DEGREES OF RESTRUCTURING IN CREOLE LANGUAGES

EDITED BY
Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh
Edgar W. Schneider

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Introduction:
"Degrees of restructuring" in creole languages?

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I

One of the dominant topics in creole studies of the last decade has been a rediscovery and a renewed questioning of basic issues and notions in the field and, consequently, a restating of the question of precisely what it means when a given language is classified as "a creole". There is not only the question of how far extant theories of creole genesis can be harmonized; rather, the very process of creolization has turned out to be a central concern of recent research. Hall's (1966) conventional model of creolization as spontaneous language generation by a first generation of children, caused by the structurally and communicatively insufficient input provided by a pidgin, has turned out to be too idealized and untenable in the light of recent evidence. Several considerations and research directions have contributed to an increased insecurity about the fundamentals of the discipline.

Most importantly, the very process of creolization itself has come under closer scrutiny, based upon improved sociohistorical as well as linguistic evidence on early phases of such processes in certain creole communities. For instance, in contrast with classic models as proposed by Bickerton (1981) it was suggested that creolization did not happen abruptly but rather gradually (Arends 1993), and that the role of children in the formation of a new creole appears to have been greatly overestimated (cf. Singler 1996). The precise mechanisms and strategies effective in this process are still insufficiently understood. Obviously, substrates, superstrates and universals interact in creole formation; substrates and superstrates appear to offer structural possibilities from which elements of emerging structures are selected on the basis of universal preferences, typological affiliation or formal similarities. A related view was that of seeing creolization as "grammaticalization in quick motion", i.e. the emergence of missing grammatical categories derived from existing lexical items. Most recently, it was suggested that creoles can be defined on structural grounds by
identifying certain structural traits which mark them as "young" languages (cf. McWhorter this volume). In contrast, some scholars have come to give up the notion of creole as a linguistic category altogether, suggesting that what sets these languages apart as a group from others are not linguistic traits but purely sociohistorical parallels (cf. Mufwene this volume).

Another aspect that has turned out to be influential was the recognition that the intensity of creolization varied from one creole region to another. It has always been clear intuitively that certain creoles — like Saramaccan and Sranan among English-related languages, less so basilectal Jamaican and Guyanese, and Haitian among the French-based creoles against Réunionnais, for instance — are "deeper", more "radical", presumably structurally closer to their substrates, than others which are considerably closer, relatively speaking, to their respective European superstrates. Earlier creole theory explained much of this variability as products of "decreolization", later approximations towards the superstrate of an erstwhile fully basilectal creole; but the historical reality and the sociolinguistic usefulness of the concept of decreolization have also increasingly come under fire (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985; Rickford 1983). Thus, increasing attention was given to varieties which, clearly without ever having undergone "decreolization" (or, a more fashionable term, "debasilectalization"), show but some of the characteristics of creoles, have been "creolized" (or "restructured", for that matter) only partially — varieties tentatively labelled "creoloids" (cf. Mühlhäusler 1998) or "semi-creoles". These include (at least) Réunionnais, Cuba's habla bozal, "Popular Brazilian Portuguese", the English spoken on the Cayman Islands, perhaps Bajan in Barbados, and, most probably, also African American English in the United States. Correspondingly, it has been suggested that there may be a "cline of creoleness" (Schneider 1990; 1998), "degrees" or "differential" stages/forms of creolization. In the light of such concepts creolization (and, by implication, the membership in a category of "creole languages") has to be understood as inherently scalar rather than dichotomous.

A third trend that has contributed significantly to the reorientation of creole studies discussed here has been a much more substantial diachronic empirical grounding and theoretical orientation of the discipline (Arends 1995). For several creoles, including Sranan, Negerhollands, Louisiana French Creole, the Indian Ocean French Creoles or the English-based creoles of Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad, and Barbados, the discovery and linguistic analysis of early records from the nineteenth or even eighteenth centuries has provided an improved understanding of the linguistic processes in the early phases of a creole's evolution as well as, in general, a deepened interest in the relationship between language change and change in creole languages (Adone and Plag 1994). Again, such investigations have uncovered and frequently focussed upon changes in the "depth", the positioning between related superstrate and substrate patterns, of any given creole, or for that matter, of any of a creole's structural properties.
In the light of such considerations, we felt it timely to organize a con­ference to focus specifically on the issue of "degrees of restructuring" in creole languages. The present volume brings together revised versions (and in one case a follow-up study) of select papers given at that conference, held at the University of Regensburg on June 24-27, 1998. We were lucky to host a remarkable group of renowned scholars from 10 countries; of these, some we were able to invite with the support of sponsors, and others reacted to a call for papers. It was our intention to promote a better understanding of the processes of partial restructuring in creolization, to support the development of theoretical models of this process, and to encourage further and improved descriptive analyses of the varieties in question, some of which are still insufficiently documented. The questions that we asked contributors to address were the following:

- Which is the most suitable theoretical framework for the description of processes of restructuring?
- Which morphological and syntactic categories are predominantly affected by restructuring in individual creoles, and to what extent?
- In individual cases, what was the rate and which were the stages of restructuring?
- To what extent do creoles with a common base language form a continuum of varieties?
- To what extent can tendencies towards restructuring already be seen in the respective base languages?
- When seen in this light, what is the status of concepts emphasizing the hybrid character of creoles (mixed-language theory, relexification hypothesis)?
- Are there any intralinguistic features and typical structural conditions which favor or cause different degrees of restructuring?
- What is the relationship between different degrees of restructuring on the one hand and sociolinguistic conditions, e.g. varying demographic proportions between different population groups, on the other?
- What is the role of bilingualism, first and/or second language acquisition, or the numerical ratio of children to adults in the process of varying degrees of restructuring?

One aspect of our conference and its resulting discussions that has turned out to be quite fruitful was the contact between scholars working on "English-based" and "Romance-based" creole languages — despite the common ground of creole theory it appears that at second glance different traditions and different lines of thinking have evolved in the two groups that have rarely been explicitly addressed, let alone discussed. In part there may be linguistic reasons behind resulting misunderstandings — the fact that English-lexifier and French-lexifier creoles appear to have followed different paths of creolization (as Alleyne shows in his contribution).
The two central concepts of the title of both our conference and this volume, "degrees" and "restructuring", respectively, are essential for the delimitation of our topic but at the same time defy uncontroversial definitions; in fact, some of the contributions to this volume make it clear that varying understandings of these notions are employed at times, or at least different aspects of them are emphasized.

As to the notion of "restructuring", so far no generally accepted definition and no uniform understanding of it have been achieved (cf. Baker this volume). It seems to be generally accepted that the term describes processes of language change which result in some sort of a reorganization of linguistic, especially morphosyntactic, structures — but there is no consensus at all with respect to the specific modalities of such processes. Are "restructuring" and "creolization" identical, or, for that matter, two sides of the same coin? What actually is it that is being restructured in such a process: the European base languages, the African (in the case of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles) substrate languages, both, or even a creole itself, after its genesis? The latter view seems to be held only by Schwegler (this volume), who uses "restructuring" almost synonymously with what has conventionally been called "decreolization". On the other hand, most creolists would probably take the term to relate to the fundamental processes of structural modifications that affected and radically altered predominantly non-standard varieties of European languages as a consequence of the specific sociolinguistic conditions in former colonies. For instance, this is how Salikoko Mufwene uses the term:

As for the term restructuring, I use it here in the sense of "system reorganization", which makes a creole different from its lexifier. The latter was primarily the colonial variety which was spoken by the European colonists and was itself developing from the contact of diverse metropolitan dialects. [...] this reorganization often consists in modifying grammatical features selected in a creole's system from the lexifier, the language that was being appropriated by foreign populations and undergoing some changes. (Mufwene 1996: 83-4)

These processes of linguistic reorganization were triggered by the special contact situation in the former European colonies; and it is essential to state that all languages affected by the contact situation were involved in the reshaping of linguistic structures. In one sense, it was predominantly the European base languages that were restructured in the process of incomplete acquisition by the slaves. While this process certainly involved both incomplete L2-acquisition and successful structural creation, the mutual impact of these creative processes, and the way these interacted, are not quite clear (cf. Baker this volume). In any case, it is clear that the influence of African substrate languages resulted in fundamental structural changes. While it cannot be denied that to a certain
extent these changes constitute also accelerations and continuations of internal developmental tendencies of the respective base languages, it is clear that the changes that occurred in creolization were considerably more radical and fundamental than instances of "internal", "normal" language change. The outcomes of these various processes of restructuring (whose chronology may have been different in English- and French-based creoles) are novel, autonomous languages — varieties which, despite the fact that on purely lexical grounds they can be seen as "based" upon or at least "related to" a European language, are characterized by a break with many rules and principles of the base language on the level of grammatical organization. Thus it would be equally inadequate to see creoles just as (grammatically) "restructured" variants of their respective "lexifiers" as to understand them purely as modifications and "relexifications" of substrates.

Which are the linguistic mechanisms underlying these processes of restructuring, and to what extent do they correspond to or differ from processes of language change in non-creole languages?

It is widely agreed in recent research that creolization is marked by certain processes of grammaticalization, i.e., following Chr. Lehmann, processes by which a lexical item becomes a grammatical one, or a partially grammatical item becomes more grammatical (cf. Lehmann 1995: 11). Such phenomena of grammaticalization were frequently initiated already in the non-standard base varieties, and were systematized and automatized subsequently in creolization (Chaudenson 1992; Bollée and Neumann-Holzschuh 1993; Bruyn 1995). Another core notion is that of reanalysis. The classic definition of reanalysis as "change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation" (Langacker 1977: 59) allows us to understand certain processes observed in creolization. It is characteristic of natural second language acquisition (and this is what happens in creolization) that the participants of a conversation, having developed a supposition as to the presumed meaning of an utterance based upon the context of situation, attempt to work out how this meaning was encoded by the speaker. In other words, in a communicative model this is a recipient-based process in which the hearer (in the given context typically African slaves) worked out a structural analysis of an utterance sequence which up to that stage was non-transparent to them. This is a mechanism which has been pointed out by Rebecca Posner and Salikoko Mufwene. The contribution by

1) "I do argue both that French creoles continue popular French tendencies [...] and that initially substrate may have had a drastic effect on the way new speakers (here, imported slaves) understood the structure of the popular French to which they were exposed" (1985: 183).

2) "Grammaticization is of course not the full story, since other changes took place, starting with the simple selection and integration into one system of forms, structures, and principles which did not use to form one system even in the lexifier itself" (1996: 124).
Ulrich Detges in this volume constitutes a significant advancement in our understanding of such processes: departing from a cognitively and semantically based theory of grammaticalization he works out a real-life example which documents how universal processes of grammaticalization and specific processes of reanalysis interact in the formation of a creole grammar.

In the light of these considerations we suggest that the notion of restructuring should be taken to refer to all structural modifications that a lexifier language undergoes in the selection and evolution of new linguistic elements, influenced by other, competing languages, in a contact situation. The final outcome of this process is a new linguistic code which consists of a variable, fairly subtle mixture of both substrate and superstrate features. This is achieved by the interaction of two fundamentally different processes of linguistic change which are effective in regular language transmission as well but which, due to the special contact situation in slave societies, operate considerably more intensely and rapidly: first, universal grammaticalization tendencies; and second, various processes of structural re-interpretation and selection, triggered by reanalysis and ultimately determined by cognitive mechanisms such as salience, semantic transparency, the impact of token frequencies, and the like (cf. Plag 1994). It remains to be seen to what extent other types of language change, such as "extension" or analogy (cf. Harris and Campbell 1995), are effective, or what the role of convergence in the selection of certain grammatical patterns is (cf. Bollée 1982; Hazaël-Massieux 1993).

The familiar, frequently described structural parallels between creoles of various bases suggest the importance of the effect of certain recurrent patterns of restructuring; but on the other hand these processes appear not to have been carried out to the same extent, with the same intensity, and with the same effects in all creoles. An empirical observation that underlies the idea of "degrees" of creoleness was addressed earlier as one of our original motivations for having this question focussed upon — the fact that different creole languages vary greatly in the set of creole properties that they share. Of course, such a definition in itself stands on shaky ground, as it builds upon the existence of a set of "typically creole" structural features (which are then present in any given language to a greater or lesser extent). It seems clear that the justification for assuming such a set of features is pragmatic, not structural, in nature — it is uncontroversial that there are no linguistic features exclusive to creole languages, and one of the questions to be addressed in the present context is in fact whether, how and why a typology of creole languages differs from analyses of analytic languages in general. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are certain

3) In other words, our understanding of the term "restructuring" is a fairly narrow, specifically creolistic one. Obviously, in a wider sense "restructuring" may be taken to designate almost any kind of language change, and it may even be assumed that the restructuring of the base languages was initiated even before they reached the colonies (Mufwene 1996: 90-1).
structural properties which have repeatedly been identified and analysed as and
taken to be typical of creoles, whatever the cause and theoretical justification
establishing this set may have been; and creolists have commonly referred to
and focussed upon such "typical" structural elements (as is done in the present
volume most pointedly in the papers by Parkvall, Kautzsch and Schneider, and — with a new interpretation and classification of such features — Baker).

If it is true that creoles come in different degrees of "radicalness" (an
assumption that will be shared by most but perhaps not all creolists at present),
then it is implied that this fact positions any individual language on a continuum
between varieties closely modelled upon substrate(s) on the one hand and
superstrates (nonstandard dialects) on the other. In other words, "radical"
drole displays many features deviant from their superstrate input forms and/or
possibly resulting from substrate transfer; on the other hand, so-called "semi-
drole" will have many superstrate-derived properties and but a few patterns or
forms derived from the substrate (or from universals). In all these cases, it is to
be understood that the mixture of features should be the product of the process
of original creole formation per se, not the outcome of a later approximation of
a creole to its lexifier language by "decreolization". Several papers in the
present volume (e.g. Baker, Mufwene, Winford) address the question of how in
this light the process of creole formation has to be redefined.

One point that has turned out to be highly relevant is the question of what
exactly the notion of "degrees of restructuring" relates to: is it really languages
as entire systems (as is entailed by many of the above considerations or by
labels such as "radical creoles" or "semi-creoles"), or shouldn't it rather be
applied to individual linguistic features exclusively (a point made most strongly
by Neumann-Holzschuh in her contribution)? In other words, can we even talk
of, say, Réunionnais or AAVE being "less creole-like" than Haitian or Jamai-
can, for that matter, or shouldn't we use such categorizations only with respect
to (for instance) the TMA-systems or the plural marking patterns of these varie-
ties, respectively? Again, this is apparently one of the points where differences
in scholarly traditions have surfaced. The former approach may have been more
common in the study of English-related creoles than in the Romance tradition.
In any case, it is undisputable that the amount of restructuring that characterizes
drole affects certain structural traits more than others, so that in any given
variety any part of its grammar, say the TMA system, may be more distant from
the superstrate (and, conversely, closer to substrates) than any other — say, NP
constituent sequences.

While the points discussed so far are central to and perhaps innovative for
an understanding of the idea of "degrees" in creole formation, there are several
other aspects that also need to be addressed and that feed into this problem but
that are perhaps more familiar from earlier publications. One such question
clearly concerns the nature of the input to the process in question: What,
precisely, is meant by "superstrate"/"lexifier"/"base language" (in most cases a
European language but usually an earlier dialect, or a mixture of such dialects, rather than a present-day standard variety), or by "substrate" (a specific African— or Pacific—language, a group, or mixture, of such languages, characteristics of such language families, or areal phenomena?). Also, of course, there is still the old, though currently less popular question of the role of language universals (Muysken and Smith 1986)—related to the more pressing issue of how strongly theories of Second Language Acquisition can be made fruitful for (and applied to) an understanding of the emergence of creoles. Another central question obviously concerns the causes, external or internal, of different "degrees" of creoleness. The most obvious and most frequently mentioned factor, specifically investigated in the present volume by Parkvall and also Kautzsch and Schneider, is the demographic proportion of superstrate and substrate speakers in a given community and at any given point in time (recent research has focussed strongly upon the interaction between speaker proportions and the time that has elapsed since the establishment of a new plantation society). Additional components to be considered include psycholinguistic factors (such as slaves' attitudes towards different varieties that they were faced with, and their motivation to acquire a white "target language" or any other code) as well as structural aspects (e.g. similarity effects between the structures involved).

III

The papers assembled in this volume certainly address many of the issues raised above and provide a lively picture of and substantial contributions to ongoing debates in the field (as reflected also in many recent contributions to the CreoLIST online discussion list, for instance). While all the papers combine general considerations with the discussion of specific structural examples, the emphasis on theoretical and descriptive aspects, respectively, varies from one paper to another, and so we have decided to arrange the contributions according to a loose thematic grouping, beginning with a state-of-the-art report and statements of decidedly general (though in essence quite conflicting) positions and proceeding with more empirically oriented investigations of English-based and Romance-based languages.

The paper by John Holm lays the groundwork by surveying the theoretical and empirical background of scholarship into the prototypical forms of partially restructured varieties, which he calls "semi-creoles". Beginning with Schuchardt's "Halbkreolisch", he traces early references to the concept and considers terminological questions in the early phase of creole studies. The main part outlines the history of research into five putative semi-creoles, of different lexical bases, and assessments of their linguistic status: African American Vernacular English, Brazilian Popular Portuguese, Nonstandard Caribbean
Spanish, Afrikaans, and Réunionnais. In conclusion, he identifies evolutionary processes that are effective in the emergence of these varieties.

**Philip Baker** begins by addressing the question of what precisely the notion of "degrees of restructuring" may imply in three familiar models of creolization (Bickerton's "Language Bioprogram Hypothesis", Chaudenson's "Approximations of Approximations" concept, and Lefebvre's relexification model). Subsequently, he outlines his own "constructive approach", suggesting that there are two linguistic processes which account for the development of the majority of pidgins and creoles: (1) the creation of a medium for interethnic communication (MIC) and (2) the development of a medium for community solidarity (MCS). While the creation of an MIC, an emerging pidgin, builds upon the varying needs of communities coming into sustained but restricted contact and pursues the limited goal of achieving efficient interethnic communication in a minimum of time, an MCS is consciously developed by slaves cultivating an enhanced form of in-group communication. Thus, in terms of restructuring, the construction of an MIC involves a limited but deliberate language construction in contact situations, building upon morphologically reduced versions of the languages involved, while the formation of an MCS usually operates by elaborating and expanding on an earlier MIC. Thus, both pidginisation and creolisation are regarded not as instances of imperfect second language acquisition but rather as cases of deliberate language construction. Within this framework, Baker sketches possible early linguistic developments on select islands as model cases of the evolution of MIC's and MCS's, thus accounting for some linguistic differences between Mauritius and Réunion as well as working out the impact of St. Kitts upon later developments in the English and French Caribbean. In conclusion, Baker questions the use of "typical" creole features as a methodological tool for establishing "degrees of restructuring", given that these constitute an unpredictable mix of retentions and innovations.

**Salikoko Mufwene** takes issue with Thomason's (1997) claim that there are "prototypical" creoles and McWhorter's (1998) idea of specific structures identifying a "Creole Prototype", arguing instead that creole languages can be defined solely on sociohistorical, not on structural, grounds. In his view, there are no linguistic features that serve to set this group of languages apart from any other, and the relationships between individual creoles are best characterized as Wittgensteinian "family resemblances" rather than varying degrees of proximity to a "best exemplar". He claims that creoles are products of language contact in which processes of feature diffusion (from superstrate and substrate languages) and competition between such features operated in essentially the same way as in other varieties, obeying the same principles of language change and linguistic evolution and approximating the respective lexifier languages' structures as "target languages". Consequently, he suggests that creoles should be seen as "disfranchised" dialects of their lexifiers.
By contrast, McWhorter (1998) — a paper which was presented at the Regensburg conference — stirred a substantial debate by claiming that there are in fact structural properties that set off creoles, or at least a subset of them conforming to a "Creole Prototype", from other languages, making them a synchronically and structurally distinct type of languages. In the present paper, John McWhorter elaborates further on this thesis and reacts to the first responses to his earlier suggestion. Comparing creoles with other, "older" languages, he specifies precise conditions that define the three structural traits of the Creole Prototype more accurately (for instance by making clear that the absence of tone as a property of creoles relates to monosyllabic lexical and morphosyntactic tonal functions, not phonological uses of tone, or that noncompositional derivation has to be distinguished from institutionalized complex formations). In essence, his claim is that the features which creoles lack are symptoms of the aging of natural languages; but as these indicators allow for gradience in various ways, it is allowed for individual creoles to be close to the hypothesized "Creole Prototype" to varying degrees — in fact, McWhorter discusses features which determine how close a given creole will be to the prototype. Some properties of Haitian Creole and other creole and non-creole languages are discussed as test cases as to how the Prototype theory might be substantiated or, for that matter, refuted.

In a very insightful paper, Mervyn Alleyne points out a fundamental observation and difficulty that may underlie many misunderstandings in the field. Comparing sociohistorical and structural properties of English-lexifier and French-lexifier creoles of the Caribbean, and looking most closely at certain verbal structures of Haitian French Creole, he argues that there may actually be two opposite processes in operation under the single label of "creolization": English-lexifier creoles appear to have originated as very "radical" creoles, structurally most distant from the lexifier to which they approximated later on, while with French creoles the structural differences from the lexifier language have grown over time, with the most distinct creole structures being fairly recent developments rather than products of an early phase of creole genesis.

In a theoretically oriented article that can be expected to have substantial impact on further discussions of creolization, Ulrich Detges analyzes the cognitive and semantic mechanisms that underlie the formation and subsequent evolution of the tense and aspect markers in the French creoles. His central thesis is that creolization is the product of two fundamentally different types of restructuring processes: grammaticalization and reanalysis. While in grammaticalization new markers normally emerge on the basis of speaker-related linguistic forms, in creole-specific reanalysis, viewed as the result of a hearer's strategy who wants to make sense out of what he has heard, new markers are selected as a consequence of their high frequency of occurrence or their conceptual saliency in the context of situation. Detges is thus able to show that the grammatical restructuring which happens in creolization results from two pro-
ceses best analyzed within a cognitive and semantically based framework of grammaticalization. Thus, he documents that restructuring in creole languages cannot be readily equated with polygenetic universals of grammaticalization and language change but must rather be accepted as a process of its own kind, characterized by the intertwining of two different cognitive mechanisms.

Comparing the same type of language change in various creole and non-creole languages with the aim of detecting possible differences, Susanne Michaelis investigates a characteristic path of grammaticalization, viz. a tendency of free personal pronouns to develop into subject clitics (marking the following predicate as finite) and, subsequently, into verbal copulas. She argues that the cause of this tendency is the effect of token frequency, not a trend towards iconicity. The typological approach, using data from two French creoles and Tok Pisin in comparison with other languages, shows that this process of "restructuring" is by no means specific to the creoles in the sample — so the important overall claim made here is that the processes of restructuring in creoles are the same as those in other languages.

Mikael Parkvall probes into the obvious question of whether there is a correlation between demographic speaker proportions (between superstrate and substrate speakers) and the degree of restructuring in any given speech community. To that end, he develops a broad research design that builds upon demographic as well as linguistic data from a wide range of creoles of various lexical bases. For each of these languages he develops a "restructuring index", based on the presence of a certain number of linguistic features, and determines the dates and periods of settlement when certain speaker proportions were reached, trying to correlate these two factors. Indeed, he finds a mutual relationship, albeit a weak one, and argues that demographics is but one factor possibly contributing to the degree of radicalness of a creole, strongly modified by others, above all motivation to acquire the target language — but that it is valuable to have worked out the impact of this single factor in isolation.

Having set out with a consideration of the theoretical problems posed by the existence of "intermediate" varieties for creolization theory, Donald Winford presents a thorough case study of a Caribbean creole whose non-basilectal character has repeatedly puzzled creolists and triggered conflicting explanations, the English-derived variety spoken on Barbados. Winford looks closely at the historical background, dividing the history of Bajan into four phases and discussing the sociohistorical framework for language contact in each of these, and at possible sources of select structural features of Bajan, mostly in the tense and aspect system, in British dialects and African languages. His conclusion is that a West African substrate influence has resulted in the structural reanalysis and modification of an English dialectal input largely from southwestern England and also, in some instances, from Hiberno-English. More generally, he suggests that intermediate varieties of Caribbean creoles like Bajan are not accounted for adequately by a conventional decreolization
scenario but have existed alongside more "basilectal" variants from early phases in the settlement of a community. In his view, these varieties emerged through a process of language shift to the target language, dialects of the superstrate, a process during which this superstrate was reanalysed and restructured to varying degrees.

Using data from Earlier African American English in South Carolina as evidence, Alexander Kautzsch and Edgar W. Schneider suggest that the notion of "differential creolization" accounts for different degrees of creoleness that can be documented in the performances of speakers from different parts of that state. After an initial discussion of the theoretical background and of earlier assumptions on the relationship between Gullah and AAVE, they propose a "rainbow hypothesis" of variation in South Carolina, claiming that the number of creole features in idiolectal grammars decreases in correlation with the increasing distance from the coast, which at the same time correlates with a decreasing African American proportion of a sub-region's population. Both a structural analysis of several idiolects and an implicational arrangement of idiolectal grammars from three sub-regions of the state largely confirm this hypothesis, and also serve to document the special situation of Horry County on the coast, for which possible reasons are proposed. Graphic displays suggest structural ranges of more or less creolized individual and regional grammars.

Magnus Huber provides a rare case study of an early phase of an ongoing restructuring process. He investigates records of the "broken English" jargon as spoken in the 1810s by "Liberated Africans" (recaptives from slave ships) who settled in independent villages near Freetown, Sierra Leone. Attestations of individual structural phenomena in a missionary's notes are documented, interpreted, and compared to dates of earliest attestations of features in Krio and West African Pidgin English. It is shown that the liberated Africans' variety constitutes largely an independent development, mostly uninfluenced by and without influence on Krio. Remarkably, the emergence of this jargon is accounted for predominantly by the impact of foreigner talk on the side of the superstrate speakers involved in the contact situation — a set of words and phrases found useful for the communication with indigenous peoples.

In the light of recent phonological theory Ingo Plag and Christian Uffmann look into the phonotactic restructuring of loan words in early Sranan and, more specifically, into the causes of the emergence of paragogic vowels. In four 18th century text sources they investigate the conditions that determine the occurrence and the choice of epenthetic vowels, employing a sophisticated statistical factor analysis approach. They find diachronic changes in phonological effects and compare these to an analysis of related effects in three African substrate languages that are known to have influenced Sranan, disclosing significant parallels but also some differences. Thus, their central claim is that paragoge in Sranan satisfies syllable structure constraints (but not rules)
transferred from substrate languages, modified by universals of second language acquisition and dialect mixing.

Peter Mühlhäusler discusses quite a different type of restructuring process, thus opening a new perspective, viz. the evolution of lexical rather than structural patterns. He argues that ecological conditions and the social needs of a community exert an influence upon the evolution of folk classification systems. This general point is underscored by a detailed documentation of the emergence of terms for fauna and flora in Tok Pisin on five levels of generalization, based upon early word lists and dictionaries. A few general insights into the principles governing the evolution of this word field can be gained.

Robert Chaudenson focusses upon two communities which are of special importance in the discussion of the degrees of restructuring: Réunion and St. Barthélemy. On both of these islands basilectal creoles coexist with varieties of the base language, with the latter, the "patois" in St. Barth and a creolized variety of French in Réunion, representing earlier stages preceding the evolution of the respective creoles. To understand why creoles differ in terms of their distances to the base language, scholars must investigate not only the specific sociolinguistic and demographic histories of the respective regions, the author argues, but also the diachronic processes that have shaped creoles out of nonstandard varieties of their base languages — processes that may vary considerably from one region to another. Due to the different situations in the creolophone communities, the restructuring processes differed as to their radicalness and speed: not only are there differences between various creoles with the same base language, but usually there is also a high degree of intralinguistic variation within a single creole-speaking community. In this respect both islands provide perfect examples of the "continuum interlinguistique" characteristic of many creolophone communities.

Among the French-based Creoles Louisiana Creole is considered a "conservative" variety, given the fact that it retained more superstrate features than other creoles. In this variety the structural break with French has not been as radical as for example in the case of Haiti, where the demographic and sociolinguistic conditions were quite different. Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh argues that in order to measure degrees of restructuring it is necessary not only to have a close look at earlier stages of the creoles and the base languages involved, but also, as far as morphosyntax is concerned, to examine each grammatical category separately — which is what she sets out to do, focussing upon examples from Louisiana French Creole. It can be shown that in a diachronic perspective the Atlantic French Creoles display a high degree of similarity during their early stages of creolization, with present-day differences typically having emerged only later in their histories; furthermore, the "radicalness" of restructuring tends to vary from category to category. Consequently, restructuring appears as a differential process that does not necessarily affect the entire grammatical system of a language at the same time and to the same degree. A related question that
arises in this context is whether it is actually possible to measure the degree of divergence from the base language, a problem that has already been discussed in a similar vein in the study of the evolution of the Romance languages.

The central question of Armin Schwegler's article is why certain languages appear to have resisted restructuring (used by this author in the sense of "decreolization"). It has long been held that extensive, prolonged exposure of a creole to a socially dominant superstrate necessarily causes decreolization or restructuring. Palenquero is one of those rare creole languages which appear to have escaped decreolization or restructuring altogether. Analyzing a series of Palenquero phonetic and grammatical features, Schwegler is able to show that Palenquero indeed appears to have remained surprisingly stable in spite of the 300 years of heavy Spanish/creole bilingualism: There is no continuum, no "in-between" in terms of lects. Palenque presents a situation of language abandonment rather than language change. The local creole is simply dying out, without suffering the natural effects of gradual neglect. As regards degrees of restructuring, Palenquero is a troublesome case: Given the prolonged heavy bilingualism and centuries-old intensive code-switching, the Palenqueros have had ample opportunity to "adjust" the structure of their local language to the superstrate — yet they have not done so, having kept the systems neatly separate for at least a century. Palenquero has not become more heterogeneous by introducing variant hybrid elements.

The subject of John Lipski's contribution is the Afro-Hispanic bozal language as spoken in various places in the Caribbean. He claims that the habla bozal was by and large a transitory phenomenon, emerging in different guises in each Afro-Hispanic speech community and reconverging with native varieties of Spanish within a single generation. In his view, claims to the effect that Afro-Caribbean bozal Spanish, particularly from 19th century Cuba, coalesced into a true creole are in large measure overstated, although creolization undoubtedly occurred in isolated slave barracks and maroon communities. The study addresses the difference between restructuring and creolization of bozal Spanish by examining the beginnings of a new verb system, based on a combination of Yoruba-like constructions and hybrid combinations, which emerged in Cuban bozal Spanish during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, only to disappear as subsequent generations of Afro-Cubans acquired Spanish natively. Due to its limited spread as a native language, Afro-Hispanic bozal language never underwent complete restructuring. In its least coherent form Caribbean bozal was a structurally reduced variety of Spanish sharing features with other learners' modes and not likely to coalesce into a stable creole. By treating contact-induced bozal Spanish as a steadily evolving interlanguage rather than as the product of interrupted transmission which produces creolization, a more accurate picture of events shaping 19th century Afro-Caribbean Spanish can be obtained.
Jürgen Lang examines restructuring within Capverdian Creole, demonstrating that certain structures in its verbal system can be assigned to either of two different levels, the "center" or the "periphery". According to Lang, this bipartite verbal system is a product of two different kinds of reanalysis. During creolization slaves were exposed to a linguistic system they were not familiar with. Faced with urgent communication needs, they analysed these patterns in the light of structures they were familiar with. This kind of "reanalysis" has produced structures which may still evoke the original Portuguese forms on the surface but are much closer to corresponding substrate structures on the semantic and functional level. These structures constitute the center of the creole grammar, with others, borrowed at a later time when the creole already existed, remaining much closer to the lexifier in both respects. Thus, divergences between Portuguese and Creole are relatively deep within this central stock of forms, while at the "periphery" the creole and its base language tend to converge structurally.

For a variety of reasons, several other papers given at the Regensburg conference do not appear in this volume; these include the following:

Dany Adone (Northern Territory University): "Restructuration and innovation in creolization";
Jacques Arends (Amsterdam): "Sociohistorical factors in the development of complementation in Saramaccan and Sranan";
Angela Bartens (Helsinki): "Existe-t-il un modèle de semi-créolisation qu'on puisse déceler à partir des systèmes verbaux du portugais brésilien vernaculaire, de l'espagnol carabéen vernaculaire, du réunionnais, de l'afrikaans et de l'anglais afro-américain vernaculaire?";
Annegret Bollée (Bamberg): "La restructuration du pluriel nominal dans les créoles français de L'Océan Indien";
Lawrence D. Carrington (Mona, Jamaica): "Fuzzy labels and fuzzy systems — a critical appraisal of terminology in the study of language contact";
Hildo Honorio do Couto (Brasilia): "Anti-creole";
Katherine Green (New York/Paris): "Semi-creolization as a model for non-standard Dominican Spanish";
Frans Hinskens (Nijmegen): "The diachrony of R-deletion in Negerhollands: Phonological and sociolinguistic aspects";
John McWhorter (Berkeley): "Identifying the creole prototype: Vindicating a typological class";
Pieter Muysken (Amsterdam): "Restructuring in Ecuadorian Quechua";
Matthias Perl (Mainz): "Kolonial-Deutsch as restructured German";
Lambert Félix Prudent (Martinique): "Maturation et maturité du créole martiniquais: Retour sur quelques étapes historiques et comparaison avec des systèmes voisins";
Norval Smith and Tonjes Veenstra (Amsterdam and Potsdam): "Synthetic compounds in a radical creole: Abrupt versus gradual change";
Peter Stein (Regensburg): "Au milieu du gué: Quelques réflexions à propos de l'origine et de l'avenir des langues créoles";
Sali Tagliamonte (York, UK): "Patterns of restructuring in FUTURE temporal reference: A cross-linguistic perspective on go";
Albert Valdman (Indiana): "Lexical restructuring in French-based creoles";
Daniel Véronique (Paris), "Négation et marqueurs pré-prédicatifs dans les créoles français: émergences et restructurations".

Having documented the breadth and versatility of the topic and the conflicting positions that can be found on various aspects, we will refrain from concluding with an overall summary, which would overstate or exclude some aspects by necessity. One thing has become clear, though: Whatever happens in the process of "restructuring", and however it can be explained that the results of this process come in varying degrees, the ultimate background for all these processes is the sociolinguistic, psychological and historical framework of the interaction between groups of human beings on a permanent basis, with all the conflicts and opportunities that this entails. In that sense, creolistics is probably best seen as but a branch of a flourishing, more comprehensive discipline of contact linguistics (Thomason/Kaufman 1988; Thomason 1996). Language contact and the social and linguistic conditions underlying it are the parameters decisive in shaping the degrees of restructuring in any instance of creolization.

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References


Semi-creolization: Problems in the development of theory

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1. Introduction

The past decade has brought an intensification of the search for a theoretical model that can adequately account for the known historical and linguistic facts surrounding partially restructured languages like African American Vernacular English, Afrikaans, and nonstandard varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, Caribbean Spanish and Réunionnais French. There are several reasons for this. On the practical side, the varieties themselves — with some 200 million speakers around the world — are far too important to ignore, and the problems they present — for example, in education — show no signs of going away.

There has also been a shift in theoretical perspective that is facilitating progress in this area of inquiry. More linguists working in creolistics are coming to see the field as only one part of a broader area of research: contact linguistics, as defined by Thomason (1997). The scope of this wider field includes language varieties that have resulted not only from pidginization and creolization (to whatever degree) but also from such processes as intertwining (Bakker and Muysken 1994), koineization or indigenization (Siegel 1997). Such studies promise to increase our understanding of the range of possible outcomes of language contact by encompassing varieties that fail to fit neatly into the definitional boxes in which we have often tried to restrict pidgin and creole linguistics.

This paper examines how scholarship on each of the above-mentioned five semi-creoles — representing five different lexical bases — has taken its own course. Although language barriers can be surprisingly effective in limiting the horizons of linguists, there has been a certain amount of communication across these barriers so that research on one variety has sometimes cast light on theoretical problems connected with another. After surveying views on partial versus full language restructuring as creolistics developed (Section 2), this study

1) I would like to thank Paul Roberge for his thoughtful comments on parts of this paper. Responsibility for any shortcomings, however, remains solely my own.
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will examine scholarship on each variety, beginning with AAVE (Section 3). To a limited extent (especially in more recent years) AAVE studies have provided models for interpreting the historical development of the other varieties, from the model of a purely European dialect reflecting general western European tendencies (e.g. loss of inflections), to the model of a post-creole retaining substratal features, to the model of differing degrees of restructuring that reflect social factors such as the initial proportion of native to non-native speakers of the lexical source language. This review of the theoretical underpinnings of research on AAVE will then be compared with work on the other four semi-creoles examined in this study: Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese (Section 4), Nonstandard Caribbean Spanish (Section 5), Afrikaans (Section 6) and Réunionnais (Section 7). The conclusion (Section 8) describes a project to coordinate research on semi-creolization and the theoretical model it yielded.

2. Semi-creolization versus decreolization

Although the theoretical foundations for the study of fully creolized languages have been developing for over two centuries, linguists have had more difficulty developing an adequate theoretical model for dealing with partially creolized languages. References to what can only be interpreted as more and less fully creolized varieties date from the latter part of the eighteenth century (e.g. Oldendorp 1777: 263). However, it was not until the late nineteenth century that a linguist observed that there were language varieties that combined features of creoles with those of non-creoles. Schuchardt (1889: 480) coined the term Halbkreolisch (i.e. semi-creole) for certain varieties of Indo-Portuguese and Caribbean Creole French that had taken on superstrate features — varieties that would today be called decreolized varieties. He also noted that American Black English seemed to be losing its creole features (Schuchardt ca. 1893, in Gilbert 1985: 42). In this view, AAVE originated as a full creole that later acquired non-creole features from contact with regional English. Later Bloomfield (1933: 474) reasoned that a restructured variety of English had become nativized among Negro slaves in many parts of America. When the jargon has become the only language of the subject group, it is a creolized language. The creolized language has the status of an inferior dialect of the masters' speech. It is subject to constant leveling-out and improvement in the direction of the latter. The various types of "Negro dialect" which we observe in the United States show us some of the last stages of this leveling. With the improvement of social conditions, this leveling is accelerated; the result is a caste-dialect [...]

This view was not elaborated into a full-blown theory of decreolization until interest in AAVE and the English-based Caribbean creoles became widespread in the 1960s and it was reasserted by Stewart (1968: 51-2). DeCamp (1961,
1971) developed the idea of a continuum of lects for Jamaican, ranging from the most creole-like to the most English-like. Stewart (1965) applied this idea to AAVE and later the continuum model was further refined by others (e.g. Bickerton 1973; Rickford 1987).

By the end of the 1970s there was a general assumption that decreolization explained the varying structural distance between different creoles and their lexical source language: Caribbean creoles based on English, for example, were actually post-creoles at different stages of decreolization away from a very early fully creolized variety (that may have resembled the modern Surinamese creoles) which had been cut off from contact with English in the seventeenth century.

The idea behind the modern meaning of semi-creole, on the other hand, originated quite independently of the actual word. In 1897 Hesseling had pointed out that "the Dutch on the Cape was on the way to becoming a sort of creole [... but] this process was not completed" (1979 translation: 12). The first recognition of a whole category of semi-creole languages can be found in Reinecke (1937: 61):

> In several instances the slaves were so situated among a majority or a large minority of whites (and there were other reasons as well for the result), that they, or rather their creole children, learned the common language, not a creole dialect; or the plantation creole dialects that had begun to form never crystallized, never got beyond the makeshift stage. This happened in [...] Brazil, Cuba and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries in general, and in the southern United States in general.

Reinecke was also the first to put this meaning together with the term "semi-creolized", which he used in reference to Afrikaans (1937: 559).

Bloomfield (1933) had indirectly implied that a non-creole language might take on creole features — a process that could lead to the formation of a semi-creole — when he asked "whether the creolized English of the southern slaves, for instance, may not have influenced local types of sub-standard or even of standard English" (1933: 474).

Later Silva Neto (1950a: 12) followed Schuchardt (1889) in referring to re-lusitanized Indo-Portuguese as a semi-crioulo. That same year he extended the use of the term to the Portuguese spoken by non-whites during the early settlement of Brazil (1950b: 166). Although he never spelled out the sequence of social and linguistic events that may have led to a semi-creole from the very beginning, this was the working hypothesis of later studies of the development of Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese (Holm 1984). Thomason, working on a comparative study of a number of different kinds of languages resulting from contact (Thomason and Kaufman 1988), also reserved the term semi-creole for varieties that appeared never to have been fully creolized. Thus the term was contrasted with
post-creole varieties such as (according to some) American Black English or vernacular Brazilian Portuguese. Others would call these varieties semi-creoles, which also means that they have both creole and non-creole features but does not necessarily imply that they were ever basilectal creoles, since both creoles and non-creoles (e.g. Caymanian English...) can become semi-creoles by borrowing features. Thus some believe that Afrikaans [...] particularly the variety spoken by some people of mixed race [...] could safely be called a semi-creole but not a post-creole. (Holm 1988-89,1: 9-10)

The term is also used in this sense by Thomason and Kaufman in reference to Afrikaans (1988: 148). Around the same time, Mufwene (1987: 99) referred to the possible "half-creolization" of AAVE. Bickerton (1984: 176-8) had proposed what he called a pidginization index to explain why the structure of some creoles is quite close to that of their lexical source language (e.g. Réunionnais) while that of others is quite far from it (e.g. Saramaccan). Although the mathematical formula which Bickerton proposed to indicate the degree of restructuring proved "unworkable" (Singler 1990: 645), he did recognize that creoles stand at different distances from their source languages in terms of the degree of restructuring that they have undergone, and that this differentiation could occur at the beginning rather than the end of the process of restructuring.

It was during this period that linguists began to question whether decreolization alone could, in fact, adequately account for the varying distance of the structure of different creoles from that of their lexical source language. Hancock (1987) put it thus:

I do not, then, believe that, for example, Black English was once like Gullah, or that Gullah was once like Jamaican, or that Jamaican was once like Sranan, each a more decreolized version of the other along some kind of mystical continuum. [...] My feeling is that most of the principal characteristics that each creole is now associated with were established during the first twenty-five years or so of the settlement of the region in which it came to be spoken: Black English has always looked much the way it looks now [...] (1987: 264-5)

3. African American Vernacular English

The decreolization theory for the origin of AAVE — the "creolist" theory that finally received the imprimatur of Labov (1982) — was a much more satisfactory explanation for that variety's creole features than earlier hypotheses that traced its origins solely to British dialects. However, my work on the lexicons of two much more creole-like varieties — Nicargua's Miskito Coast Creole English (Holm 1978) and Bahamian Creole English (Holm and Shilling 1982) — made it clear that archaic and regional British English must have played a primary role in the genesis of all three African American varieties. Research on
possible British origins of specific creole grammatical features had been unfashionable in the 1970s, but in the 1980s two such studies — Schneider (1981; translated in 1989) and Rickford (1986) — had an important impact on the field, reopening the question of the degree to which British syntactic patterns had been preserved in African American varieties.

Further doubt regarding some of the basic assumptions of decreolization theory grew out of my work with several non-creoles that appeared to have acquired creole features: White Bahamian English (Holm 1980), and Caymanian and Bay Island English (Washabaugh 1983; Warantz 1983), leading to the conclusion that

Although long contact with creolized varieties of English has influenced the English spoken by white Caymanians and their kin on the Bay Islands of Honduras, this influence seems to be confined largely to areal contact phenomena such as word-borrowing and phonological shifts. Considering the English system of verbal inflections in the speech of Utila [...] as opposed to the system of preverbal tense and aspect markers that characterizes Central American English creoles [...] the former would seem to be not a creole but rather a regional variety of English influenced by contact with creolized English, much like the folk-speech of the southern United States. (Holm 1983: 15)

The most convincing evidence I found that decreolization alone could not account for the present structure of AAVE was listening to tape recordings of the speech of former slaves (Bailey et al., eds. 1991). Even taking into account that their speech may have shifted considerably between their childhood in the mid nineteenth century and the time they were recorded in the 1930s and later, it was clearly a variety of English with some creole features rather than a variety of creole with some English features:

The present study supports the view that the language of the ex-slaves, like earlier attestations of the speech of blacks in the American South, indicates in the light of the relevant sociohistorical and demographic data discussed above that the language of blacks born in North America (outside of the Gullah area) was from its very beginning a semi-creole representing a compromise between the creole of slaves imported from the West Indies and the regional speech of British settlers. While American Black English has certainly undergone decreolization over the past 300 years in the sense that it has replaced many of its original creole features with those of English, this is not actually evidence that American Black English itself ever constituted an autonomous creole system. (Holm 1991: 247)

A more radical view (which seems inherently unlikely, given what is known about language contact phenomena) is that the very concept of decreolization is misguided, and that it played no role in the development of varieties such as Gullah and AAVE. Mufwene (1991: 382-3) seems to support such a view.