to the general appearance of Spanish the more are they likely to be interested in reading it . . . ' (Nida 1963:29).

The Kriol orthography makes use of a combination of solutions, trying to strike a balance between maximising the transfer potential to English and yet conforming to the recommendations for uniformity among Aboriginal languages. Kriol phonemes that are common with English make use of the English symbol with the least restricted distribution. For example, the phoneme /f/ is symbolized by f, not ph nor gh. It should also be noted that in keeping with the English usage, the digraph th is used in Kriol to symbolize both the voiced and voiceless interdental fricative. Where the sounds of Kriol are common with other Aboriginal languages, but not English, is most noticeable in the use of digraphs. While this aids transfer to traditional languages, transfer from English to Kriol in some instances is hindered.

Kriol makes use of digraphs in common with other Aboriginal languages for the retroflexed phonemes /rt, rd, rn, rl/, the alveopalatal phonemes /tj, ny, ly/ and the flapped or trilled rhotic /rr/. The retroflexed phonemes do not occur in English, but the digraphs do (e.g. 'fort', 'bird', 'burn' and 'girl'). Two of the alveopalatal phonemes, however, do occur in English, but because they are not considered significant sounds they do not have their own symbols (e.g. the first nasal in 'onion' and the lateral in 'million'). Similarly, the flapped rhotic occurs in some dialects of English but does not receive special attention. Though all of these digraphs tend to cause some problems in the initial stages of transfer, only the alveopalatal /tj/ causes critical problems. Its appearance is very non-English, especially when word initial. This symbol, unlike the others in the Kriol orthography, alters the image of the light Kriol word in relation to its English etymon such that good readers often hesitate. For example, 'church' is *tjetj* and 'children' is *tjildrin*. A possible improvement would be to use the digraph ch instead of tj. The main disadvantage of ch is that it introduces the letter c. In teaching nonliterate, its use would introduce complications as c has no meaning apart from its use in the digraph. The other approach would be to simply eliminate the tj and underdifferentiate the voiced-voiceless contrast, using j for both.

### 3.7 VARIABILITY AND STANDARDISATION OF SPELLING

The unique difference in the Kriol writing system from other writing systems is the variability of spelling along

the continuum. This provides for a wide range of stylistic possibilities for Kriol writers who have literary feeling. In addition, the variability of spelling, which is consistent in sound-symbol relationship, allows for the development of initial reading materials in specific dialects. As Nida (1963:26) points out, the problem of having one dialect of a language as the model for the 'literary dialect' of the language shows up 'in attempting to teach people to read a dialect which is not their own. Accordingly, it is wise to provide primers and some introductory materials in the specific dialect in question. Once the person has learned what reading is, he can then with much greater ease make the adjustment to another dialect.' The Kriol variability of spelling rule, in fact, allows for the preparation of materials geared to the idiolects of individual students. As Genat (1976:44) points out, 'the material given for reading should approximate the reader's oral language as closely as possible'.

In addition, the variability of spelling should eliminate the need to spend hours of time teaching spelling. Once people learn the orthography with its consistent sound to symbol relationships, they can spell the way they speak. It should make the pedagogical task easier, especially as compared to English: 'The reason we can get along with five vowel symbols in English for our horribly complex vowel system is that we can force children to stay in school long enough to teach them' (Smalley 1963b:42).

There has been, however, much opposition to the variability of spelling--though all the opposition I am aware of has come from non-Kriol speakers. Mother tongue English speakers, who come from a tradition of standardised spelling, do not know how to cope with variability. Somewhat similarly, those of us who are involved in the ongoing task of compiling a Kriol dictionary have difficulty in knowing how to handle the variability.

Some standardisation has, in fact, been taking place with Kriol. There is a noticeable trend among Kriol writers not to use the full range of variability available to them and present in their own speech. An extreme example is the demonstrative pronoun 'that'. With its short, long and longer forms, it can be pronounced in some twenty-four different ways (a few examples: *jat*, *dat*, *dadan*, *tharran*, *jarranwan*). Only half a dozen of the potential twenty-four written forms occur with any frequency in written work. In the design of initial reading material, the consensus of

all teachers has been that a selected standard must be chosen with variability introduced at a late stage in the reading scheme. The standardised spelling of individual words in the Bamyili literacy kit was based primarily on common pronunciations of the children which were acceptable to the adult literacy workers. There has also been strong pressure--and here again it's been from whites, including manuscript typists!--to be consistent in the spelling of words within a given book. In other words, 'that' may be spelt as *jat* in one book and as *dat* in another book, but the pressure has been against allowing both *jat* and *dat* to occur in the same book.

I suspect that pressure from the dominant culture (i.e. from whites) will continue to be applied for the standardisation of spelling in Kriol. White teachers who attempt to encourage Kriol literacy, both reading and writing, among their students usually have difficulty in knowing how to cope with the variability. I would suggest that some standardisation of Kriol spelling should be undertaken to enable such teachers to cope and thus continue to encourage Kriol literacy. I would not suggest, however, that variability completely be eliminated, nor am I suggesting here that Kriol grammar should be standardised. That is to say, I am not advocating prescribing rules for correct and incorrect usage of grammar. What I am suggesting is that just as there are rules that specify the use of the symbols in the Kriol orthography, there is a need to elaborate the rules regarding the spelling of Kriol words and also the use of punctuation. The 1976 decisions did in fact speak to both of these areas: spell as you speak, and punctuate as practised in English. Observations of Kriol reading and writing over the last six years, however, clearly indicate the need to elaborate on the 1976 decisions.

Most of the literature on developing writing systems does not deal with the problem of such wide-ranging variability, mainly because few creoles had received orthographic attention until recently. Voorhoeve (1963) provides us with a discussion of a restricted problem of variability in Sranan, a creole language in Surinam. For various reasons, such as quickness of speech or emphasis intended by the speakers, vowels can be elided or lost. The problem is how to spell words in which vowel elision takes place. One solution 'might be sought in a set spelling of the words according to the pronunciation at a moderate speed. Then, however, the spelling becomes difficult to learn. A dictionary would constantly have to be consulted.

Moreover, in this way the language loses its stylistic flexibility, because it is the use of double forms which is so important stylistically, and is absolutely indispensable to the rhythm of the sentence. Besides, the pronunciation also changes with the degree of emphasis and the position in the sentence, even where the speed remains constant. So an arbitrary choice would have to be made between the double forms anyhow. This solution should therefore be rejected' (Voorhoeve 1963:65).

Kriol does not have an exact equivalent to the Sranan double form problem, but it does have several similar ones. Words that have an intervocalic 'd' are often pronounced, especially in quick speech and among children, as a flapped 'r' (e.g. *gādim* ~ *garrim* 'have'). Every word, then, that has an intervocalic 'd' has a double form. In addition, some words that have an intervocalic 'r' likewise have a double form with a flapped 'r' (e.g. *spirit* ~ *spirrit* 'spirit'). This does not mean, however, that every flapped 'r' is the second member of a double form (e.g. *burrum* 'from' is never *\*burum*). When full variability is practised, one does not know whether the underlying form of the *rr* is a *d*, an *r* or the *rr*. The standard form for the main entry in the Kriol dictionary should be the one with the underlying or stable form (i.e. *gādim*, *spirit* and *burrum*). The selection of these as the standard form also provides for the economical use of space in larger books.

Valdman (1968:321-324), however, has argued for Haitian Creole that standardisation of spelling is a prerequisite to the launching of a literacy campaign. He cites, as an example, the failure in both the McConnell-Laubach and Faublas-Pressoir writing systems to 'normalise' the five variant forms of the third person singular pronoun by a single underlying standard form. He argues that 'the normalization of variant forms of individual Creole morphemes and the selection of a single written form for each morpheme is the least difficult of the steps toward the development of a Creole standard . . . the interests of the Creole-speaking majority of Haiti can be advanced and the development of the country enhanced only if the vernacular is raised in prestige and dignity. Now that linguists, by detailed analysis of its structure, have demonstrated that Creole is indeed a full-fledged language, and now that a workable orthography that does not jar the sensitivities of the literate elite has been given official recognition and is widely employed, there remains the task of codifying the language so that its speakers are given a set of conventions dealing with pronunciation (really,

morphophonemic) norms, orthography, and lexical usage . . . raising the prestige of the vernacular through the process of standardization will more highly motivate the monolingual masses to learn to read it and will open up new channels of communication for them.'

There are good arguments in favour of the standardisation of closed classes of words. The reading of functors is, or at least should be, by sight. An important aspect of facilitating the sight reading of functors is, in Voorhoeve's terms (1963:66), maintaining a unity of word image. Variability of spelling destroys that unity. It was mentioned earlier that the demonstrative pronoun for 'that' has twenty-four possible spellings. To facilitate easy recognition and reading of that pronoun, its spelling variability must be restricted. Some standardisation of closed class words has already been observed among Kriol writers. For example, although the first person pronoun 'I' can be pronounced and written as *a* or *ai*, the shorter form (*a*) is seldom written. Strict standardisation would eliminate the use of *a* in print, although certainly not in pronunciation. Such standardisation should not cause any problems in reading. In the vast majority of Kriol books published to date, the third person pronoun 'they' has been standardised as *olabat*. Speakers of the Roper dialect almost invariably say *alabat*. Roper readers will sometimes point out that they do not say *olabat*, but they have never been observed to stumble over the reading of the word because of its spelling. It is suggested, therefore, that closed classes of words (such as pronouns, prepositions and verbal auxiliaries) be standardised. There should be, however, allowance made for the maintenance of long and short forms. For example, the twenty-four forms of 'that' should not be standardised to only one form, but should probably be standardised to three forms: a short form (maybe *jat*), a long form (maybe *dadān*), and a longer form (maybe *dadānwan*). The preposition 'for' has four main pronunciation forms: *blanganda*, *blanga*, *bla* and *ba*. The longest form is archaic, the shortest form is limited primarily to some children, and the middle two forms are used by virtually every Kriol speaker. Standardisation should probably recognize a long and a short form (*blanga* and *bla* respectively). By standardising long and short forms, variability is being reduced but not eliminated. Teachers should be able to cope with such standardisation, while Kriol writers will still be able to make stylistic use of some variability.

In Papua New Guinea, Samarin (1980:219) notes that 'there seems to be more consensus among those who have anything to do with Pisin than in Haiti, and, in fact, some writers talk about "the standard orthography" [in the generic sense including spelling] . . . But there is still disagreement, as in Haiti, as to how closely spelling should imitate Standard English, such as *aluvim* for what is spelled *helpim* 'to help' . . . '

In the initial stages of the development of the Kriol writing system, consideration was given to a writing system in which Kriol words would be spelt very similar to and in many cases identical with their English etymons. Thompson (1976) recommends such a system for Lockhart Creole. In his system the creole word for 'write it down' could be spelt as *writim down*. Such a system was not selected for Kriol, basically for the same reasons as given earlier in the section regarding an etymological writing system. However, with the phonemic system that Kriol has, it is often possible to spell words very similar to English. This is the case when the English spelling is very similar phonemically to the light Kriol pronunciation. For example, 'help' can be pronounced and written as *helpim*. A desire for English similarity would standardise on that spelling for the word. Most Kriol speakers, however, do not consider *helpim* to be 'proper' Kriol and would thus reject that spelling as the standard spelling. The 'proper' and more common form would probably be *album*.

Hudson (1981:26) has followed the principle used for Bislama, the lingua franca of Vanuatu: 'for those phonemes where there is no generally accepted realisation . . . the form of the cognate in the language from which the Bislama root was derived is followed' (Camden 1977:ix). This means that the form selected for the standard spelling would be the pronunciation that is in general use by a broad range of Kriol speakers. Where there is no predominant pronunciation, however, the phoneme from the assumed English etymon would be used. For example, in pronunciation if both *album* and *elbum* are equally common, then *elbum* would become the standard form since its English etymon is 'help'. Likewise, *alabat* would be selected as the standard form over *olabat* since its English etymon is probably 'all'. There is, however, a strong sociological argument against such a principle: Kriol is not English and Kriol speakers do not want it to look like English. If standard Kriol forms are selected on the basis of the spelling of the English etymons, then written Kriol will look more like English. Extensive testing needs to be



carried out to determine whether the standard form should be in the direction of English or away from English.

Standardisation of spelling involves the application of the orthography to individual words. This 'must be carefully worked out and as far as possible it should be simple, clear-cut and consistent. Here again the phonological structure of the word and the need for morphological differentiation should be the determining factors, and not the phonetic structure. The introduction of unusual spellings for purely historical reasons is to be avoided' (Garvin 1974:421). Smalley (1963b:41) stresses the importance of consistency, although the use of some arbitrary spelling to reduce homonymy may be beneficial.

Probably the most important principle to be kept in mind while working out standardised forms is to keep the rules simple, clear-cut and consistent. This would mean no arbitrary spelling standards, although there is one good argument for some arbitrary spellings: to reduce the number of homonyms in the language and thus potentially reduce misunderstandings of the written word. There is potential ambiguity in Kriol, for example, between 'soak' and 'choke' if both are spelt *jogim*. To reduce that ambiguity, 'soak' could be spelt *sogim* and 'choke' *jogim*. Rumsey (in press) has pointed out that Kriol already has a number of grammatical and lexical ways of reducing the potential homophony of English borrowed words. Textual clues normally prevent misunderstanding due to homophony and most of these textual clues would likewise carry over into written Kriol. Arbitrary spelling standards should not be introduced just for the sake of reducing the number of homonyms, but should be considered used only for sets of homonyms which continually cause problems to readers.

Part of the standardisation process is selecting among the multitude of different forms from among the dialects of a language. Nida (1963:26) points out that 'on the whole, it is not advisable to "make up" an artificial dialect. Such attempts are rarely, if ever, successful. It is best to choose that dialect which (1) is the culturally dominant one, (2) is the most regular in grammatical formations, and (3) is most easily understood by the other dialects. At times it is impossible to find all these requirements met in a single dialect, and so some compromises must be made.' He goes on to point out, as noted earlier, that while readers often gain 'amazing facility' in the use of a literary dialect which is different from their own spoken dialect, problems often emerge in the initial reading stages.

The degree of standardisation being recommended in this paper does not reach the level of which Nida speaks. We are still in the initial stages of developing Kriol literacy and literature. A standardised literary dialect as such is still in the future. What we need now are some suggested standards which will enable Kriol speakers to more easily write in their own dialects and to write in such a way as to allow readers from other dialects to easily read their writings. The main difficulty at present is that we do not know enough about dialect differences, especially with regard to differences in the frequency of occurrence of phonemes and speaker preferences. For example, the Roper dialect of Kriol has a preference for the voiced series of stops over the voiceless ones. Both series are used, but the voiced are more frequent. In addition most Roper speakers consider the voiced and hence heavy pronunciations to be 'proper.' Though both *gugum* and *kukum* 'cook' are in everyday use, *gugum* is the preferred form. The preference in the Kimberleys tends to be the opposite; that is, the voiceless series is preferred over the voiced. Contrary to Sandefur and Sandefur (1980:34), the same appears to be true for the Bamyili dialect. Though some attempts can be made now to select standard spellings, a finalised standard should only be made after more dialect research is coupled with extensive experience by Kriol speakers from all of the dialects in reading and writing.

Another problem relates to differences in forms due to the speed of speech. Nida (1961:125) recommends that the best solution is to write those forms which occur most frequently in the moderate or possibly moderate-to-slow speech, for three reasons: (1) A person learning to read will read slowly, and it is to his advantage to have forms which approximate the speed at which he will be reading. (2) If the material is to be read aloud publicly, forms which approximate moderate speed will be easiest to read. (3) The changes from slow forms to fast forms of speech are usually automatically conditioned, and a person reading the fuller form is more likely to automatically shift into the faster form than the reverse.

This principle of Nida's supports the suggestion above that the standard form for words involving the change in fast speech of an intervocalic 'd' or 'r' to the flapped 'r' should not be the form with the rr. In this particular instance, the change in speed resulted in a switching of phonemes. Most changes in Kriol due to fast speech result in the loss of phonemes or syllables, and hence result in

the shortening of the word. The most obvious example is probably the loss of the final m on transitive verbs: *kilim* 'hit, kill' often becomes *kili* in fast speech. Following Nida's principle the standard form would include the final m.

Quick speech also results in contractions in Kriol. For example, *bin oldei* 'past tense always' sometimes becomes *binli*; *melabat andi* 'we will' sometimes becomes *melabandi*; *bin andi* 'past tense intention' is often *bina*. Virtually all Kriol readers whom I have observed have rejected the contracted written form, even though they use the contracted form in their own speech. The only contracted form which appears to be universally acceptable is *imin* or *ibin* for *im bin* 'he/she past tense.' This contracted form appears to be acceptable because the uncontracted form virtually never occurs in speech. I would suggest that except for *imin/ibin* the uncontracted form be the standard in writing.

There are a few cases in which a syllable within a word is elided. For example, the pronoun *yundubala* 'you two' is sometimes pronounced *yunbala*. This is part of the 'shortening' process that appears to have been in operation in Kriol between generation levels for a long time (e.g. notice how the pronoun for 'we' has been shortened from *melelabat* to *melabat* to *mela*). With some words the shortened form may be established alongside the longer form and thus both need to be selected as standards (e.g. maybe both *yundubala* and *yunbala* should be standard forms). In other cases, however, the shortened form or forms are not generally accepted as legitimate or 'proper' forms. For example, it appears that the shorter forms of *lagijat* 'thus', namely *laijat* and *la*, would not be acceptable as standards. With such words the standard form for use in writing would be the longer form (in this case, *lagijat*). The longer form could, of course, be read with the shorter pronunciations.

Nida (1963:24-25) says that it is generally not a good practice to use 'silent' letters, letters for which there are no sounds. It may be, however, wise to preserve elided vowels in the written form of words, though vowels should not be indiscriminately added. There are, he says, two essential requirements for writing elided vowels: '(1) their automatic loss in easily definable positions (this does not justify the arbitrary writing of a vowel for some grammatical reason) and (2) the insistence on the part of the speakers of the language that such vowels should be

added.' On this last point he notes that we still lack an adequate understanding of the psychological factors involved.

Vowel elision is most noticeable in Kriol in word initial consonant clusters as one moves from heavy pronunciation to light pronunciation. Historically as words were borrowed from English, consonant clusters were avoided by the insertion of a vowel, the deletion of a consonant, or both (e.g. 'sleep' became *silip*, 'stone' became *ton* and 'straight' became *tarreit* respectively). The inserted vowels are elided in light Kriol and the consonants reinserted (e.g. *silip* becomes *slip*, *ton* becomes *ston* and *tarreit* becomes *streit*). It would be ideal to apply a rule of standardisation that writes all such words either with the vowel or without the vowel, but the words are regarded differently by Kriol speakers. For example, though *silip* is heavy with regard to the inclusion of the vowel, the word is considered to be 'proper' as compared to *slip* which is light. The standard form would need to be *silip*. On the other hand, *tarreit* is considered to be heavy by most Kriol speakers and *streit*, the form with the vowel elided, is considered to be 'proper'. Therefore, *streit* would need to be the standard form. Every word which occurs with elided vowels needs to be considered individually on the basis of speaker usage and preference.

There are a number of 'special' related problems. One is the interpretation, for a written standard, of diphthongs and semiconsonants. For example, should the word for 'house' be written as a one syllable word with a diphthong (i.e. *haus*) or should it be written as a two syllable word with a semiconsonant (i.e. *hawus*). Extensive testing needs to be done to determine which of the two alternatives is the predominant perception of Kriol speakers. Hopefully, one rule of standardisation can be applied to all such words instead of having to consider each word individually.

Related to this problem is what to do with transitive verbs in which the root ends with a vowel. For example, should *bai + im* 'to buy' be *baiim*, *baiyim* or *baim*? There appears to be a definite preference for *dum* 'to do' over *duim* and especially *duwim*. The preference for 'to show', however, appears to be *shoum* over *showum* and *shom*. Hopefully, however, extensive testing will indicate that one rule of standardisation can be applied to all such words.

Another problem relates to the spelling of words that have a syllabic 'n' or 'l'. Some of these words have alternate

pronunciations which insert a vowel and thus eliminate the syllabic nature of the consonant. For example, 'turtle' can be either *tetl* (with the syllabic 'l') or *tetul* (with a vowel and non-syllabic 'l'). Similarly, 'garden' can be pronounced either *gadn* (with syllabic 'n') or *gadin* (without). Some words, however, do not have alternate forms. For example, 'little' is always *lil* (or *lilwan*, etc.), with the second 'l' being syllabic. It is never *\*lilit*. Every such word will need to be examined individually. A possible rule for standardisation, however, is that words with a syllabic consonant that forms a consonant cluster (e.g. *gadn*) should be written with the vowel and normal consonant so as to avoid the unusual consonant cluster it would otherwise form. Syllabic consonants that follow a vowel (i.e. come after a CV syllable) would be written as a syllabic consonant (i.e. without an added vowel), thus avoiding potentially ambiguous vowel clusters (e.g. *lil*, not *\*lilit*).

Three other problems which warrant consideration are initial *h*, geminate consonant clusters and the verbal suffix *-ing*. Kriol words whose etymons begin with an 'h' may be pronounced with or without the 'h'. For example, 'hear' can be either *hirrim* or *irrim*; 'house' either *hawus* or *awus*; and 'happy' either *hepi* or *epi*. It would be ideal for a single standardisation rule to be applied to all such words. Unfortunately, however, usage and preference indicate that words will need to be given individual consideration. With the first example above, *irrim* is by far the most common form and is considered to be more 'proper' than *hirrim*. It would, therefore, be the choice for a standard form. With the second example, both *hawus* and *awus* are commonly used. More testing would need to be done to determine which would be the preferred standard form. With the third example, *hepi* appears to be the most preferred form and would thus be the standard form.

Two spelling rules are already in operation for geminate consonant clusters. Clusters within syllables, such as the 'double' letters of English (e.g. as in 'boggy'), are not used in Kriol (i.e. 'boggy' is spelt *bogi*, not *\*boggi*). Clusters across syllable boundaries within a simple words, however, are written as a geminate cluster. For example, 'finger' is spelt *bingga*, not *\*binga*, because of the syllable break (i.e. *bing-ga*). The problem area which needs standardising is how to write clusters across syllable boundaries between words joined as compound words. For example, should *nait* and *taim* ('night') be written as *naittaim* or *naitaim*? The solution at first glance seems

obvious: the words should simply be joined together with the clusters written as clusters. For many Kriol speakers, however, *naitaim* is not perceived as two words joined together. It is perceived as a unified whole. When asked to pronounce the word slowly to indicate the syllable break, it is often *nai-taim*, not *nait-taim*. A closer examination needs to be made of all such words to determine where the majority of Kriol speakers perceive the syllable breaks to be. The words, on an individual basis, would then come under one or the other of the two existing spelling rules.

The third problem is very restricted in scope. It relates to the spelling of the verbal aspect suffix '-ing'. It occurs in two forms in speech, as -ing and as -in (e.g. *woking* and *wokin* 'walking'). In general the longer form (-ing) tends to occur more frequently at the end of a word (as in *woking*), whereas the shorter form (-in) tends to occur more frequently when the suffix is followed by another suffix (as in *wokinabat* 'walking around'). A closer examination of these tendencies needs to be made to determine whether or not they form an adequate basis for a standardised spelling rule.

There is much we do not understand about the psychological aspects of bilingualism. Voorhoeve (1963) notes that speakers of Sranan have learnt through the teaching of Dutch to make certain distinctions which are functional in Dutch but not in Sranan. The Sranan speaker now hears these distinctions, however, in Sranan even though they are non-phonemic. The spelling of Sranan has to take this into account with the result that 'a certain amount of 'Dutchifying' is therefore desirable' (Voorhoeve 1963:62). In Aboriginal languages, a certain amount of 'Anglicising' may be necessary. Smalley (1963b:39), in recognising the need for making concessions because of influences from the national language, says that the importance of such influences lies in the functional load they carry. They are less serious if they are in the area of low functional load than if they are in the area of high functional load. The writing of items which carry a low functional load can often be omitted, though Gudschinsky (1970:23) warns of the combined functional load becoming critical if more than one item is omitted. [For a discussion of the concept of functional load, see Powlison 1968.]

Some aspects of 'Anglicising' Kriol spelling have already been discussed. Because the vast majority of Kriol readers are also English readers, interference between the two

languages needs to be reduced as much as possible. While troublesome words need to be examined individually, many of them cause interference because they are identical in written form to a different English word. For example, the Kriol word for 'top' can be pronounced either *top* or *tap*. The latter form tends to be more frequently used and would thus seem the best choice for the standard form, but it sometimes causes problems because it is identical in form to the English word 'tap'. The choice of *top* for the Kriol standard for 'top' would therefore probably be a wiser one. Some troublesome words are not so easily handled. For example, the Kriol word for 'sheep' is *ship*, which is identical to and often misread as the English word 'ship'. An almost identical example is the Kriol word for 'sheet'. Unlike the *top/tap* problem, there is no alternative vowel used in common pronunciations. Such words need to be observed closely and if found to cause critical problems, then it may be that arbitrary spellings should be used as the standard forms.

Some English words cause interference to the reading of some Kriol words because their visual images or silhouettes are very close yet slightly different. For example, 'sugar' is *shuga*, and 'television' is *telavisha*. With both of these sets of words, if s were used instead of sh, the Kriol and English silhouettes would be virtually identical. If the standard forms were *suga* and *telavisan*, interference from the one language while reading the other should be minimised. The selection of the s spellings would in fact be the selection of heavier, though much less common, pronunciation forms. As one approaches the heavy phonological sub-system, the /sh/ phoneme becomes an allophone of the /s/ (and ultimately /j/) phoneme. The 'arbitrary' spelling of the 'sh' sound as s in such words, therefore, has a phonological basis.

The spelling of numbers presents a problem. Numbers up to about twelve commonly occur with the suffix *-bala*. Occasionally higher numbers also occur with the suffix. I would suggest that numbers up to ten be spelt out (e.g. *wanbala*, *faibala*, *tinbala*; also *wan*, *faiv*, *tin*), whereas the higher numbers should be written in numerical fashion (e.g. 15000, not *\*fiftin thousand*). The lower number could optionally be written out in numerical fashion as well (e.g. 1, 5, 10). In those cases where some of the slightly higher numbers have the suffix included, a combination form may be more efficient than a fully spelt out form (e.g. instead of *fiftinbala*, write *15bala*).

Another problem area which standardisation of spelling must take into consideration is that of morphophonemics. Nida (1963:26) speaks of the principle of 'unity of visual impression' which means that 'when the sounds of contiguous words affect each other in purely automatic ways, there may be some distinct advantage in preserving the basic form of the word rather than writing it in a number of different manners.' Gordon (quoted in Bauernschmidt 1980:19) provides the following rule of thumb: 'If allomorphs are grammatically conditioned they probably should be written phonemically; if they are phonologically conditioned they should be written morphophonemically.' In the latter case the morpheme maintains the same shape in all environments. Gudschinsky (1970:25) points out that the morphophonemic writing of function words is supported by the view that such words should be read by sight rather than sounded out. However, when important morphological distinctions are obscured by the neutralisation of phonemic contrasts, the underlying form of the morphemes rather than the phonemic form that is actually pronounced should in general be written (Gudschinsky 1970:22).

The only major area in which morphophonemics affects Kriol is in regard to the vowel of the transitive verb suffix. The underlying form of the suffix is *-im*. The preceding vowel of the verb, however, tends to affect the vowel of the suffix. If the preceding vowel is a back vowel, the suffix vowel is usually the high back vowel (/u/). If the preceding vowel is a high front vowel, the suffix vowel is generally the underlying high front vowel (/i/). If the preceding vowel is a mid vowel, the suffix vowel tends to be a mid or central vowel (/e/ or /a/). Because the suffix syllable is unstressed, however, the suffix vowel often become a non-distinct front or central vowel (/i/, /e/ or /a/). The most convenient standardisation rule would be to use the underlying form (*-im*) in all cases. Informal observations indicate, however, that the form *-um* is often preferred for use with verbs in which the preceding stressed vowel is a back vowel. There seems to be no predominant form among the front and central vowels. Kriol writers, seemingly indiscriminately, use all three forms (*-im*, *-em* and *-am*). I would suggest that *-im* become the standard form for use with verbs in which the preceding stressed vowel is a non-back vowel, and *-um* become the standard form with back vowels.



Another major area for consideration in standardisation is that of loanwords. Solutions in this area depend in part on when borrowed words are considered to finally become the 'property' of the borrowing language. Nida (1963:28) says 'words which have been borrowed by the indigenous languages so long ago that people are quite unaware of where they came from' should be written in the spelling system of the indigenous language, whereas recent borrowings or newly introduced words should be spelt in the system of the dominant language. Bauernschmidt (1980:19), however, says that 'words which have become obviously integrated into the vernacular are spelled with the vernacular orthography. Words with only one or two at the most phonological changes might be better written as in Spanish since they would look almost like Spanish anyway.'

The Prague School (Garvin 1974:421) recommends that 'the spelling of foreign words, particularly common ones, should not follow an orthographic system different from that used for domestic words . . . On the other hand, it is neither desirable nor useful to adapt international terms to the domestic spelling system and by this change in their written shape introduce a strange graphic pattern which isolates them from their international connection . . . ' According to Ferguson (1968b:259), 'the Soviets have generally preferred to have Russian loanwords spelled in the minority language just as they are in Russian regardless of the discrepancies in pronunciation or orthographic conventions . . . Russian practice in this respect has now shifted . . . ' Wurm (1974:213) says regarding Tok Pisin that 'until recently, ad hoc solutions have prevailed, but current developments favour re-phonemicised spellings' of newly introduced words of English origin.

Leeding (1982:5-6) recommends loanwords be spelt in the orthography of the borrowing language, arguing that 'English-derived loanwords in Aboriginal languages are both ours and theirs. Difficulties have largely arisen because non-Aboriginals tend to claim these words only as their own and Aborigines have not been aware that, like in all other languages, borrowed words can be claimed as their own. The spelling of these words can, therefore, be in their own graphemic system. The ability to read and write in English need not then be a prerequisite to being able to read and write in the vernacular . . . The argument that, as Aborigines must learn to spell English words eventually in

their education programme and that they may as well spell them that way from the beginning, overlooks what consequences this has for the Aborigines' self-image. It infers that English spelling is superior in some undefined way to vernacular spelling, and that English-speaking people are somehow superior to vernacular-speaking people . . .

The decision as to how to spell loanwords ultimately lies with the speakers of the minority language. Bauernschmidt (1980:19) reports of a poll taken among Amuzgos school children in Mexico. Their unexpected answer was: 'If a Spanish word has been taken into our language then it's our word and we want it spelled like our language.' As a result, all loanwords are now spelt as they are pronounced in Amuzgo.

Kriol, being a relatively new language, is composed totally of loanwords, most of which have been borrowed from English. A policy of spelling loanwords in Kriol as they are spelt in the languages from which they were borrowed would, therefore, result in an etymological writing system. The general policy for Kriol should be to spell loanwords in the Kriol writing system, not the writing system of the etymological language.

It should be remembered that Kriol is not unique in borrowing words from other languages and spelling them in its own orthographic system. English does the same. For example, with the following 'English' words, note that not only have they been borrowed from other languages, but they are not spelt in English as they are spelt in the other languages. (The transliterated forms are taken from *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.)

<u>English</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
beef	(Old) French	boef
turban	Persian	dulband
bamboo	Malay (via Portugese)	mambu
tea	Mandarin	ch'a
potato	Spanish	patata
chocolate	Aztec	chocolatl
bayou	Choctaw	bayuk

There are some situations, however, where it may be advisable to allow 'exceptions' to the rule of spelling in the Kriol orthography. In written instructional material that makes reference to forms written in English (e.g. a

ballot), it may be advisable to use the English spelling of words which the Kriol speaker will be handling. This could be done in several ways, such as:

*Dei gibit la yu peipa kolum ballot-paper.*  
or *Dei gibit la yu peipa kolum belatpeipa (ballot-paper).*

The second form is probably preferable, especially when the English spelling contains letters which the Kriol orthography does not have (i.e. c, g, x and z). The problem also applies to words borrowed from traditional Aboriginal languages. For example, words which contain a glottal stop or an interdental stop should normally not be written in Kriol with the unfamiliar usage of h and dh respectively. It may be that the writing of local traditional language words could be in the writing system of the traditional language when the material is for local use only, but for material intended for use throughout the Kriol country it would be best to avoid such loanwords.

Related to the problem of loanwords is the question of how to spell names. A person's name is very much a personal thing, and the general rule is not to change the spelling of a person's name unless the person himself decides to change it (Bergman 1979:16). There is, however, an international precedent for changing one's name. In English my name is John. Though I can insist that it remains John everywhere I go, the Mexican version of my name is Juan and the Russian version is Ivan. In other words, the spelling of a person's name depends, to a degree, on the country in which a person is and the language of that country. When a person is in Kriol country using Kriol, he should be able to spell his name in Kriol.

It is often said regarding biblical names that one should maintain the English spelling of common names but transliterate the uncommon names. The problem, however, is in determining which are common and which are not. Not only so, but transliteration is no small task. If transliterations of uncommon names are not to be stumbling blocks to readers, a consistent transliteration system based on a thorough analysis of the relationship of the sound system needs to be worked out (Doble 1963). It was noted in the list of English loanwords given above that the English spelling is not a transliteration of the original word. The more uncommon biblical names which are spelt in Kriol as a literal transliteration of the English form have often been observed to cause reading difficulties. Kriol

names need to be examined more closely and a consistent but dynamic transliteration system accordingly established, even if the visual image of the Kriol form of the name no longer resembles the English form.

Other types of proper nouns, such as the names of towns or government departments, present another problem. How, for example, should Hodgson River and Department of Social Security be spelt in Kriol? The argument is often put forward, as was noted above, that the English spelling should be used because Kriol readers will have to know the English spelling when dealing with those English entities. It is instructive to note, however, that English does not operate by that rule. The 'official' abbreviation for the Russian states is USSR in English, but in Russian it is СССР. The language of Germany in English is spelt German, but in the language itself it is spelt Deutsch. If you are writing for an English audience, you write USSR and German respectively. If, however, you are writing for Russian or German audience, you should write СССР and Deutsch respectively. I would suggest that it be the same for Kriol. If you are writing for an English audience, the spelling should be in English. If, however, you are writing for a Kriol audience, the spelling should be in Kriol, not English. This, in essence, parallels the use of spoken language: if the audience is white, English is appropriate; if the audience is Aboriginal, Kriol is appropriate. (For a more detailed discussion of the spelling of loanwords and names, see Sandefur 1983b.)

### 3.9

### PUNCTUATION

In developing a writing system for a language, little thought is usually given to the area of punctuation. Punctuation includes not only the conventions which we as English speakers consider as punctuation (full stop, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, colon, semicolon, hyphen and quotation marks), but also symbols which indicate other grammatical or thought units (such as space, indention, upper case and italic type). Punctuation symbols usually indicate suprasegmental features of a language (such as stress, tone and intonation) or the boundaries of certain kinds of grammatical units rather than phonemes or morphemes (Smalley 1963a:8).

In common with other areas of the writing system, an imperfect system of punctuation can confuse or mislead the reader. A thorough understanding of the syntactic system of a language is basic to devising an efficient system of

punctuation (Nida 1961:129), though Samarin (1963:161) points out that 'in the history of writing, all punctuation conventions have been at their best only partially indicative of what actually happens in the spoken language'.

According to Nida (1961:127) there are two principles in devising a punctuation system: (1) the simpler the punctuation, the better it is; and (2) 'regardless of anything else, such punctuation should be consistently used'. A corollary of Nida's first principle is: use only that punctuation which is essential for preventing misinterpretation of the written word. These principles need to be kept in mind in developing punctuation conventions for Kriol.

Cotterell (1978:12) says there are two basic uses for punctuation. The first is to indicate a sentence class. If there is a grammatical indication (e.g. an interrogative particle) which makes it quite clear that the sentence belongs to a certain class (e.g. a question), then it is unnecessary to use an additional symbol. If there is no such grammatical indication, then a specific punctuation symbol is needed. The second basic use is to indicate the completion of a phrase, clause or sentence. In some instances there is a means in the language of indicating the completion of a thought sequence (e.g. intonation) which shows up in the written form of the sequence (e.g. in tone marks) such that specific punctuation is not necessary. If, however, there is no way by which the reader can be assured that he has come to the end of a whole thought from the written words, then some kind of punctuation is valuable. Cotterell adds that whatever symbols are chosen for punctuation should be unambiguously visible. The full stop (.) and comma (,) are examples of potentially visibly ambiguous symbols, especially when using poor quality paper or duplicating methods.

Three symbols are currently being used in Kriol to indicate sentence class: exclamation mark (!) for exclamatory type sentences and interjections; question mark (?) for questions; and full stop (.) for normal statements and normal commands. This usage follows the English convention. Intonation appears to play a more important role in Kriol than in English, but there appears to be no simple means of symbolising the various intonation patterns in writing. The end punctuation used in Kriol is the same as that used in English, namely the full stop (.), with the

beginning of the next sentence beginning with an upper case letter. Kriol differs from English, however, in its 'definition' of a sentence. A sentence in Kriol can consist of an extremely long 'string' of independent clauses joined by a conjunction (usually en). Such constructions may be considered ungrammatical in English, but they are fully grammatical in Kriol.

Cotterell's second use for punctuation is sometimes referred to as the indication of juncture. Juncture also includes the division between words. Nida (1963:24) has pointed out that phonetically there are often no borders between 'words'. In normal speech several words may be pronounced as though they were a single unit. Beck (1963:156) points out that even mother tongue speakers of a language cannot always easily decide on matters of word separation in their language unless they have a comprehensive understanding of the structure of the language.

Normally word juncture is indicated by a space. In some special instances the 'loss' of word juncture is indicated by a hyphen (e.g. in the phrase 'an English-based creole'). Maintenance of the visual image of words is psychologically important. Indicating word juncture at the wrong place can be disconcerting for the reader. Note the awkwardness of Englishbased creole, or un gentle man li ness for ungentlemanliness in English. At present, juncture is indicated in Kriol by space, and there appears to be no advantage in changing that practice. There are some words, however, which need to be examined more closely to determine where Kriol speakers perceive the juncture to be (e.g. should 'hit each other' be *kilimgija* or *kilim gija?*).

Junctures between phrases and clauses are often indicated by commas, semicolons and colons. Voorhoeve (1963:66-68) points out that with commas one has to decide if they are to be used to indicate the structure of a sentence or to indicate pauses. In other words, should commas be used to indicate the end of grammatical units or the end of phonologically significant units? In many cases, of course, the two occur together. It is generally recommended that commas be used chiefly to indicate phonological pauses in the sentence (Voorhoeve 1963:68 and Nida 1961:127). The importance of indicating pause is pointed out by Samarin (1963:161). Pauses, and the intonation patterns with which they are connected, are intricately involved with meaningful contrasts in speech.

'Intonational puns' in English readily indicate this: compare 'Look on the road ahead'. with 'Look on the road, a head'.

The use of the comma in Kriol has yet to be fully specified. I would suggest that it be used to indicate the end of phonologically significant units rather than grammatical ones. I would also suggest, however, that it not be used for all phonologically significant units, but only for those which are psychologically significant to Kriol readers and essential for correct decoding of the written word. More study and observation is needed to determine which units are psychologically significant and essential.

The use of semicolons and colons depends upon the structure of the language. Nida (1961:128) notes that semicolons are useful in languages which combine independent clauses in a paratactic manner (e.g. 'It is late; I must go.') If such combinations of independent clauses do not occur, then usually full stops are used. Colons can be used for a variety of odd jobs, such as indicating direct quotations if quotation marks are not employed. Kriol could make use of the semicolon in the context that Nida notes. I would recommend, however, in an effort to keep the punctuation system as simple as possible, that semicolons not be used unless the use of the full stop in those contexts causes incorrect decoding. The use of the colon for punctuation in Kriol is not recommended, especially while it is being used as a diacritic on the vowels.

Junctures between sentences are generally indicated by full stops and capitalisation of the first letter of the next word. There are, of course, variations to the use of full stops depending on the intonation patterns and sentence structure of the language. It is generally assumed that questions, for example, will all be indicated by a question mark at the end of the sentence. Nida (1961:127-128) points out, however, that 'if the language indicates questions by a special order of words or by some particles in the sentence, then it is not necessary to employ a question mark . . . ' In Kriol, for example, content questions contain a question word at the beginning of the sentence and one class of yes-no question contains a question tag at the end of the sentence. The use of a question mark with these constructions is therefore redundant.

With the second class of yes-no question in Kriol, however,

the use of a question mark is absolutely essential. With this class of question, there is no question word or tag nor is there any change in word order. The only thing which distinguishes it from an ordinary statement is a special intonation. A question mark is therefore necessary to indicate the special intonation. At present the usage of the question mark in Kriol follows English practice, that is, a question mark is placed at the end of the question. In Kriol, however, the question intonation begins well before the end of the sentence. Many readers do not realise the sentence is a question until they reach the end of the sentence in their reading. By that time it is too late for them to read it with a question intonation. As a result, they have to go back and reread the sentence. One possible solution to this problem would be to follow the practice in Spanish of placing a question mark at the beginning of the sentence as well as the end. Unfortunately, however, as Nida (1961:128) points out, 'the pressure of the national language usage may compel the use of the question mark regardless of actual need'. Bauernschmidt (1980:18), for example, recommends the use of question marks for languages in Mexico to follow the Spanish usage if for no other reason than it makes 'the vernacular look more like Spanish'.

The use of quotation marks can be problematical, especially when discourse structure allows for quotes within quotes or when the distinction between indirect and direct quotes is not clear. Quotes within quotes are not very common in Kriol and thus not a major problem. The main problem in the use of quotation marks in Kriol is the lack of a clear distinction between indirect and direct speech. It is very common for indirect speech to 'turn into' direct speech without it being clear when the transition is made. The end of direct speech, however, is usually distinct. In other words, there is little problem for writers and editors to know when to close the quotes, but there is often great difficulty in trying to decide where the beginning quote marks should go.

It may be that quotation marks are not needed in Kriol at all. Both Nida (1961:129) and Cotterell (1978:13) point out that quotation marks are unnecessary when the language has a special formula or special particles to introduce a direct quotation. Kriol has several special formulas to either introduce or indicate the closure of a direct quotation (e.g. *Imin tok*, . . . or *Imin lagijat*.). These quotation formulas, however, are not used to mark all direct quotations. Needless to say, direct speech and the



use of quotation marks in Kriol needs more study.

Every language is different, with no two languages having identical systems. The structure of the language for which the writing system is being devised (in our case, Kriol) needs to be objectively analysed and a punctuation system devised for it. The system of the national language (in our case, English) should not simply be imposed upon the minority language. As Cotterell (1978:13) points out, punctuation features are needed in a writing system, but they should be 'related to the way in which the language works. Use only what is needed and NO MORE. Do not use [punctuation] signs simply because we use them in English . . . Use punctuation thoughtfully and visibly, but be quite sure that it is used only when necessary.'

#### 4. BEYOND THE WRITING SYSTEM

The development of an orthography and a set of spelling rules is not an end in itself. One of the measurements of the efficiency of a writing system discussed earlier is the degree to which it is used by speakers of the language. We want to go beyond the writing system itself and see Kriol speakers reading and writing and developing their own literature. The ultimate goal is not a writing system but confident literate people with positive self-image and pride in their own language and literature.

The road to achieving these goals involves more than just an orthography and a set of spelling rules. Smalley (1963b:44) has pointed out that 'in the matter of ease of learning, a great deal has to do with other factors than the orthography itself. Among them, a primary one is the program of literacy education which is carried on. With proper primers, carefully graded materials, and interesting reading matter ease of learning is considerably enhanced, independently of the difficulties which may be involved in the writing system.'

Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that some 20,000 Aborigines scattered across one million square kilometres of North Australia speak Kriol, there is only one program currently in operation in which all the elements needed for the obtainment of the above mentioned goals are present--the Kriol bilingual school program at Bamyili (Sandefur 1982). It is clearly evident that the Bamyili program is helping not only the children but also the Aboriginal adults involved in the program to develop

confidence in themselves. There is a need in almost one hundred and fifty other Aboriginal communities for Kriol literacy programs to be implemented (Sandefur 1983c).

There is also a need for the expansion of the existing Kriol literature. Although there are now some three hundred published titles in Kriol, the body of literature as a whole is very restricted. The majority of the titles are children's books. It is important that a body of adult material be developed in the near future. The range of literature must also be broadened. As McGill (1980:36) has noted, 'it is important to new readers that their literature embraces at least the same range of styles as their spoken language does. Later they may develop distinctive written styles. In the meantime any restriction of literature to anecdotes/stories alone should be seen as crippling to literacy.'

What Cotterell (1978:2) noted regarding north Africa is applicable to Kriol: 'We have long passed the stage where we produce primers and readers which are patterned on children's books written in English . . . Therefore we must find out what the people are interested in, and our books must zero in on that kind of interest.' We must go beyond what is available in English and in the children's classroom and find out what kind of literature the community as a whole is interested in and begin to produce it. Without doing so, the literary potential of Kriol will never be fully realised.

## 5. SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR KRIOL

A number of changes in the Kriol writing system have been suggested in this paper. I have two main motives for suggesting these changes. The first is the desire to resolve the difficulties which Kriol speakers have been observed to have with reading and writing Kriol. The second motive is the desire to make it as easy as possible for Kriol speakers literate in English to transfer or extend their reading skills to Kriol without the need for formal instruction.

The significance of this second motive should be noted, for it has an important influence on the direction changes in the Kriol writing system will take. In the changes I have suggested in this paper, my focus has been upon the easy transfer of reading skills. This is very much in contrast to focusing upon the ready display of the distinctiveness

of Kriol. In other words, my major concern in making these suggested changes is not to make Kriol appear as un-English as feasible but rather to make it as easy as possible for English-reading Kriol speakers to extend their reading skills to include Kriol, hopefully without the need for much, if any, instruction. It should also be noted that my focus is upon easy reading rather than writing. That is, I hope writing will be easy, but I consider writing to be secondary to reading.

The suggestions I have made fall into three groups: those which deal with orthography, those which deal with punctuation, and those which deal with spelling.

## 5.1 ORTHOGRAPHY

Eight main changes to the orthography have been suggested:

1. The consonant letter v should be added to symbolise the voiced labiodental fricative /v/.
2. Consideration should be given to eliminating tj either by using the consonant digraph ch in those words which have a ch in the English etymon, or by using j in place of tj.
3. The 'double dot' vowel diacritic should be eliminated, with the o: versus o distinction being eliminated and o alone being used.
4. The e: distinction should be maintained by 'vowel plus r'; i.e. eliminate the double dot and use r in its place.
5. Three diphthongs (ou, oa and ua) should be added.
6. The '2' character symbolising reduplication should be eliminated.
7. Eliminate the use of the cursive 'tail-n'.
8. Consideration should be given to shifting some of the vowels, in particular using oo instead of u for the high back vowel.

## 5.2 PUNCTUATION

Punctuation conventions for Kriol have never been fully specified. Five main suggestions have been made in this paper:

1. Punctuation should only be used when it is necessary and punctuation rules should be kept simple.
2. Colon and semicolon should not be used for punctuation in Kriol.
3. The comma should be used to indicate psychologically significant phonological units, not analytical grammatical units.
4. Consideration should be given to using a question mark at the beginning of 'intonation' type yes-no questions in addition to its use at the end of questions.
5. Consideration should be given as to whether or not quotation marks are necessary in Kriol.

### 5.3 SPELLING

One of the main suggestions made in this paper has been that Kriol spelling be standardised. It is not recommended, however, that absolute standardisation be undertaken. Rather, it is recommended that standardisation be in terms of partially restricting variability. In other words, some variability of spelling should be maintained as a stylistic device for expressive writing and for the preparation of dialect specific initial reading materials. On the other hand, some standardisation of spelling should be established in order to provide a unity of word image in written material intended for use throughout the Kriol country.

The main spelling rules suggested in this paper are:

1. Words should be spelt consistent with the orthography of Kriol.
2. Words with one or two syllables should be written as one word when reduplicated, whereas words with three or more syllables should be written as two words when reduplicated.
3. Closed classes of words should in general be restricted to no more than one long and one short standard written form.
4. Contractions should not be written, with the exception of *imin/ibin*.

5. The larger numbers should be written in numerical fashion, whereas the smaller numbers can be written in either numerical fashion or spelt out.
6. The transitive verb suffix should be written in full, either as *-im* or *-um*.
7. Words with an intervocalic 'd' or 'r' should be written with the underlying d or r rather than the quick speech rr.
8. Standard spelling of given words should be based on the most common form across dialects, but where no form clearly predominates, then the English etymon form should be favoured.

#### 5.4 LAYING DOWN THE LAW

The suggestions made in this paper are not binding on anyone. They are not intended to be taken as law. Rather, they are my thoughts on potential ways of improving the Kriol writing system so as to make Kriol literacy and literature more easily accessible to the thousands of Kriol speakers scattered throughout the outback of North Australia.

I trust that Kriol readers and writers, as well as the Europeans working with them, will think about my suggestions in the light of their experience and observations such that we can interact together and improve the Kriol writing system for the benefit of those whose language it is.

Since writing this paper, several developments regarding the revision of the conventions of the Kriol writing system have taken place. In October 1982 a two day-seminar looking at the question of orthography revision was held at Bamyili School. Participants were limited to literacy workers and teachers involved in the school's Kriol bilingual program and two SIL workers. The participants of the seminar decided that a number of changes should be made. (For details, see the report to the N.T. Department of Education entitled 'Kriol Workshop. Bamyili October 28th-29 1982'.)

I then circulated to a few select people several word lists incorporating some of the changes arising from the Bamyili seminar. Comments on the word lists were received from Yiyili/Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Bamyili.

In May 1983 a nine-day Kriol Bible translation conference was held in Halls Creek. Each day a session was given over to Kriol literacy and issues relating to orthography and spelling conventions. Participants in these sessions included Kriol speakers from Ngukurr, Halls Creek, Yiyili and Fitzroy Crossing, as well as SIL workers from Ngukurr, Halls Creek and Yiyili/Fitzroy Crossing. Most of the decisions made at the conference were in agreement with the decisions made at the Bamyili seminar the year before, although there were a few differences. (For details, see the report to the SIL entitled 'Kriol Spelling Conventions, May, 1983'.)

The details of the revised conventions of the Kriol writing system have been set out in *A Guide to the Kriol Writing System* elsewhere in this volume.

#### NOTE

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