Introduction

I.1 Academic Beginnings: Undergraduate

In 1968, exactly half a century ago,[1] I arrived at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) to begin an undergraduate degree in Literature, my favorite subject at the time.[2] Within a year, however, I fell under the spell of Linguistics and Anthropology, influenced by courses with Roger Keesing, a professor of Anthropology who was working on Solomon Islands Pijin English (Keesing 1988),[3] and Bill Shipley, a professor of Linguistics who specialized in Maidu, a Native American language in Northern California (Shipley 1964).[4] Solomon Islands Pijin reminded me of my native Guyanese Creole (GC), another English-based contact variety, and I began to wonder whether the similarities were due to a common superstrate, or reflected parallel results due to parallel sociohistorical circumstances and processes (Parallels Due to Parallels, or PDP, in the parlance of creole origins theories of the time). Keesing also led me to readings in the nascent field of sociolinguistics (e.g. Labov 1966, Fishman 1968), and after devouring Le Page's (1968) article on "Problems to be faced in the use of English as a medium of education in four West Indian territories" – one of which was Guyana – I was hooked.[5] Aided by UCSC's innovative character (it was only in its fourth year, had no letter grades, and welcomed experimentation), I switched in 1969 to a self-designed major in Sociolinguistics, leading me to graduate in 1971 with perhaps the earliest and only BA with that specific name.

A few other aspects of my undergraduate experience influenced my choice of graduate school, my academic career and some of the papers in this book.

First, in designing my Sociolinguistics major at UCSC, I was guided by Le Page's (1968: 440) suggestions about the training his proposed "language specialists" should get in order to help Caribbean teachers and students understand and bridge the differences between vernacular Creole and the standard English required in schools:

> It is essential that these specialists have a thorough basic training in linguistics, psychological and sociological aspects of linguistic behavior, the psychology of language learning, the processes of creolization, the principles of contrastive analysis, and

the structure of the languages involved in their situation . . . They must also be trained in the general principles of education, in the preparation of teaching materials, and in the use of audio-visual aids, radio, and television.

Not all of this training (especially the education and AV parts) was available at UCSC, but in crafting my major, I sat down with the UCSC course bulletin in one hand and Le Page's article in the other, and opted for courses in Linguistics, Anthropology and Sociology that I might not otherwise have had.

Second, through the Cowell Extra-Mural Program directed by Sociology Professor J. Herman Blake,[6] I spent a quarter in 1969–70 doing community service and linguistic research on Daufuskie, an isolated Gullah-speaking island off the coast of S. Carolina and Georgia. Not only did this experience provide data that convinced me of the creole origins of African American Vernacular English (see Rickford 1974, my first publication), but it led me to write a senior honors thesis with concerns that continue to innervate my work to this day. It was entitled, "De train dey ridin' on is full of dead man's bones: Language, death and damnation in a two-room schoolhouse on Daufuskie."

Third, in the summer of 1970, I enrolled in the "Sociolinguistics Institute" at Stanford University, just an hour's drive north of UCSC, taking courses from pioneer sociolinguists like Charles Ferguson, Joshua Fishman and Richard Tucker. Ferguson, who would become a family friend and mentor when I returned to Stanford as an assistant professor in 1980, had participated in the 1968 University of the West Indies conference on "Pidginization and Creolization of Languages" (cf. Ferguson 1971). And as I perused the handouts and papers he shared with me from that conference, I grew increasingly excited about the value of combining the insights of sociolinguistics and creole studies.[7]

I.2 Graduate School

A Danforth graduate fellowship in 1971 – one of the only fellowships I was eligible for, since I was not yet a US citizen – ensured that I would not return to Guyana that year to teach high school English and drink beers with fellow teachers in break periods, as I had done while teaching at Queen's College, my alma mater, in 1967–68 before heading off to college. More importantly, it allowed me to go to graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, benefiting from the mentorship and dissertation supervision of Bill Labov, "the founder of . . . variationist sociolinguistics,"[8] and from coursework with him, John Fought, Henry Hoenigswald and Dell Hymes,[9] among others.

No account of my graduate career would be complete without mention of the Georgetown Roundtable and NWAV (New Ways of Analyzing Variation in Language) conferences that I attended annually in the early 1970s,[10] allowing

me to meet and learn from leading figures in sociolinguistics and creole studies. The historic 1973 Linguistic Society of America Institute at Ann Arbor, Michigan, on "Language in Space, Time, and Society" was also important to me. That Institute included courses by Charles Ferguson, William Labov, Gillian Sankoff, William S. Y. Yang and others, and a paradigm-challenging Forum Lecture by Trinidadian creolist Mervyn Alleyne[11] – a heady mix of sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies for a young scholar from the Caribbean.

In 1974 I returned to Guyana to teach at the University of Guyana and begin fieldwork for my (1979) dissertation on pronominal variation and its theoretical and methodological implications. That dissertation is the source of several chapters in this book, beginning with Chapter 1 on fieldwork in a racial and political maelstrom. But before going through these chapters in turn, I'd like to comment on why I thought a book on sociolinguistics and creole studies might be of interest.

I.3 Rationale for this Book

Historically, the fields of sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies, in their modern incarnations at least, took off in the late 1960s, with some of the leading figures then and in subsequent decades contributing to both subfields. The list includes Mervyn Alleyne, Derek Bickerton, Renée Blake, David DeCamp, Dennis Craig, Walter Edwards, Geneviève Escure, Charles Ferguson, Dell Hymes, Bill Labov, Robert Le Page, Miriam Meyerhoff, Peter Patrick, Suzanne Romaine, Gillian Sankoff, Jeff Siegel, John Singler, Arthur Spears, Gerard Van Herk and Don Winford, among others.

This was not surprising, since the focus of modern sociolinguistics was variability, and pidgin-creole communities, especially the creole continua of Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Hawaii, Trinidad and Tobago, were sites of variability par excellence. Ferguson's classic (1959) exposition of diglossia included Haitian Creole and French as one of its four exemplars, and scholarly arguments in the 1960s and 1970s about the relative viability of quantitative versus dynamic or implicational variationist models (e.g. by Bickerton, DeCamp, Edwards, Le Page, G. Sankoff, Winford and myself) sometimes rested crucially on data from the Caribbean. Moreover, studies of pidgin-creole communities repeatedly raised issues of sociohistory, relative stigma and prestige, and divisions of class, ethnicity and gender that were intrinsically interesting and challenging to sociolinguists. Anthropologist Dell Hymes had virtually no standing in pidgin-creole studies when he attended the 1968 Jamaica conference on *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, but his edited (1971) proceedings volume, based on his involvement in and reflections on that conference, profoundly reset the direction of creolistics, linking it to key

themes and issues in an emerging sociolinguistics. Bill Labov, the pioneer in quantitative sociolinguistics, also attended that conference, and published an important article on "system" (Labov 1971) in that volume. In turn, people who were initially creolists (e.g. Robert Le Page, Gillian Sankoff, Don Winford) looked to sociolinguistics and variation theory for analytical tools to help them deal with descriptive, theoretical and applied linguistic challenges in pidgin-creole communities, often ending up creating new tools and elements within sociolinguistics in the process. The best example was perhaps Robert Le Page, with his concepts of "focusing" and "diffusion" and his Acts of Identity model (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985).

As a native of the Guyanese Creole continuum, and an intellectual descendant of scholars like Charles Ferguson, Dell Hymes and Bill Labov, my academic training was steeped in an awareness of the rich connections between sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies. This was reflected both in my 1979 dissertation and in my edited (1987b) volume and introductory article on "Sociolinguistics and Pidgin Creole Studies," reprinted in a revised version in this book (Chapter 5). But the number of linguists who are actively working in variationist sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies today (especially on analyses of variation in pidgin- or creole-speaking communities, as against reflection or research on pidgin-creole genesis) – people like Renée Blake, Walter Edwards, Miriam Meyerhoff, Nicte Fuller Medina, Peter Patrick, Gillian Sankoff, John Singler, Gerard Van Herk, Alicia Wassink, Don Winford – is relatively small, and growing smaller as scholars reach retirement.

This is especially regrettable at this time in sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies because current (especially new) practitioners in either subfield are less aware of and attentive to data and theories in the other subfield than they were a decade or more ago, even though the mutual relevance of the subfields remains strong. Within pidgin-creole studies, formal descriptions of features of pidgin-creole varieties are commendably common, but they, like recent theoretical introductions to the field and critical discussions of creole genesis, are often bereft of variationist insight,[12] and rarely based on sociolinguistic interviews and recordings in speech communities or communities of practice. Within sociolinguistics and variation theory, the focus tends to be more and more on metropolitan, English-speaking communities in North America and the UK, with sophisticated acoustic analyses of vowels and other sociophonetic features, but with less awareness of the incredibly rich data of pidgin and creole communities, and the challenges and opportunities these communities offer to sociolinguistic theory. Variationist sociolinguists these days sometimes treat morphosyntactic variation (copula absence or variation in tense-aspect marking or relativizer choice) like a poor relation, forgetting Wolfram's still valid (1969) point that grammatical variation is often sharply stratified and very socially meaningful. They also pay less attention to

sociohistory than creolists do (cf. Le Page 1960, Rickford 1987a, Singler 1996, Meyerhoff and Walker 2013). Pidgin-creole scholars, by contrast, tend to focus on grammatical variation and pay little or no attention to sociophonetics, or to concepts like indexicality or persona that are characteristic of Third Wave Sociolinguistics (Eckert 2012, 2018, Podesva et al. 2015). These gaps are the result of differences in faculty, facilities, ideology and exposure in the respective universities where (variationist) sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies thrive, but bridging the gaps and realizing the potential for synergy between these two subfields would be a boon for both subfields. I hope this modest collection of papers at the intersection of sociolinguistics and creole studies will count as one small effort at bridge-building, perhaps inspiring others to build more such bridges, and cross them.

I.4 Papers in this Book

Four general points should be made about the papers in this book. First, given space limitations, I decided to exclude papers in other books I've authored, e.g. my chapter on "Historical and Sociolinguistic Developments" in Rickford (1987a), and my 1985 paper on "Ethnicity as a Sociolinguistic Boundary." Second, every paper, even the most recent, has been modified in some way, either by the inclusion of updated references and minor changes in wording, or by extensive reconceptualization and new data, so much so that it merited a new title and date (cf. Chapter 13). Third, three chapters are published in their current form for the first time: Chapter 1 is a revision of sections of the fieldwork chapter in my unpublished (1979) dissertation; Chapter 13 is a revision of a 1985 conference paper that was published in 1986 but has been significantly expanded and revised for this volume; and Chapter 14 is a revision of a 1986 working paper that was substantially revised for a 1993 conference and has been further updated for this volume. Finally, the chapters generally appear in historical order, from the earliest to the most recent.

The book begins and ends with fieldwork chapters, representing my conviction – one I gained from reading Labov (1966) and being taught and mentored by him – that fieldwork in the speech community is *vital* to the study of sociolinguistic variation and change. Chapter 1 is about nuts and bolts – lessons I learned about getting in, getting on, designing and using instruments for fieldwork in Guyana that might be helpful to sociolinguists working anywhere. Chapter 15, highlighting narratives of personal experience elicited in two American communities (Daufuskie Island, S. Carolina, and Redding, California) is a short but enthusiastic celebration of the joy and value of sociolinguistic fieldwork more generally, even when such narratives deal with painful subjects like death, racial prejudice and conflict.[13]

Rickford and Traugott (1985) was first conceived as a vehicle to indicate that the many accounts of negative attitudes to pidgin and creoles, like other non-standard varieties, needed to be balanced against the simultaneous, sometimes paradoxically *positive* attitudes that speakers also evince about such varieties. We also sought to show the complexity of such attitudes in other ways, by contrasting views expressed in the mass media (whether by educators and government ministers or in editorial columns vs. comic cartoons) with those expressed in literature, by men and women on the street, or in systematic sociolinguistic surveys. Chapter 2, the updated version of this paper, contains several new examples, and twenty or more recent references, especially relevant since attitudes to language remain an important (if sometimes neglected) element in the study of sociolinguistic variation and change.

Chapter 3 represents my (1986) attempt to investigate the adequacy and expressiveness of creole languages, in response to linguist(!) Keith Whinnom's (1971) assertion that "linguists do not have the evidence to assert with confidence that speakers of creole-languages are not handicapped by their language" (p. 110). The 1980s saw a resurgence of 1960s appeals for linguists to go beyond general assertions that all languages are equal and adequate, and provide empirical investigations of the issue in relation to specific varieties. Although this chapter lays out a general framework for macro-surveys of linguistic resources using Slobin's (1978) four "charges to language," it is most valuable, I think, for the micro-analyses it provides of the discourse of ordinary Guyanese speakers. These include the logical arguments of cane-workers Irene and Mindy about the existence of "Ole Higue," the lament of Granny about the hardships of estate labor, and the moving narrative of Lohtan, a cattle farmer, about the death of his young daughter. As I note, "this creole-speaking cattle-rearer shows no intellectual handicap from his language, but the ability to work it masterfully for effective rhetoric and poetics."

In Chapter 4 I address a central concern in linguistics – assessing the linguistic competence of individuals or groups. Formal or "theoretical" linguists often accomplish this by the study of intuitions with little regard for observed usage, while sociolinguists usually depend on observations – especially the data of "spontaneous" interviews – with little regard for intuitions. In this chapter I argue that survey sociolinguists need to make greater use of repeated recordings and elicited intuitions. Why? As I attempt to replicate an earlier implicational analysis of pronominal variation in the Guyanese Creole continuum, incorporating data from repeated sampling and the inclusion of elicited intuitions, the discontinuities on which implicational scaling depends disappear almost entirely. With a clearer idea of what speakers *can* say, however, the sociolinguistic interpretation of what they *do* say in the spontaneous interviews and recordings is rendered more reliable and revealing. In the conclusion, I discuss some of the theoretical implications and methodological

difficulties of extending the use of repeated recordings and elicited intuitions in sociolinguistics more generally.

Chapter 5, originally in Rickford (1987b), discusses some of the historical, theoretical and methodological connections between sociolinguistics and pidgin-creole studies, concentrating on shared interests and contributions with respect to social history, models and methods of analysis, and applications to education and national language policy/development.

Chapter 6 focuses on implicational scaling, an important instrument in the toolbox of variationists – indeed, all linguists – to establish the systematicity of language variation, especially since non-linguists often view it as random or unconstrained. This is dramatically demonstrated in this chapter in the observation that "with nine binary variables – and several scales in the variation literature have at least this many – there are 512 (or 2^9) possible arrangements of + and -, but only 10 (or 9+1) valid scale types." In this chapter I discuss what implicational scales are, their history and development in creole studies and their centrality in arguments between "implicationalists" and "quantitativists," and their relative decline in use among variationists (but continued vitality among students of second language acquisition). While urging both sociolinguists and creolists to make greater use of implicational scaling than they currently do, I close with three caveats about their traditional use in both fields.

Chapter 7, coauthored with Angela Rickford (Professor of Education at San Jose State University), is the first in this book to exemplify the applied concerns that drew me into sociolinguistics, but it reflects also the passion for literature with which we finished high school and began our college careers.[14] Our overall argument is that the under-achievement in Standard English and the Language Arts that one often finds among vernacular and pidgin-creole speakers in schools might be effectively countered by teaching approaches that value and develop *versatility*, the applied counterpart of the variation that linguists study. *Versatility* is derived from *versatile*, "capable of doing many things competently" (American Heritage Dictionary 2011: 1925), a quality that every school and society should value. Teachers tend to extol uniformity (in Standard or Mainstream English) as a goal for their students; but the best maestros and maestras of language in the community – writers, preachers, comedians and actors, singers, toasters and rappers – tend to exemplify *versatility*, in variety, genre and other respects.[15] Although we support Contrastive Analysis (CA) as a teaching strategy, CA, at least as practiced to develop bidialectalism, is not without its weaknesses, and we emphasize the use of poetry and song, with many African American and Caribbean examples, instead of tedious "drill and kill" exercises.

Chapter 8 discusses the theoretical and applied legacy of Robert B. Le Page, one of the "founding fathers" of modern sociolinguists, and a major figure in the development of Caribbean creolistics, especially the study of

sociolinguistic variation in Belize, Jamaica and St. Lucia. Theoretically and descriptively, his distinctions include his extensive work on Jamaican sociohistory and lexicography, and his development, with Andrée Tabouret-Keller, of the Acts of Identity model. After identifying some plusses and minuses of that influential model, I go on to discuss his applied work, which includes the 1968 paper about problems of English language teaching in the Caribbean that drew me into a self-designed major in Sociolinguistics. His 1964 book on the *National Language Question* in newly independent countries like Malaysia and India may seem dated now, but the issues raised in his co-edited 1997 *Vernacular Literacy* book are as vital as ever. In closing, I explore the opportunities for and challenges of building on Le Page's valuable legacy.

Chapter 9 (originally 2012) follows Chapter 8 (originally 2011) because of its date, but its ordering could also be justified by its content, since it develops a theme raised in my Chapter 8 critique of Le Page's *Acts of Identity* model – that it pays relatively little attention to internal linguistic constraints compared with external social and psychological considerations. I argue for the importance of the former by considering the use of subject *mi(i)* in Guyana. It is rare or non-existent among mesolectal (and especially urban) speakers, except before negative *en*, as in *mi en nuo*, "I don' know." Creole *mi(i)* is also much more common among such speakers when used as a possessive (*mi(i) book* "my book") than as a subject *(mi noo* "I know"*)*. I discuss other examples of linguistic conditioning in pronoun use, building to the larger point that the social significance of linguistic variation can only be accurately and adequately assessed when its internal anchoring or conditioning is fully understood. One has to be *linguistically* free to use variant *a* or *b* before using either variant can carry *social* meaning.

Chapter 10, coauthored with Robin Melnick (Stanford PhD, now Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Pitzer College, California) is the only chapter in this book to provide quantitative variable-rule analyses. And it's the only one to bear on the Creolist/Anglicist controversy about the origins of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), an issue about which I've thought and written extensively (cf. Rickford 1974, 1997, 1998, 2006). Here, our focus is not on sociohistory or copula absence, but on subject–aux non-inversion in questions (as in "*You can* do it?" vs. inverted "*Can you* do it?"). The data come from vernacular speech recorded by my students, colleagues and myself in three creole-speaking Caribbean countries (Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica), and in contemporary AAVE and Appalachian, analyzed by Melnick and myself, compared with data on Samaná English (Dominican Republic) and African Nova Scotian English (Canada) recorded by Shana Poplack, Sali Tagliamonte and others, and analyzed by Van Herk (2000). The stipulative generalization about questions in creoles is that they never invert, making use instead of rising intonation. But in fact, conversational

corpora from Guyanese, Bajan and Jamaican display inversion rates of 92 percent to 96 percent, and when these are compared with AAVE, Appalachia, Samaná and ANSE, with lower non-inversion rates (35, 15, 59 and 7 percent, respectively), what is most striking is the similarities they display in terms of constraints. For instance, yes/no questions favor non-inversion over *wh-* and other questions, and *do* auxiliaries favor non-inversion over all other auxiliary types. These cross-variety similarities make question formation non-diagnostic (Poplack 2000: 17–18) with respect to the AAVE origins issue, but they also demonstrate the value of having accountable, quantitative, variationist data on this variable, here available for the first time. We need more data of this type for other Caribbean/Creole features.

Chapter 11 was originally written for an LSA workshop on what to code for in archived online corpora from sociolinguistic recordings. But as I noted at the workshop and in the resulting publication, enriching such recordings to include more variable situations is an important prerequisite if these corpora are to serve as a resource for the analysis of situational or stylistic variation, which still remains a relatively neglected variable in sociolinguistic theory and analysis. Accordingly, much of this paper is devoted to illustrating the value of recording speakers in different situations, using examples of situational style-shifting (primarily triggered by changes in interlocutors) and metaphorical style-shifting (primarily triggered by changes in topic) from the literature. Some of these are serendipitous, while others are orchestrated, the result of deliberate efforts by researchers to record speakers with different addressees or in different situations. The richest examples, involving orchestrated serendipitous situational and metaphorical shifting, come from work by Devyani Sharma and Ben Rampton, which is briefly summarized. In my conclusion, I turn to the issue of what to code for in archived sociolinguistic corpora, suggesting that we start with some of the key Hymesian components, like setting, scene, participants and perhaps purposes, key and local norms of interaction. We should of course feel free to draw on other classical taxonomies of language variation (e.g. Preston 1986) and we also need to incorporate more recently emphasized elements, like speaker agency, persona and stance (Podesva 2007a, Moore and Podesva 2009, Eckert 2012), while balancing a concern for completeness and ethnographic richness with a concern for feasibility and practicality. Ultimately too, I am less concerned about coding for online sociolinguistic corpora than I am about developing a sociolinguistic theory and methodology that more adequately covers stylistic variation, but responding to the immediate challenges of the former provides a convenient means of addressing the latter, larger, issue.

Chapter 12, coauthored with Sharese King (Stanford PhD, now assistant professor at the University of Chicago), represents my first foray into a different area of applied sociolinguistics than language and education:

language and law, or forensic linguistics. We focus on Rachel Jeantel, the leading prosecution witness in the 2013 trial of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin. Jeantel, a good friend of Martin's who'd been speaking with him by cell phone throughout his deadly encounter with Zimmerman, was the closest proxy to Trayvon's being in the courtroom himself. And her testimony contradicted Zimmerman's on key points. But she spoke in deep AAVE, and jurors found her crucial testimony incomprehensible and not credible. Zimmerman's subsequent acquittal sparked the highly influential Black Lives Matter movement. The deep disregard of Jeantel's speech in court and the media is familiar to vernacular speakers and puts Linguistics itself on trial: following Saussure, how do we dispel such "prejudices" and "fictions"? We show that Jeantel speaks a highly systematic AAVE, with possible Caribbean influence. (There are other creole/pidgin examples in the chapter, justifying its inclusion in this volume.) We also discuss other factors that bedeviled her testimony, including dialect unfamiliarity and institutionalized racism. Finally, we suggest strategies for helping vernacular speakers to be better heard in courtrooms and beyond.

Chapter 13 is a considerably revised and expanded rewrite (almost three times as long) of a widely cited paper I first published in 1986 – hence its modified title. In the original 1986 paper, I had critiqued the ways in which sociolinguists traditionally approached social class, and highlighted two approaches (*Evaluated Participation*, ethnographically tailored to the local community, and *Conflict Models*, which contrast with the functional or order paradigms implicit in the multi-index scales popular in sociolinguistics) that better captured sociolinguistic stratification in Cane Walk, and, I'd suggested, in other speech communities. These elements are retained in the new version, but onto them I graft a theoretical discussion of prestige scales vs. socioeconomic indexes of occupational status, and introduce a new occupational status scale (Nam and Boyd 2004, Boyd and Nam 2015) that provides a 100-point status ranking of 975 US occupations. This is considerably more than older occupational status scales, and makes it easier for sociolinguists working in the US to use, even as we recall the cautions of Evaluated Participation and Conflict Model sociology. The other new feature of the chapter is the extensive discussion of social class in Cane Walk, including relevant geographic location, anthropological analysis and history, and the views of Cane Walkers about the number and nature of social class in the village. In the end, I conclude that a Weberian model of classes as aggregates of "people with common economic 'life chances'" is most appropriate for Cane Walk, and the theoretical discussion and ethnographic community member commentary help us to better interpret the big differences in Estate Class (EC)/Non-Estate Class (NEC) use of pronoun variants with which the chapter ends.