AN INTRODUCTION TO PIDGINS AND CREOLES

JOHN HOLM

UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, PORTUGAL

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011–4211, USA http://www.cup.org
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

First published 2000

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in 9½/13pt Times [GC]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Holm, John A.
An introduction to pidgins and creoles / John Holm.
p. cm. – (Cambridge textbooks in linguistics)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0 521 58460 4. – ISBN 0 521 58581 3 (paperback)
1. Creole dialects. 2. Pidgin languages. I. Title. II. Series.
PM7801.H65 2000
417′.22 – dc21 99-23499 CIP

ISBN 0 521 58460 4 hardback
ISBN 0 521 58581 3 paperback

CONTENTS

TABLES

I
Introduction

1.0 Pidgins and creoles and linguistics

What earlier generations thought of pidgin and creole languages is all too clear from their very names: *broken English*, *bastard Portuguese*, *nigger French*, *kombuistaaltje* ('cookhouse lingo'), *isikula* ('coolie language'). This contempt often stemmed in part from the feeling that pidgins and creoles were corruptions of 'higher', usually European languages, and in part from attitudes toward the speakers of such languages who were often perceived as semi-savages whose partial acquisition of civilized habits was somehow an affront. Those speakers of creole languages who had access to education were duly convinced that their speech was wrong, and they often tried to make it more similar to the standard. With few exceptions, even linguists thought of pidgin and creole languages as 'aberrant' (Bloomfield 1933:471) if they thought of them at all – that is, as defective and therefore inappropriate as objects of serious study. The analogy seemed to be that broken English, for example, was of as little interest to the linguist as a broken diamond would be to a gemologist.

It is only comparatively recently that linguists have realized that pidgins and creoles are not wrong versions of other languages but rather *new* languages. Their words were largely taken from an older language during a period of linguistic crisis to fill an urgent need for communication. This makes them appear to be deformed versions of that older language. If, however, one examines them as linguistic *systems*, analysing the structure of their phonology, syntax and word formation, it becomes evident that these systems are quite different from those of the language from which they drew their lexicon (their *lexical source* or *base language*). Their systems are so different, in fact, that they can hardly be considered even dialects of their base language. They are new languages, shaped by many of the same linguistic forces that shaped English and other 'proper' languages.

Pidgins and creoles were largely ignored by earlier linguists not only because of this misunderstanding of their identity, but also because of the

prevailing notion of what language was and why it was worth studying. In western Europe, this notion had grown out of the Roman tradition of rhetoric: the cultivation and refinement of language for public speaking and writing. During the millennium in which western Europeans retained Latin as their medium of writing, it was a foreign language that had to be taught prescriptively, with definite rules as to what was right and wrong. As western European languages came to replace Latin in serious writing, the idea that there could be only one correct form was transferred to them after an initial period of flux. The rise of modern European states reinforced the idea of a language – a relatively uniform variety used by the educated and ruling classes in speaking and writing – as opposed to a dialect – the uncultivated speech of the masses, changing from one locality to another. The appearance of uniformity of written languages was further reinforced by the advent of printing, which hastened the standardization of orthographic conventions.

Written languages were usually studied for quite practical reasons: access to the learning stored in their literature. Languages were regarded as relatively fixed and stable entities, although dialect studies such as Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* reflected the understanding that languages change over time as well as space. In 1863 the German linguist, August Schleicher, described languages as 'natural organisms that come into being, develop, age, and die according to laws that are quite independent of man's will' (cited by Arens 1969:259). Such a reification of language is at odds with the more current notion of language as an individual's set of habits for communicating that have largely been determined by his or her social experience, guided by an innate ability to decipher and learn the language habits of other humans. These habits for encoding one's thoughts and perceptions into verbal symbols in order to communicate them can shift to some degree with one's social circumstances; similarly, the most frequent language habits of the aggregate of individuals forming the society can also shift (Hudson 1980). Since individuals use language to communicate not only their meaning but also their social identity, they can shift their habits to signal a shift in their social allegiances; similarly, an entire speech community can shift language habits to signal a more focused or cohesive identity (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Such an understanding of language as a dynamic part of the interrelationship between the individual and society has allowed linguists to deal with aspects of language that do not fit a static model of artificial homogeneity based on standardized languages. Thus it is only relatively recently that linguists have begun to study language that appears to lack order: the speech of very young children, foreigners, aphasics and linguistically heterogeneous communities.

The more social view of language began with a nineteenth-century philologist who realized that some Western European languages had not only ancestors but also descendants in the form of creoles. This early creolist was Hugo Schuchardt, a student of Schleicher's who rejected his idea of language as a natural organism that followed natural laws such as regular sound changes, which the Neogrammarians held to be without exception. Schuchardt's interest in challenging this theory led him to the creoles, in which sound changes were often irregular because language mixing had disrupted the internally motivated historical sound changes that might be expected in languages in isolation. Schuchardt came to realize that individuals play an important role in the social process leading to language mixture: 'Old and new forms are distributed . . . within a single dialect according to sex, education, temperament, in short in the most diverse manner' (1885:18, cited by Fought 1982:425). Schuchardt's concern with the social matrix of language change marks him as nearly a century ahead of his time, but his work received only limited attention from his contemporaries. Most linguists continued to consider pidgins and creoles freakish exceptions that were irrelevant to any theory of 'normal' language. Yet Reinecke (1937:6) realized that, because of their very nature, pidgins and creoles could offer important insights into the study of language: 'What some Germans have ambitiously called the sociology of language (*Sprachsoziologie*) is still in its infancy . . . Among the localities most suitable for special studies are those in which the marginal languages are spoken. Changes there have been very rapid and pronounced. Languages can be observed taking form within a man's lifetime.'

Since the establishment of pidgin and creole studies as an academic discipline in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it has become clear that the linguistic forces that shape pidgins and creoles are exceptional only in that they are indeed 'very rapid and pronounced'. Moreover, research on the processes of pidginization and creolization has led to important advances in a number of areas of applied and theoretical linguistics. Studies of creole continua (2.11) led to the development of implicational scaling in linguistics. Labov's work on African American Vernacular English (a semi-creole: see 1.3) laid the foundation for modern sociolinguistics, which has in turn cast new light on language change as being socially motivated. Pidginization and creolization have become important to historical linguists as extreme examples of contact-induced language change which challenge the validity of some traditional assumptions about the genetic relatedness of languages, particularly the family-tree model, and concepts like glottochronology (2.9). This has brought us closer to a method for establishing whether a language was previously creolized, using both linguistic and sociohistorical data (e.g. Rickford 1977,

Mello 1997a). A better understanding of pidginization has also contributed to our understanding of the acquisition of second languages (e.g. Andersen 1983, Romaine 1988), while first-language acquisition theory has been challenged by the concept of the innate bioprogram (2.12) as developed by Bickerton (1981) in the context of creolization theory and having, he claimed, implications for the origin of all languages and even language itself. Finally, work on the role that language universals might play in pidginization (Kay and Sankoff 1974) as well as creolization has focused attention on the very nature of universals, thus contributing to grammatical theory.

The practical value of pidgin and creole studies is also considerable. Because these languages were not traditionally written, their speakers have usually had to learn literacy in a foreign or quasi-foreign language, often the lexical source language. Yet because the restructured variety's separate identity or very existence frequently received no official acknowledgement the (quasi-)foreign language of literacy and instruction was taught as the child's mother tongue – that is, not taught at all. This has caused serious educational problems for the millions who speak creoles in the Caribbean area, and for the scores of millions who speak post-creoles and semi-creoles (1.3) in such countries as the United States, Brazil and Australia. Creolists from Caribbean countries have taken the lead in applying the results of their linguistic research to practical problems in education, and they are not alone. However, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done simply to describe these restructured varieties so educators can understand clearly what the first language of their pupils actually is.

In Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific area, Tok Pisin (an English-based pidgin) is now used in the House of Assembly and in news broadcasts because of its nationwide currency. Scholars of pidgin and creole languages have taken an active and influential role in language planning there. Other creoles are also acquiring such status in the Cape Verde Islands, Guiné-Bissau, the Seychelles, Haiti and the Netherlands Antilles, and creolists from these and other countries are engaged in practical projects from lexicography to the preparation of teaching materials.

1.1 Pidgins

There are problems in defining the most basic concepts in language: *word*, *sentence*, *dialect* and even *language* itself. Our definitions, like our grammars, often leak: they fail to account for the endless variety of reality. Yet a clear understanding of concepts is important: they are the building blocks we use to construct our theories to account for that reality. The definitions below are presented as straightforwardly as possible in an effort to make them

intelligible and useful; their problems and weaknesses will be briefly indicated in the ensuing discussion, and it is hoped that the material that follows in the selected case studies in chapter 3 and broader surveys (e.g. Holm 1988–9, vol. II) will make clear the full implications of their problematical aspects.

A *pidgin* is a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common; it evolves when they need some means of verbal communication, perhaps for trade, but no group learns the native language of any other group for social reasons that may include lack of trust or close contact. Usually those with less power (speakers of *substrate* languages) are more accommodating and use words from the language of those with more power (the *superstrate*), although the meaning, form and use of these words may be influenced by the substrate languages. When dealing with the other groups, the superstrate speakers adopt many of these changes to make themselves more readily understood and no longer try to speak as they do within their own group. They cooperate with the other groups to create a make-shift language to serve their needs, simplifying by dropping unnecessary complications such as inflections (e.g., *two knives* becomes *two knife*) and reducing the number of different words they use, but compensating by extending their meanings or using circumlocutions. By definition the resulting pidgin is restricted to a very limited domain such as trade, and it is no one's native language (e.g. Hymes 1971:15ff.).

Although individuals can simplify and reduce their language on an *ad hoc* basis (for example, New Yorkers buying sunglasses in Lisbon), this results not in a pidgin but a *jargon* with no fixed norms. A pidgin is more stable and has certain norms of meaning, pronunciation and grammar, although there is still variation resulting from the transfer of features from speakers' first languages. It has been suggested that such stabilization requires *tertiary hybridization*, in which two or more groups of substrate speakers adopt the pidgin for communicating with each other (Whinnom 1971). If superstrate speakers become the least important part of this pidgin triangle and close contact in the pidgin is established and maintained between speakers of different substrate languages over an extended period of time, an *expanded pidgin* results: the simpler structure of the earlier pidgin is elaborated to meet more demanding communicative needs (Mühlhäusler 1986:5).

This description distinguishes pidgins from the imperfect speech of foreigners in other social situations, when native speakers of the target language do not try to follow the foreigners' imperfect version of it, and this does not become established or stabilized. However, two further stipulations are needed

to distinguish pidgins from other kinds of contact language. First, social distance must be maintained between speakers of the superstrate and the other languages; otherwise, if the substrate speakers so desired, they could eventually acquire enough information about the superstrate language to speak it in a non-pidginized form (Valdman 1978:9–10). Secondly, it must be assumed that the languages in contact are not closely related, in which case *koineization* or a kind of dialect levelling would result (1.3). Finally it should be noted that contact languages can evolve between trading partners of approximately equal power, such as Russenorsk (Broch and Jahr 1984). Such varieties, if they are indeed stable pidgins rather than jargons, tend to draw their vocabulary more equally from both languages – sometimes even to refer to the same things.

The following is a text of Melanesian Pidgin English, Tok Pisin (cf. 'talk pidgin') used in Papua New Guinea. It is from Hall (1966:149):

naw mi stap rabawl. mi stap lɔng bɪglajn, mi katim kopra. naw
Then I stay Rabaul. I was in workgroup, I cut copra. Then

wɔnfɛlə mastər bɪlɔng kampani ɛm i-kɪčɪm mi mi kʊk lɔng ɛm
a white man from company he take me I cook for him

gɛn. mastər king. mi stap. naw ol mastar i-kɪk
again. Mister King. I stay. Then all white men were playing football.

i- kɪkɪm ɛm. naw lɛg bɪlɔng ɛm i-swelap.
They kick him. Then leg of him swell up.

One of the most striking features of this text is the absence of complex phrase-level structures such as embedding. However, this recording was made by Margaret Mead over sixty years ago, when Tok Pisin was not yet widely spoken in an expanded form. Today embedded structures such as relative clauses are found not only in the speech of Tok Pisin's native speakers (often children of interethnic marriages growing up in a multi-ethnic urban setting) but also in the speech of adults who are not native speakers (Sankoff and Brown 1976; cf. Tok Pisin text in section 3.12).

1.2 Creoles

A *creole* has a jargon or a pidgin in its ancestry; it is spoken natively by an entire speech community, often one whose ancestors were displaced geographically so that their ties with their original language and sociocultural identity were partly broken. Such social conditions were often the result of slavery. For example, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Africans of diverse ethnolinguistic groups were brought by Europeans to colonies in the New World to work together on sugar plantations. For the

first generation of slaves in such a setting, the conditions were often those that produce a pidgin. Normally the Africans had no language in common except what they could learn of the Europeans' language, and access to this was usually very restricted because of the social conditions of slavery. The children born in the New World were usually exposed more to this pidgin – and found it more useful – than their parents' native languages. Since the pidgin was a foreign language for the parents, they probably spoke it less fluently; moreover, they had a more limited vocabulary and were more restricted in their syntactic alternatives. Furthermore, each speaker's mother tongue influenced his or her use of the pidgin in different ways, so there was probably massive linguistic variation while the new speech community was being established. Although it appears that the children were given highly variable and possibly chaotic and incomplete linguistic input, they were somehow able to organize it into the creole that was their native language, an ability which may be an innate characteristic of our species. This process of *creolization* or *nativization* (in which a pidgin acquires native speakers) is still not completely understood, but it is thought to be the opposite of pidginization: a process of expansion rather than reduction (although a pidgin can be expanded without being nativized). For example, creoles have phonological rules (e.g. assimilation) not found in early pidgins. Creole speakers need a vocabulary to cover all aspects of their life, not just one domain like trade; where words were missing, they were provided by various means, such as innovative combinations (e.g. Jamaican Creole *han-migl* 'palm' from English *hand* + *middle*). For many linguists, the most fascinating aspect of this expansion and elaboration was the reorganization of the grammar, ranging from the creation of a coherent verbal system to complex phrase-level structures such as embedding.

There are many questions about the process of creolization that remain unresolved. Is it qualitatively different from the expansion of a pidgin that does not acquire native speakers? How crucial is the uprooting of those who begin the new speech community? There are creoles whose speakers were never uprooted, such as the Portuguese-based varieties in Asia (Holm 1988–9:284–98), although in a sense the Portuguese fathers of the first generations were indeed uprooted and their racially mixed progeny formed not only a new speech community but also a new ethnic group. It has been proposed (Gilman 1979) that the significant difference between creoles and extended pidgins is not nativization, since the designation of what is a 'first' as opposed to a 'primary' language is arbitrary and irrelevant in many multilingual contexts, but rather whether the language is one of ethnic reference. However, this does not decide the issue of whether the differences between creoles and

extended pidgins are entirely social rather than linguistic. The restructured Portuguese of Guiné-Bissau is an extended pidgin for most of its speakers in that country, but a language of ethnic reference for a group in neighbouring Senegal; despite recent research (Peck 1988, Kihm 1994, Couto 1996), it is still not clear whether there are any significant linguistic differences between the two. Singler (1984:68) argues that 'The evidence from other West African pidgins and, especially, from Tok Pisin argues for the rejection of the centrality of nativization in the expansion of fledgling pidgins and the recognition of the fundamental commonality of creoles with extended pidgins.' Mühlhäusler (1982:452) found that 'The structural consequences of creolization of Tok Pisin are less dramatic than in the case of creolization of an unstable jargon. Both Sankoff's and my own findings indicate that, instead of radical restructuring, the trends already present in expanded Tok Pisin are carried further in its creolized varieties.'

Some linguists distinguish between the creolization of an extended pidgin, which is both socially and linguistically gradual, and the creolization of an early pidgin or even an unstable jargon, called *early* creolization (Bickerton in Bickerton *et al.* 1984) or *abrupt creolization* (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988). If Caribbean and other creoles did indeed grow out of nativized varieties of unstable pre-pidgin jargons, then the classical definition of a creole as 'any language with a pidgin in its ancestry' is technically wrong. The crucial element would seem to be a variety that has been radically reduced (a jargon or a pidgin) rather than one that has stabilized (a pidgin but not a jargon). However, our knowledge of the earlier stages of particular creoles is usually quite sketchy and based on speculation rather than direct evidence. It may be prudent to reserve judgement on this issue.

There are other major issues regarding creolization that remain unresolved. To what extent did adult speakers of the pidgin or jargon help their creole-speaking children organize their speech? To what extent did these adults draw on their native languages to do this? What was the role of universal trends in the acquisition of a first or second language? These issues will be discussed in detail in chapter 2, and a number of them will be illustrated in chapter 3 in actual case studies.

The following text (Park 1975) is in Ndyuka, an English-based creole spoken in the interior of Suriname in northern South America (see section 3.9):

Mi	be	go	a	onti	anga	wan	dagu	fu	mi.
I	had	gone	hunting	with	a	dog	of	mine.	

A	be	wan	bun	onti	dagu.	Da	fa	mi	waka
He	was	a	good	hunting	dog.	Then	as	I	walked

so,	a	tapu	wan	kapasi	na	a
so,	he	cornered	an	armadillo	in	the

olo. A lon go so, a tyai wan he kon na a olo.
hole. He ran away so, he brought a capybara into the hole.

Note that unlike the pidgin text in Tok Pisin, the above creole text has an embedded subordinate clause, 'fa mi waka so'.

Before leaving our discussion of the terms *pidgin* and *creole*, a word about their origin may be of interest. The etymology of *pidgin* is uncertain, and an entire article has been devoted to it (Hancock 1979a). The *Oxford English Dictionary* derives it from the English word *business* as pronounced in Chinese Pidgin English, which was of course used for transacting business. Other possible sources include the Hebrew-derived *pidjom* 'exchange, trade, redemption'; a Chinese pronunciation of the Portuguese word *ocupação* 'business'; or a South Seas pronunciation of English *beach* as *beachee*, from the location where the language was often used (Mühlhäusler 1986:1). Lest we run out of alternatives, I have suggested Portuguese *baixo* 'low,' used to distinguish pidgin Portuguese (*baixo português*) from standard Portuguese in Portugal's Asian empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. *Baixo português* was in fact the trade language that preceded pidgin English on the coast of China, and there are no more phonological problems (and certainly fewer semantic ones) in deriving *pidgin* from /baišu/ rather than /bɪznɪs/.

The origin of the term *creole* is more certain. Latin *creāre* 'to create' became Portuguese *criar* 'to raise (e.g. a child)', whence the past participle *criado* '(a person) raised; a servant born into one's household'. *Crioulo*, with a diminutive suffix, came to mean an African slave born in the New World in Brazilian usage. The word's meaning was then extended to include Europeans born in the New World. The word finally came to refer to the customs and speech of Africans and Europeans born in the New World. It was later borrowed as Spanish *criollo*, French *créole*, Dutch *creools* and English *creole*.

1.3 Other terms

In addition to those terms in italics introduced in the preceding two sections, there are some other terms to be explained here that will recur in the following chapters. They are largely confined to (or have a particular meaning in) pidgin and creole linguistics (sometimes shortened to *creolistics*; cf. French *créolistique* or German *Kreolistik*). Terms having to do with theory (e.g. *relexification*, *bioprogram*) are explained in chapter 2 and can be found in the index.

In some areas where the speakers of a creole remain in contact with its lexical donor language (e.g. in Jamaica, where English is the official

language), there has been a historical tendency for the creole to drop its most noticeable non-European features, often (but not always) replacing them with European ones – or what are taken to be such. This process of *decreolization* can result in a *continuum* of varieties from those farthest from the superstrate (the *basilect*) to those closest (the *acrolect*), with *mesolectal* or intermediate varieties between them. After a number of generations some varieties lose all but a few vestiges of their *creole features* (those not found in the superstrate) through decreolization, resulting in *post-creole* varieties such as (according to some) African American Vernacular English or Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese. However, others say that these particular varieties are rather the products of *semi-creolization*, which occurs when people with different first languages shift to a typologically distinct target language (itself an amalgam of dialects in contact, including fully restructured varieties) under social circumstances that partially restrict their access to the target language as normally used among native speakers. The processes that produce a semi-creole include *dialect levelling* (see *koineization* below), preserving features that may be archaic or regional in the standard language; *language drift*, following internal tendencies within the source language, such as phonotactic, morphological or syntactic simplification; *imperfect language shift* by the entire population, perpetuating features from ancestral languages or *interlanguages* (see below) in the speech of monolingual descendants; and *borrowing* features from fully pidginized or creolized varieties of the target language spoken by newcomers, or found locally but confined to areas where sociolinguistic conditions were favourable to full restructuring; and in some cases *secondary levelling*, corresponding to the *decreolization* which full creoles can undergo. These processes result in a new variety with a substantial amount of the source language's structure intact, including the inflections not found in basilectal creoles, but also with a significant number of the structural features of a creole, such as those inherited from its substrate or the interlanguages that led to its preceding pidgin (Holm 1998a, 1998b, fc.).

The term *creoloid* has been used for so many different kinds of vaguely creole-like languages that its usefulness has become rather limited; here it will be used only to mean languages that superficially resemble creoles in some way (e.g. by being morphologically simpler than a possible source language), but which, on close examination, appear never to have undergone even partial creolization. This may have been caused by the language shift of an entire speech community, such as the adoption of Old High German by Romance-speaking Jews, producing Yiddish, or the adoption of English by Puerto Ricans in New York, producing Nuyorican. These *xenolects* or slightly foreignized varieties spoken natively, akin to what Siegel (1997) calls

indigenized varieties that have taken root abroad (such as Singapore English), are not creoles or even semi-creoles because they have undergone significantly less restructuring. Nor are *interlanguages* (intermediate varieties of a target language spoken by foreign learners) to be considered pidgins (since they lack shared norms or stability) or even jargons (since they are targeted toward the native-speaker's variety and are not confined to a particular domain). As mentioned above, contact of closely related languages can result in *koineization*, in which dialect levelling produces some morphological simplification but leaves intact many fairly complex grammatical features common to both language varieties. This is particularly true in new speech communities overseas, as in the case of the closely related languages of northern India that formed new varieties of Hindustani or Bhojpuri in Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, Mauritius and Fiji, spoken by the descendants of contract labourers (Siegel 1987). There is also a tendency toward simplification in isolated overseas enclave varieties such as Missouri French, particularly when they are used by a dwindling number of speakers who are bilingual in the surrounding language (Maher 1985). However, *language death* or *attrition* can also take place in a language's original location if it gradually loses speakers to an encroaching language and is finally spoken only by bilinguals who lack native-speaker competence in the dying language.

Finally there are *mixed languages* that are none of the above, both in the trivial sense that practically all languages are mixed to some degree by contact with other languages and also in a miscellaneous category of very mixed languages whose genesis had to be quite different from that of pidgins or creoles. For example, there is the strange case of Mbugu or Ma'a in Tanzania, a Cushitic language that acquired Bantu grammar, apparently under duress (Goodman 1971, Thomason 1997a). Then there is Anglo-Romani: basically English syntax, phonology and function words holding together Romani or Gypsy lexical items, used principally between English-speaking Gypsies in the presence of English-speaking non-Gypsies in order to maintain secrecy (Hancock 1984). Another case of language mixing is Michif, spoken on the Turtle Mountain Indian reservation in North Dakota in the United States (Bakker and Papen 1997). It consists largely of perfectly formed Cree verb phrases and perfectly formed French noun phrases, e.g. 'Nkii-cihtaan dans la ligne', literally 'I-PAST-go to the-FEMININE state-line' (Richard Rhodes p.c.). Thomason (1984) hypothesizes that Michif was created by racially mixed bilinguals (cf. French *métis* 'half-breed', whence *Michif*) in order to assert a social identity distinct from that of speakers of either French or Cree. Such *bilingual mixtures* (Thomason 1997c) are said to result from *language intertwining* (Bakker and Muysken 1994).

This inventory of non-pidgins and non-creoles is by no means exhaustive, but it helps to define the subject at hand by specifying what pidgins and creoles are not.

1.4 Scope of the book

As an introduction to the study of pidgin and creole languages, the present work attempts to bring together the most important information relating to this field as objectively as possible, avoiding tendentiousness in matters of theory. However, decisions as to what data are important enough to be included, even before any question of their interpretation, always imply a theoretical position. To be explicit, this book reflects the belief that while universal tendencies in adult second-language acquisition carried over into pidginization and creolization (2.12) play a role in shaping creole languages (e.g. the nearly complete reliance on free rather than inflectional morphemes to convey grammatical information), a significant number of the features in a creole language that are not attributable to its superstrate can be traced to parallel features in its substrate languages. Together with creole-internal innovations, borrowings from adstrate languages (those which are neither superstrate nor substrate) and the convergence of all or some of the above, these account for the features that distinguish creoles from their lexical source languages.

This moderate substratist position (2.13) has influenced the choice of which languages provide most of the linguistic features compared in chapters 4 to 6. These are the *Atlantic creoles*, a term first applied to the English-based creoles of the Caribbean area and coastal West Africa (Hancock 1969) and later extended to include the other creoles in these areas, those whose lexicons are based on Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and French. The Atlantic creoles share many structural features on all linguistic levels that are not found in their European lexical source languages, as chapters 4 to 6 will demonstrate. Many of these features can be attributed to the substratum of African languages that these creoles share. To highlight this, the features of Atlantic creoles of different lexical bases (particularly Angolar CP, Papiamentu CS, Negerhollands CD, Haitian CF and Jamaican CE) are contrasted in chapter 6 with those of two non-Atlantic varieties (Tok Pisin and Nubi Arabic).

It might be asked why the comparison of linguistic features draws mainly on the Atlantic creoles rather than more equally on all creoles and pidgins. The main reason is that it has been demonstrated (e.g. Holm 1988–9) that the Atlantic creoles form a natural group with many comparable features because of similarities in their genesis and development. However, no claim is being made that their common features are necessarily traits of all creoles

(the fundamental flaw in the work of extreme universalists) – much less traits of all pidgins.

The development of the discipline has imposed a logical order in comparative work. Not until a number of individual varieties had been adequately described could we start comparing varieties in the same lexical groups and not until comparative studies within lexical groups had been done could we start comparative work for larger groupings. The present work builds on the cross-lexical-base comparative work on the Atlantic creoles, comparing the structure of that group with that of other varieties. The agenda in pidgin and creole studies is still a long and demanding one. As contact linguistics increasingly influences the central concerns of general linguistics, the next generations do not need to fear a dearth of important, fascinating research yet to be done.

Having identified as precisely as is possible at this point what pidgin and creole languages are, we will now look at how they came to be studied and the problems they have posed for linguistic theory.