CHAPTER 2

Key concepts in the history of creole studies

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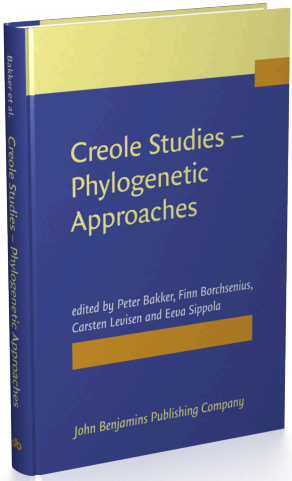

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CHAPTER 2

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This chapter serves as a brief introduction to creole studies. It mostly deals with issues that are discussed in the book, but not exclusively. It starts with an introduction of terminology, and key terms are printed in CAPITALS. The second part presents a number of observations and claims that have been made more or less explicitly in creole literature. Some key sources are given, and arguments are discussed briefly. This background knowledge should enable the reader to interpret the subsequent chapters, and take an informed position on the basis of the results presented there. We end by discussing a number of issues that could become important in the future of creole studies.

2.1 Introduction

In order to understand this book in full, an introduction to Creole Studies is needed. We will first give a very short history of creole studies, where we will also introduce a number of important terms (2.2). Thereafter we will give an overview of the main issues in the creole studies of the past fifty years, where some central concepts, ideas and terms will be introduced. We will focus on structural characteristics, including complexity, and sociohistorical discussions. This will include looking at the existence or non-existence of a pidgin before a creole, who the creators of the creoles might have been, where the process took place, and whether it happened gradually or quickly. Finally, the sociohistorical and linguistic properties will be linked, before concluding the chapter. The following chapters of the book will shed light on many, but by no means all, of the issues dealt with here, and this is discussed towards the end.

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2.2 Creole studies

As a field of linguistics, creolistics is especially important because it builds bridges between many other branches of science. Creole studies has ramifications in the social sciences, including historical research, migration studies, post-colonial studies and social anthropology. Within linguistics, several fields are relevant, especially philology, typology, psycholinguistics, language acquisition, computational linguistics, historical linguistics, theoretical linguistics, socio-anthropological linguistics and applied linguistics. Creole language documentation dates back to the 1600s and 1700s. The first grammar of a creole, Virgin Islands Creole Dutch, was printed in Danish in the late 1700s (Magens 1770). The members of the pietistic religious group called the Moravian Brethren, in particular, left rich written sources on creoles from the early 1700s, among others from the Danish West Indies and Suriname. Research on creoles as a subdiscipline of scientific linguistics goes back to the late nineteenth century, when scholars like Lucien Adam, Adam Coelho, D. C. Hesseling, Addison van Name, Auguste de St-Quentin, Hugo Schuchardt, and Leite de Vasconcelos had developed an interest in language contact and studied the circumstances under which creole languages emerged and developed (Holm 1988; Meijer & Muysken 1977; Krämer 2013, 2014).

The traditional view of pidgin and creole genesis (as laid out for example in Mühlhäusler 1997; Romaine 1988) is that pidgins came about in contact situations where groups of people without a common language had to communicate with each other, and crude, simplified contact languages were created, first quite individual and normless JARGONS, later more systematic and collective PIDGINS (on pidgins, see Parkvall & Bakker 2013). When these simplified languages had to be used for other functions and when they were employed as languages of wider communication, or became mother tongues (NATIVIZATION), the limited structures and lexicons of pidgins were expanded, thus developing into languages of full communicative functionality. Those fully developed languages are called CREOLES and the process of the development of jargons or pidgins into creoles is called CREOLIZATION. Creoles are almost always native languages or mother tongues, in contrast to pidgins. Pidgin-derived contact languages that are spoken as both second and first languages are sometimes called EXPANDED PIDGINS or PIDGINCREOLES (Bakker 2008), and due to their functional and structural expansion they are quite similar to creoles (e.g., Tok Pisin, Nigerian Pidgin English, Sango, Plains Indian Sign Language).

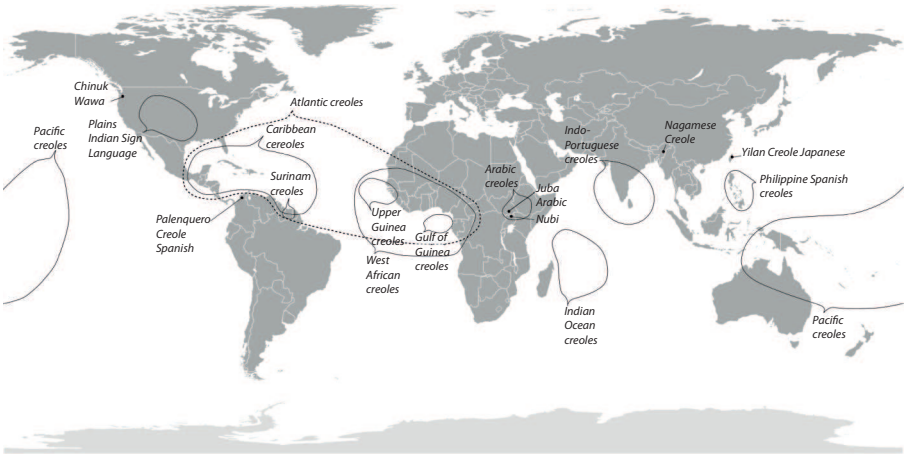
Some languages show significant simplification with regard to their source language, but not so much INNOVATION and EXPANSION. These are sometimes called SEMICREOLES or CREOLOIDS or RESTRUCTURED VARIETIES (Holm 2003), and Afrikaans and the language of Réunion are among them. Also Vernacular Brazilian Portuguese and Lingala may belong in this class.

One important strain of research in creole studies is the reconstruction of the GENESIS of creoles. Linguistically, one can distinguish phases of REDUCTION and/or simplification (in pidginization) and EXPANSION and GRAMMATICALIZATION (in creolization). The reduction phase, if not documented, can be inferred from the fact that, for instance, nominal gender and number marking, as well as verbal inflection are virtually never inherited from the lexifiers in creoles. This can best be explained by an earlier simplification stage, as many of the lexifiers' grammatical categories do not find their way into the pidgins (Bakker 2003; Roberts & Bresnan 2008), so the absence in creoles is explainable through pidginization.

In recent years, some creolists have tried to discredit the scenario of simplified pidgins developing into complex creoles (Chaudenson 1992; Mufwene 2000, 2008; Aboh 2015). They find no evidence for a pidginization phase for some creoles, but their claims are rarely, if ever, backed up by historical or linguistic data. The process from pidgin to creole has been documented, for instance, for Pacific Englishes (Tok Pisin), Chinook Jargon in North America, and Sango in Central Africa, but not in the Caribbean or in Indo-Portuguese creoles. As the existing creole languages like Tok Pisin (documented pidgin stage, 1800s) and Haitian Creole (no documented pidgin stage, 1600s) are quite similar in structure, some creolists have assumed a process of simplification and/or pidginization also in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and elsewhere. Thus, some of the shared linguistic properties of creoles can then be explained on the basis of an assumption of a pidgin stage, even when a pidgin stage is not historically documented.

Creoles came about in situations where speakers of several languages were brought together, often in rather adverse circumstances connected with colonialism and expansionism. From a geographical point of view, most creoles are spoken in areas of European expansion fairly close to the equator, from where tropical products were extracted. Some creoles arose in the context of religious missions, others emerged with colonial enterprises, indentured labor, plantation economies and similar forms of economic expansion. In some cases, creoles arose in multilingual urban settings, including multi-ethnic schools (Roberts 2005 for Hawai'i, Ehrhart & Revis 2013 for Tayo, New Caledonia, and Volker 1982 for Unserdeutsch in Papua New Guinea).

In creole studies, a number of regions are often distinguished on geographical grounds (see Map 2.1). The creoles in these different regions may also be influenced by several distinct languages, e.g. African, Dravidian, or Austronesian, and they often also show similarities within the region. The regions are: the ATLANTIC (split into Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, and Upper Guinea in Africa, and the Caribbean, the Guyanas and Central/North America in the Americas), the INDIAN OCEAN, South Asia/INDIA and finally the PACIFIC, including Melanesia, Northern Australia and South East Asia, including the Philippines. A few isolated creoles are also known, such as Palenquero Creole Spanish in Colombia and Nubi Creole Arabic in East Africa.



Map 2.1 A map showing the regions distinguished in creole studies.

The basic lexicon of creole languages is typically (but not always) derived from a colonial language, including dialects of a European language. The language that is the source of the vocabulary is called the LEXIFIER or SUPERSTRATE. The lexifier is often included in the name of the creole language, e.g., Jamaican Creole English. Perhaps as many as 100 creoles are based on Arabic, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. There are several creoles with these European lexifiers in different parts of the world, and also a few with non-European lexifiers such as Yilan Creole Japanese, Grand Ronde Chinuk Wawa, and Sango in Central Africa.

The grammatical structure of a creole often deviates considerably from that of its lexifier. Creolists disagree about the reasons why there are differences between creole and lexifier structures. Some emphasize that creoles are continuations of the lexifiers (e.g. Chaudenson 1978; Mufwene 2008), and those who adhere to this idea are sometimes called SUPERSTRATISTS in the literature. Others stress the influence of speakers of other languages (e.g. Holm 1988; Lefebvre 1998). For instance, Papuan or Oceanic languages in the case of Pacific creoles, Philippine languages in the Philippines and the mother tongues of Africans in the case of the Atlantic creoles. Such languages are called SUBSTRATES if they are no longer spoken in the creole-speaking communities, and ADSTRATES if they are present in the community even after creoles developed. In this book also the innovative term CONSTRATE is used, as a cover term for all languages spoken by the people in the development of a creole, viz. the superstrate, adstrate and substrate languages. In the Atlantic contexts, the substrate languages were mostly Bantu, from Central coastal Africa, but there were also significant numbers of speakers of West African languages, such as Kwa languages, including Gbe languages like Fon and Ewe. With regard to the Caribbean, discussions of substrates dominate, whereas in

Asian and West African contexts, it is not easy to distinguish between substrates and adstrates (see e.g. Smith 2012; Corum 2015).

The expansion of reduced, makeshift languages into fully fledged languages can be adduced from the striking structural discontinuity between the lexifiers and the creoles, especially the most radical ones. Observed grammatical similarities of creoles across lexifiers have been the focus of attention of creolists since the 1970s, and they have been linked to UNIVERSALS (Bickerton 1984), to SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE (Lefebvre 1998), to psycholinguistic effects in the creation of grammatical systems, influence from second language acquisition (Becker & Veenstra 2003; Mufwene 2010; Plag 2011) to POPULATION MOVEMENTS (Mufwene 2008) and to other factors.

The influence of substrate languages can manifest itself in different areas of the creole languages. Substrate influence can be observed in morphosyntactic structures, e.g., word order patterns or reduplication in morphology (Aboh & Smith 2015), or in phonology, notably in the presence of certain phonemes alien to the lexifier, certain types of vowel harmony or phonotactic patterns. Substrate influence is also found in the lexicon, e.g., the words for cultural inheritance and natural phenomena are often transmitted from African languages in Atlantic creoles (Bartens & Baker 2012; Parkvall 2000). A number of structural features found in creoles may be due to what is sometimes misleadingly called language UNIVERSALS. If traits are universal, in that they are found in ALL languages, they are obviously present in creoles as well as non-creoles. There may be relevant statistical typological universals (Velupillai 2012, Chapter 2), however, in which (very) high proportions of languages display certain properties. Here creoles may show different preferences compared to non-creoles, displaying different sets of typological properties. There are also patterns of change that may differ: so-called diachronic universals (going back to Greenberg 1966) such as patterns of grammaticalization, may lead to structural results which differ among creoles compared to non-creoles.

Creolists debate the relative weight of the influence of the lexifiers, the substrates, universals and innovations (Michaelis 2008). In the past, some took extreme positions and categorically denied, for instance, any influence of substrate languages (e.g. Bickerton 1986), or any form of innovation (Aboh 2009), but currently the vast majority of creolists interested in the genesis of creoles accept a multitude of influences. Probably a large majority of creolists support the influence of substrates (see Lefebvre 2011 for a recent overview).

Some scholars have emphasized that the languages of the earliest arrivals of immigrants often influenced the creoles more deeply. The FOUNDER PRINCIPLE in creole genesis (Mufwene 1996) stipulates that a selection advantage was proffered to founder populations in colonial contexts. This approach is connected to the FEATURE POOL HYPOTHESIS. The feature pool consists of the properties of language

varieties involved in a concrete contact situation put together. Creoles would select properties from this feature pool (Mufwene 2001, 2002; Aboh & Ansaldo 2007). The idea was inspired by Ian Hancock's original COMPONENTIALITY HYPOTHESIS (1986). The feature pool hypothesis seems to leave no room for structural innovations, despite the fact that newly-formed grammatical constructions have been observed in great numbers in all creoles, for instance new ways of expressing tense and aspect, or relative clauses (see e.g. Givón 1982; Kuteva & Comrie 2012; Bakker 2016). The feature pool idea has been criticized by a.o. Plag (2011) and McWhorter (2012) for being contrary to observed properties of creoles and unfalsifiable.

Many creolists have not only relied on linguistic data, but also on a wide array of other sources. Studies on the genesis of creoles ideally make use of historical and demographic data in order to pinpoint the origin of slaves. Earlier texts from creole communities have been studied, using methods from PHILOLOGY.

DEMOGRAPHIC disproportion is often invoked as a crucial factor in creolization. For instance, it is sometimes suggested that slaves in the earlier phases of the settlement lived in a more intimate relationship with the Europeans, in what is called *société d'habitation* in the French tradition, or HOMESTEAD phase, where servants and slaves would acquire close to perfect French. But in the *société de plantation* or PLANTATION SOCIETY, when the masters had become a minority, the lexifier became less accessible to each new slave population. The slaves learnt an APPROXIMATION OF AN APPROXIMATION of the superstrate or lexifier, and this would explain the deviant structures observed in creoles compared to the lexifiers (Chaudenson 1978).

It has been suggested that when the shift from a homestead phase to a plantation phase occurred, the slaves did not have enough access to French, Dutch etc., because there were too few speakers of these languages in relation to the total population. Thus, speech forms that were increasingly different from the lexifiers emerged in the different phases.

Researchers have also suggested that the speakers of the lexifiers could have spoken in a simplified manner, providing FOREIGNER TALK as input, rather than the colloquial varieties spoken among themselves. Foreigner talk is the way people speak to others who do not share their language, purposely simplifying their language (Ferguson 1971; Clements 1992).

For a long time, creolists considered creoles to be a result of the failed attempts by subjugated populations to acquire the lexifier language. The assumption was at the time that the lexifier was the target language for people. Since Baker's (1990) article, aptly called "off target", most creolists no longer believe that the lexifier was the TARGET LANGUAGE for the displaced or indigenous communities. Rather, they wanted to create a means of interethnic communication, without having to worry whether the utterances were grammatically correct from the perspective of

the lexifier. Successful communication was the main goal: obtaining food, trade goods or a variety of services was more important than acquiring the other's language to perfection. This would help explain why creoles have remarkably different grammatical systems compared to those of the "target".

Different TYPES OF CREOLES can be distinguished on the basis of the historical circumstances under which they emerged. Some creoles developed around trading sites, where Europeans often built fortified communities for trade with the local population. Creoles that developed locally, for instance around trading forts in West Africa between Europeans and indigenous Africans, are called ENDOGENOUS CREOLES (Greek *endo* "inside, within"), and those that involve large numbers of displaced workers, often slaves or indentured laborers, are called EXOGENOUS (Greek *exo* "outside") and quite a few of them are spoken in insular settings (Chaudenson 1978). Creoles that developed around forts (e.g. in West Africa) are called FORT CREOLES. Other creoles developed in MULTIETHNIC WORKFORCES, often in agricultural societies for which labor was imported from other parts of the world, either through slavery or indentured labor. Most Caribbean and mainland American creoles have formed as so-called PLANTATION CREOLES. In several cases, however, maroons (escaped slaves) fled the plantations and established autonomous communities. These creoles are called MAROON CREOLES, and those communities that were established early in the history of the colonies tend to speak creoles that are more distant from their lexifiers than for example fort creoles are. Maroon creoles are mainly spoken in the Guyanas, especially in Suriname, and insular West Africa. Furthermore, there are creoles that emerged in educational environments, or in armies with soldiers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. These can be called respectively urban SCHOOL CREOLES (for instance Nicaragua Sign Language, Rabaul Creole German, perhaps also Hawaiian Creole English and Tayo in New Caledonia) and ARMY CREOLES (for instance the Arabic creoles of East Africa).

Histories of languages and their connections can also be reconstructed by studying the diffusion of particular words, or forms of words, from one language to another, or from one geographical region to another. Such words can be INHERITED from an earlier common source language, or BORROWED. Structural similarities can be explained by parallel and independent generalizations, but for some very specific forms of words or idioms, especially if they are numerous enough, it can be argued that these specific forms derive from one and the same source. Philip Baker and others have studied this especially for the English and French creoles, and for the specific forms of African words found in the Atlantic creoles (Baker 1993; Baker & Huber 2001). Word forms that are common between creoles spoken on both sides of the Atlantic have led scholars of English creoles (e.g., McWhorter 1995; Smith 1987) and of Portuguese creoles (e.g., Jacobs 2012)

to suggest a COMMON ORIGIN for several creoles with the same lexifier. One can attribute the presence of some common quirks to migrations of persons travelling between different regions of the world (Speedy 2013; Baker & Mühlhäusler 2013). Certain creolists who believe in a common origin of creoles from one lexifier in a specific region (e.g., Atlantic English, South Pacific English, Indian Ocean French) support the idea of MONOGENESIS, while others posit the occurrence of multiple independent geneses, or POLYGENESIS. In the 1960s and 1970s, a strong monogenesis theory was discussed (e.g. Whinnom 1965; Taylor 1971) in order to explain perceived similarities between creoles across lexifiers, with one origin of a creole and subsequent relexification (i.e., the massive replacement of vocabulary but not of grammar). The idea that all creoles regardless of lexifier have a common origin is now universally rejected.

2.3 Issues in creole studies

In this section we are going to introduce some of the main issues in modern creolistics by making a number of statements about the nature of creoles. We will mention some of the main protagonists and antagonists and their arguments. We will start with general issues such as the characteristics of creoles, sociohistorical issues, pidgins, the influence from other superstrates and adstrates, complexity, the agents of creolization, etc.

A small selection of references will be given in almost all cases. These references are not exhaustive but point to some publications that have contributed to the issues.

2.3.1 General characteristics

According to some, creole languages have some specific properties that distinguish them from other languages. Scholars have discussed the social, historical and also linguistic aspects of these, and the connections between them.

1. *Creoles are natural languages, just like any other language*
This statement is uncontroversial among linguists. The expressability of natural languages entails that any thought can be expressed in any language, and that includes creoles. Of course the vocabulary of any language will have gaps in that some languages can use one word where other languages need circumlocutions, compounds, phrases or sentences, but the vocabulary can easily be adjusted. Due to some sociohistorical coincidences, and not because of linguistic restrictions, some languages fare better for discussions of medicinal plants in the rainforest,

others better for quantum mechanics, as some of its speakers have developed an interest in such matters. All natural languages can easily expand the vocabulary to express everything, and the grammatical means to do so.

The same is true for grammatical properties. Many grammatical distinctions that many people may think are present in all languages, may be non-existent in almost all other languages, or be expressed in more detail in others. There are languages without the word "to have" (for instance Russian, Finnish and Diu Creole Portuguese), without distinct pronouns for first and second person plural (Haitian Creole, English), without a past tense (40% of all languages according to Dahl & Velupillai 2013), without plural endings (10% according to Haspelmath 2013a), and without verbal conjugations (15% according to Dryer 2013). If creoles lack distinctions that are present in their lexifiers, that observation makes them neither richer nor poorer.

2. *Creoles are the result of retention, loss, and reconstitution*

The three keywords that define creolization may be retention, loss, and reconstitution. Part of the lexicon and part of the grammar are retained from a lexifier, but there is a clear loss of properties as well. Processes of simplification and reduction have initially led to the formation of rather basic codes of communication. The results were clearly insufficient for broader patterns of communication, and hence communicative shortcuts through grammaticalization must have been created to make an efficient communication system, and a complete and fully natural language. Semantic distinctions were reintroduced into the emerging creole – and these distinctions were different from those found in the lexifier. For instance, definite and indefinite articles from the lexifiers are lost, and demonstratives and the numeral 'one' are retained and were also used for the reconstitution of definite and indefinite articles (Heine 1997). For instance, in Saramaccan *wan* is used for specific and unknown (< English one), *di* for specific and known (< English *this*). The articles in many creoles may distinguish specific/non-specific and known/unknown contrasts rather than (in)definiteness.

3. *Creoles are alike, simple and mixed*

It has been claimed that creoles are similar to one another, that creoles are complex but less complex than most languages of the world, and that creoles are mixed in that they combine lexicon and grammar from other languages (cf. Muysken 1988; McWhorter 2001; Aboh 2015). All three claims have been under constant discussion. Until the 1990s the statement that creoles were ALIKE, i.e., SIMILAR TO ONE ANOTHER, was probably the least controversial. Taylor (1971), Whinnom (1965) and others had noted and described striking similarities between French, English, Spanish and Portuguese creoles, later also Dutch and Arabic creoles.

Comparing creoles, they observed, for instance, a preverbal system of tense/mood/aspect markers, the expression of nominal plurality by a third person pronoun, etc., which are all quite different for the lexifiers. They also noted that these languages had not inherited much of the morphology and close to none of the irregularities of the lexifiers.

Creole languages have very complex grammars, but it has been argued that they are less complex than other natural languages because of their special history (e.g. McWhorter 2001; Parkvall 2008). Some people have called creoles SIMPLE, or simplified (but see e.g. DeGraff 2003 for a critique), and from the perspective of the lexifiers, one can observe lexifier material that is not echoed in the creole. Due to their special history, they did not acquire either unnecessary or decorative features, or complex morphophonology or tone, all of which take time to develop.

Finally, it has been claimed that creoles are MIXED (e.g. Thomason 2001; Aboh 2015). Creoles have been formed through contributions from several languages, often called superstrates or lexifier, substrates and adstrates (see above). Some scholars find creoles less mixed as they display fewer loans than the lexifiers. The lexicon of a creole has its origin mostly in one language, the lexifier. There are a few special cases of creoles with mixed lexicons, with many roots from languages other than the main lexifiers. We should perhaps call them secondary lexifiers, and not substrates in these cases. The three examples of such languages are: Angolar (Portuguese and a Bantu language Kimbundu), Saramaccan (English and Portuguese), Berbice Creole (Dutch and Eastern Ijo, a Nigerian language), perhaps also Palenquero (Spanish and Bantu). Most mixed-language creoles are spoken by descendants of maroons.

The other creoles have an overall lexicon that is less mixed than what is found in non-creoles, not only in languages heavily shaped by contact such as English, but also languages like Swedish or Japanese. Overall, some 70% of the English vocabulary in a middle-sized dictionary is borrowed from Latin and Romance language, but only 7% of the basic lexicon (Grant 2009). In creoles, the proportion of non-lexifier lexicon is probably less than 5% in the overall vocabulary. Generally, upwards of 95% of the lexical and grammatical roots of a creole can be traced to one language, called the lexifier.

The mixture may also be associated with a dichotomy between the lexicon and the grammatical system: almost all the basic vocabulary, and indeed the lexicon in general, comes from one language, but the grammatical system is assumed to be from another source, thus making a creole a mixed language. This idea is inherent in the relexification hypothesis, now called relabeling, see below under (11) (Lefebvre 1998, 2014).

4. *The definition of "creole language" is circular*

It is not easy to define a creole language (but see McWhorter 2005). One cannot take the folk label "creole" to define creole languages, as only a minority are in fact called creoles by their speakers. Some communities call their languages pidgins, but they are in fact creoles (e.g. Tok Pisin ("Talk Pidgin"), Hawaiian Pidgin English, Solomon Islands Pijin, Nigerian Pidgin, Fernandoo Poo Pichi). On the other hand, some population groups are called creoles (e.g. Alaskan Russians, Aleuts of the Commander Islands), but their language is not classified as a creole. If one takes certain social or demographic criteria as a point of departure, e.g. new languages spoken by displaced populations, then it is easy to see that this is not enough: we call Cuban Spanish a dialect of Spanish, even though it is spoken mostly by people whose ancestors did not have Spanish as a mother tongue when they arrived on the island (cf. Haspelmath 2013b). French is spoken by descendants of Celtic and other languages, which has left traces as substrate features, but French is not called a creole.

If we call certain languages creoles when they display a large number of changes in phonology, lexicon and syntax in comparison with their nearest (lexical) relatives, then this reasoning is circular: the restructuring and deviant nature within the group of languages with the same lexifiers, is already part of the definition of the creole. In other words, a creole is in principle a language associated with certain sociohistorical events, but if the linguistic structures after such events do not conform to ideas about what a creole language is supposed to be like, we do not call a language a creole – despite a certain social history shared with situations in which creole languages came into being. And that is circular.

There are several potential ways to avoid this circularity. First, one can simply take the existing set of languages generally recognized as creoles by specialists. This would then be a closed set, but generalizations are limited, and expansion of the set is impossible. A second way to avoid circularity would be to isolate some properties that distinguish recognized creoles from non-creoles – a contested idea. Finally, one can try to define a creole as a language that shares its lexicon with other languages, but not its grammatical system, which should be quite different from the other languages of the family, and not identical to other languages, and visibly grammaticalized (see Cabral 1995 and DeLancey 2014 for some languages in South America and Asia). None of these methods are generally accepted. Defining what a creole is remains difficult.

2.3.2 Sociohistory of creoles and creolization

Creole languages are often associated with specific socio-historical events, such as colonization, expansion, population displacement and slavery. Here we discuss the most conspicuous links between properties of creole languages and socio-historical situations that creoles have been associated with.

5. *It is impossible to distinguish creoles from non-creoles on the basis of the structure alone, without knowledge of the sociohistory of a language community*

Where we have creole languages, a set of social circumstances have played a role (see discussion in the previous section). There is, in other words, no doubt that creoles can be associated with certain sociohistorical events. Some scholars say that one cannot tell the difference between a creole language and a non-creole language based on structural traits alone (Ansaldo & Matthews 2007, e.g. p. 4, 14, DeGraff 2001, 2003, 2005a, b, 2009; Mufwene 2001). For example, Ansaldo & Matthews claim that "creole languages do not form a typological or otherwise structurally unique class distinguishable from non-creole grammars" (2007: 14) and DeGraff states that "Creole grammars do not form a typological class that is aprioristically and fundamentally distinguishable from that of non-Creole grammars" (2009: 137). For them, there is no class of creoles, just a set of languages with certain histories that are called creoles.

6. *Certain sociohistorical circumstances have an effect on language structure, and specific circumstances can lead to the emergence of creoles*

Multilingual workforces may lead to the emergence of a pidgin, especially when the different parties want to maintain a social distance. Languages spoken by few people have fewer phonemes (Hay & Bauer 2007) Languages learned by many as a second language will show the effects of simplification (Kusters 2003; Lupyan & Dale 2010). Languages spoken by isolated populations will grow in complexity (Trudgill 2009, 2011). In a similar vein, certain sociohistorical circumstances that are responsible for the emergence of creole languages can have an effect on structure. These factors seem to be the development of a new society, where communication in the standard language is not desirable or not possible, and where therefore an in-group language develops which becomes a shared language. This can trigger a development in which the medium of interethnic communication becomes the default means of communication in the community, in some cases even a mother tongue.

7. *The ecology of each situation of each creolization event was different, and therefore requires extensive data collection from historical sources*

It is uncontroversial that each situation of creolization was unique. The ecology is always different, but this statement should not lead us to abandon the search for historical data and linguistic facts. Mufwene (2001) points out that the ecology of the genesis of all creoles was different, and therefore it is impossible to generalize. With 'ecology' he means the socio-historical circumstances in which creoles develop, including the presence of different languages with different levels of prestige. Chaudenson (1978) has proposed that subsequent generations tried to approximate earlier generations' speech, without backing the claims up with documental evidence. These approaches are especially futile if documentation is available, even if fragmentary. Baker and Fon Sing (2007), for instance, collected early texts from Mauritius, Arends and Perl (1995) texts from Suriname, and van Rossem and van der Voort (1996) for Virgin Islands Creole Dutch. Even though historical and linguistic sources may be scarce and defective, any theory on creole genesis should be compatible with the available facts, and with as many facts as possible that can be unearthed.

8. *Creoles are created as an act of identity*

Once different groups have been gathered together, perhaps far away from their homeland, the second generation of locally-born populations may form a new identity. The locally-born do not identify with the indigenous populations (if present) and neither with the colonial powers. Creole languages may be interpreted as an expression of such a new, local identity (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985; Baker 1990; Muysken 1981).

9. *Creoles are or were spoken by suppressed populations*

Some of the world's creole languages are spoken by populations whose ancestors were deported to other locations as slaves or as indentured laborers. In many societies their descendants have now, after the colonial period, obtained independence. Most creole populations now live in postcolonial settings, and the status of their languages range from dominant in all domains (Papiamentu in the Dutch Antilles) via widely spoken but not visible or official (Saint Lucia French Creole) to moribund (Diu Creole Portuguese, Grenada French Creole). Bislama, the English creole of Vanuatu, is an official language but not widely accepted as such.

2.3.3 Development: Pidgin stage or not

The existence of pidgins that would have influenced creoles is contested.

10. *A creole does not emerge without a preceding pidginization stage*
Before the 1990s, a pidgin stage before a creole was uncontroversial (Mühlhäusler 1997; Romaine 1988). Until the 1980s, scholars of pidgins and creoles agreed that pidgins did not have full expressability, whereas creoles were complete and mature languages, and people agreed that a pidgin could become a creole through expansion. More recently, a pidgin stage preceding a creole has become a controversial issue. People have argued in different veins that some creoles were not preceded by a pidgin stage or they denied the existence of a stage in which there was some kind of a reduced version or approximation of another language which became a creole (Bollée 1977; Mather 2007: 410; Thomason & Kaufman 1988).

In the Pacific, successive stages of documentation (e.g. Mühlhäusler 1979 for Tok Pisin) clearly show that a rather simple communication system was used in initial stages, which was variable and extremely simplified. In the Americas and the Caribbean, however, where (pidginization and) creolization took place centuries earlier than in Melanesia, proof of a pidgin stage is often lacking. Therefore, the proof for a pidgin stage is speculative when documentation is lacking, and mostly argued on the basis of indirect evidence.

11. *Creoles emerge without a pidgin*
Three strains of creolists have proposed that creoles emerged without a pidgin. First, creolists like Arends (1989) and Hazaël-Massieux (2008) have been looking at historical documentation in locations where today a creole is spoken. Documentation of the language may show a development away from the lexifier to a more creole-like language. Opponents, however, have said that the documentation of earlier stages does not document the "deep" creole or the "basilect" but displays a variety affected by missionaries, by literacy or by normative views of the languages. Others have claimed that creoles are direct relexifications of the substrate languages, and hence a pidgin was not part of the history of such languages (Lefebvre 1998). Again others have claimed that creoles are the result of recombination of features from two or more languages (Mufwene 2008; Aboh & Ansaldo 2007; Aboh 2015), and hence a pidgin is unnecessary to explain the properties of creoles, as all their properties are argued to be traceable back to the contributing languages.

12. *A creole is a nativized pidgin*

In connection with the preceding paragraphs, one can also claim that every creole language must be a continuation of a pidgin. Here the definition of "pidgin" is important. For some creolists, a pidgin is a rather stable system, which has to be learnt, and one can be a good or bad speaker of the pidgin (Parkvall & Bakker 2013). Other creolists (notably Bickerton 1981) have assumed a very chaotic system of communication with no rules or stability for the stage preceding creolization, more akin to a jargon. Both views agree that creoles build on incomplete communication (pidgin), which was not designed to be a fully effective form for communicating. Both views of pidgins assume simplification of lexifier properties in the pidginization process.

2.3.4 Influences from input languages

The exact contributions of the lexifiers, substrates, adstrates and dialects of the lexifiers are still under debate (see also the statements under (3) above).

13. *A creole language is a structural continuation of an imported or indigenous language, where only the word forms have been replaced by words from another (mostly European) language*

One theory on the genesis of creoles entails that creoles are, for instance, African languages with a European coat on. The inner form or deeper meaning, or even the entire structure, would be identical to another, substrate language. Haitian Creole would have a French lexicon, but a grammatical system from the African language Fongbe of the Gbe cluster (Lefebvre 1998). The idea, known as the RELEXIFICATION (or RELABELING) HYPOTHESIS, suggests that a creole, if analysed by structural properties alone, should show close to one-to-one similarity with the substrate/adstrate languages.

14. *Creoles are natural continuations of the lexifiers, which developed just like for example Latin developed into Italian or Spanish*

All languages evolve and change, which is a natural process. One theory of creole genesis entails that there is no reason to classify some results of linguistic changes as creole languages, and others merely as overseas varieties of a language, or as local developments from another language. The evolution from Latin to French or Spanish would be equivalent to the development of French to Haitian Creole or Mauritian Creole. French would be Latin with Celtic substrate influence, Spanish would be vulgar Latin with Iberian and Arabic influence, Haitian and Mauritian would be French with African influence, especially Kwa languages and Bantu languages. As the substrates, or the specific constellations of the substrates, are

different in all these cases, the resulting linguistic outcomes are different. The lexicon and grammar of Latin would be continued in French and Spanish, and the lexicon and grammar of French would be continued in Mauritian and Haitian (Mufwene 2008).

15. *In the case of creoles, transmission of the language from parents to children was broken at one point in time*

Normally, languages are transmitted from parents to children, whereby members of each generation change the language a little bit. Changes are minor and gradual but over several generations one can notice differences. Reading Shakespeare from the 1600s is possible for a contemporary speaker of English, reading Chaucer from the 14th century is difficult, and reading Beowulf from a few centuries earlier is virtually impossible. Some creolists argue that creolization differs from this kind of normal transmission (Thomason & Kaufman 1988). At some point in time, the transmission was broken in creoles, in that people did not want to or were not able to learn the lexifiers. Thus they had to create a creole, perhaps based on a pidgin. In this view, there was a catastrophic event at some point in time which made the normal parent-child transmission of the language impossible. People with a range of language backgrounds were brought together, and they had to create a vehicular language, understandable for all. This would necessarily have been a quick process, and that is called creolization. After the creation of the creole, the transmission would be like any other natural language. Some creolists, however, promote the view that the lexifier was just transmitted from generation to generation in the normal way, perhaps with some loss, or with influence from substrate languages (e.g. Ansaldo & Matthews 2001; DeGraff 2001: 291, 2009; Aboh 2016).

16. *Creoles are the result of a combination of features from several languages, notably the lexifier and its vernaculars, and different indigenous or transplanted languages*

It is clear that a creole language differs from its lexifier phonologically and syntactically, in some cases to an extent that the creole is not intelligible to the speakers of the lexifier. Some people have claimed that creoles are formed by a combination of the structural properties of the superstrate and substrate languages, as exemplified in Aboh & Ansaldo (2007) for Surinamese creoles. An arbitrary mixture of structural features would have taken place, where some feature is taken from one source language, and another from a second source.

If this is correct, each and every feature of a creole must be attributable to one or more of the source languages, with no room for innovation. It does seem to happen that creoles display features not found in any of the known contact languages. In such a case, the feature is assumed to originate in an unidentified

substrate language or an unknown dialectal variety of the lexifier (Mufwene 2001). Innovations are downplayed or not mentioned. This idea was empirically tested in Aboh and Ansaldo (2007), but not all creole features were found in the identified source languages, and not all the lexifier and substrate properties were found in the creoles. Features that were *not* transmitted from lexifiers or substrates into the creole, were, according to Aboh and Ansaldo (2007) "semantically vacuous" (p. 53, 56) and not "semantically active" (p. 47) or "not semantically relevant" (p. 54). For another detailed application of the model, see Aboh (2015). Others have pointed out that creole languages display many innovations (e.g. Bickerton 1981; Baker 2001; Bakker 2014a).

17. *Creoles show no structural traits from the indigenous or transplanted languages, and hence no substrate influence at all*

Some people, notably Derek Bickerton (1981, 1984), have claimed that creoles developed from scratch: creoles were created by children who imposed a system on the chaotic speech (a jargon, rather than a pidgin) around them, and no influence at all can be contributed to the languages spoken as first languages by their parents. Research shows that there is influence from the substrates (and adstrates) on creoles (e.g. contributions in Muysken & Smith 1986; Michaelis 2008; Lefebvre 2011; Muysken & Smith with Borges 2015), but virtually nothing among the most stable structural features (Daval-Markussen et al., Chapter 7, this volume) at least for the Atlantic creoles.

2.3.5 Complexity of Creoles

Some creolists claim that creoles are less complex than other languages, probably due to the preceding pidgin stage. Others contest this claim.

18. *Creoles are, as a group, less complex than non-creoles*

There is an old view in linguistics, or perhaps an axiom or a dogma, that all languages are equally complex, as to the natural communicative capacities of languages. It is not always easy to come up with an acceptable definition of complexity, however. Complexity can be measured in many ways, for instance the number of grammatical rules, the number of words or syllables needed to express a specific idea or a text, the presence or absence of more or fewer grammatical categories, etc. The idea that all languages are equally complex, according to some metric, has been challenged repeatedly in recent years (e.g. Kusters 2003; Dahl 2004; Givón 2009; Shosted 2006; Miestamo et al. 2009; Sampson et al. 2009).

It has been claimed that creole languages as a group are simpler than non-creoles (e.g. McWhorter 2001; Parkvall 2008). Other people disagree with

this statement, suggesting that there are hidden or overt complexities in creoles (DeGraff 2001; Arends 2001; Ansaldo & Matthews 2001; Aboh & Smith 2009; Faraclas & Klein 2009). Or they claim that the loss of some properties of the lexifier are compensated for by an increase in complexities elsewhere.

19. *Some creoles are more complex than their lexifiers*
It is obvious that creoles generally lack a number of properties found in the lexifier, such as the presence of grammatical gender, inflectional morphology and variable constituent order. However, there can be structural traits in creoles that are more complex than what is found in the lexifier. Chinuk Wawa, for instance, had more personal pronouns than its lexifier, as do Solomon Islands Pijin and Tok Pisin. Also, it was claimed that the long and short forms of the verbs in Mauritian creole are not predictable, and, amongst others, therefore more complex than in French. In general, however, supporters of this claim have not undertaken comparisons of the complexity of lexifiers and creoles with a view to providing empirical proof of this theory. Aboh (2015) is an attempt, and his view is that creoles are hybrid languages, and therefore more complex than each of the contributing languages.

2.3.6 Creators of creoles

Who created the creoles? Who was most responsible for the new language? Some people hypothesize that the adults were at the root of their creation, others assume it was the children or adolescents.

20. *Creoles are created by children*
When children are confronted with the speech of adults, who all speak the dominant language "incorrectly", or who speak a highly variable jargon, or an incomplete pidgin, they need to create order in the chaos, and their generation will speak a homogenous creole. The children are the ones who create the structures of the creoles (Bickerton 1981, 1984, 1988).

21. *Creoles are created by adults*
When adults learn a second language, they will almost always have an accent and make errors in several areas of the language. If access to a second language is limited, or temporary, the result may be a version of a language quite different from the lexifier language (cf. Plag 2011 for thoughts about creolization and second language acquisition). In this way creoles can develop. In many settings where creoles emerged, adults were the largest group of the populations, and hence the driving force behind creolization (Shnukal & Marchese 1983; Jourdan 1989, 1991). In one

version, subsequent cohorts of people arriving in the new society, approximate the approximations of the previous generation, which, after some generations, resulted in a creole language (Chaudenson 1978).

22. *Creoles are created by adolescents*
Newborn children are not normally observed creating new languages, and neither are adults instrumental in the formation of new languages or purposeful distortion of languages. The sector of the population most creatively involved in languages, are adolescents (Kiessling & Mous 2004). They create and maintain secret languages, youth slang and other utterances of verbal creativity. Creole languages could have been created by adolescents, possibly when communicating with each other (Muysken 1981).

2.3.7 Gradual or quick

Some creolists have argued for a rapid genesis of creoles; others have argued for a gradual development. This question is also connected to who the agents of creolization were (see 14 and 15 above).

23. *Creoles develop slowly, over several generations*
If new groups of people keep on arriving in the overseas society, with each generation the lexifier language will be changed fairly radically, more so than with normal transmission between generations. The new acquirers will be adults, and thus the effects of imperfect second language learning will make themselves felt. Thus, creoles develop slowly, and it would take many generations for creoles to stabilize. Some of the arguments for this position are found in the early documentation of some of the creoles, where there seems to be much more variation and less stability than in later periods. This idea is sometimes called gradual creolization (Arends 1989, 1993; Bickerton 1991).

Arguments for gradual creolization can be found in the documentation of early sources, which often show less significant deviations from the lexifier compared to the later creoles (see e.g. Arends 1989, 1993; Bakker 2014b).

24. *Creoles develop quickly, within one generation*
Some scholars argue that creolization is a very rapid development, even as brief as one generation (Baker 2001; Bickerton 1984). Within just one or few decades, the creolization process would have led to a new, stable language. The idea of rapid genesis is often associated with a preceding pidginization period. The first generation of new arrivals, being displaced people speaking many different languages,

will be forced to create an adequate medium of interethnic communication. The first generation will have the most impact on the structure, as they are the founders (Mufwene's "founder effect", 1996). In Suriname five English-based creoles are spoken, despite the fact that the country was an English colony for at most a few decades, so it is assumed the language must have come together rapidly.

25. *Creoles show grammaticalization paths at an accelerated pace*
Usually, grammaticalization entails a change of meaning, in many cases a broadening, and at the same time a reduction of the form. An example is the development of the numeral meaning "one" to an indefinite article in Western European languages or into a marker of nonspecificity and newness in creoles (Givón 1981; De Mulder & Carlier 2011). The development of grammatical elements out of lexical elements is one aspect of grammaticalization. The genesis of grammatical elements (such as case markers, TMA elements, verbal conjugations and the development of adpositions out of nouns) is usually assumed to be a rather slow process, taking up to several centuries.

In the creolization process, a new grammar has to be developed. Thus, in a relatively short amount of time, new grammatical markers develop for a number of semantic and cognitive distinctions. Many of the new markers show up in the earliest documentation of language samples in the creole societies. For many markers, the lexical stem, with a specific meaning, and the grammaticalized form, with a generalized meaning, coexist. In Saramaccan, for example, the word *manu* means "man, husband", but it developed into a derivational affix – *ma* where it has the function of an agentive suffix, relating to both men and women. Similarly, *tan* means "to stand" and developed into *ta*, the non-punctual aspect marker derived from it, as in *a ta waka* "he is walking". Both the early appearance and the continued presence of the source lexical items are taken to be witnesses for a rapid process of grammaticalization in creoles (cf. Plag 2002; Bruyn 2011).

2.3.8 Location

The question of where the creoles developed has been a source of contention for several decades.

26. *(Some) creoles developed on plantations*
One important group of creoles consists of those associated with plantations. Many creoles of the Caribbean region and the Americas are considered plantation creoles. The work forces for many of these were often slaves. In the 1970s, the idea was that slaves did not have a language in common and thus had to develop a pidgin to communicate with each other and with the bosses. The pidgin subsequently

creolized when the slaves became parents. Others, however, have argued that the English based creoles have so many words, structures and grammaticalized items in common, that they must go back to one place, perhaps in Africa (McWhorter 1995, 1999). In that case, the pre-creole was possibly imported to the plantations from Africa, or an early settlement in the region, for instance Barbados or Saint Kitts.

Still, there are many creoles that developed outside of plantation settings, such as the Arabic creoles in Africa, the Portuguese creoles in India, Tayo in New Caledonia, and the creoles that developed in West Africa.

27. *Creoles developed in urban settings*

Some people have argued that at least some creoles developed in urban settings. It was in urban settings that people speaking a diversity of languages met and interacted. This has been argued for by a.o. Roberts (2005) for Hawaii. Also Jourdan (1989, 1991) associated the stabilization of pidgin in the Solomon Islands with urban settings, as do Shnukal & Marchese (1983) for Nigeria. Some creoles have been associated with schools, notably Tayo French creole in New Caledonia and Hawaiian Creole (Baker 2001).

28. *Some creoles developed in other settings: forts, mission stations and maroon societies*

Slaves who escaped from the plantations, may have done so before a creole language had developed on the plantations. Creoles spoken in such societies, are called maroon creoles, of which most of the Suriname creoles are the best known examples.

Some creoles developed around forts that Europeans established for instance in West Africa. Local populations would settle around them, and develop a new vernacular. The same happened around some mission stations.

2.3.9 Reasons for perceived similarities

If indeed creoles show more similarities with other creoles than with other languages, including the lexifiers and substrate languages, then this calls for an explanation. This quest for an explanation is one of the fascinating parts of creole studies, where different opinions are found.

29. *The structures of creoles are similar because their substrate languages show similarities*

Creolists working with Caribbean creole languages, which are spoken mostly by descendants of Africans, noticed similarities amongst the creoles and suggested that these similarities could best be explained by the fact that the ancestors of the first generations of speakers were speaking African languages (Holm 1988).

30. *The innovations in creoles reflect pragmatic aspects of language, i.e. language use*

The perceived common features in creoles are due to the increased language use in a setting where communicative pressures lead people to make their speech as effective and efficient as possible. The grammatical shortcuts devised are pragmatic solutions leading to successful communication (Sankoff & Laberge 1974; Shnukal & Marchese 1983; Bakker 1987).

31. *The structures of creoles reflect the more deeply engrained properties of the human brain through a bioprogram*

Bickerton (1981) explained recurring semantic distinctions in creoles by claiming that these properties were more deeply entrenched in the brain. These semantic distinctions (like realis/irrealis, or singular/plural) surface in creoles, when children grow up without a model language. The children impose the bioprogram features, which surface particularly in plantation creoles and maroon creoles.

These similarities, if one accepts them, could also be explained on the basis of pragmatic issues in language (Givón 1973, 1982; Bakker 1987) combined with cognitive limitations and salience in communication, leading to similar semantic distinctions in creoles (Givón 1973).

32. *The innovations in creoles reflect cognitive aspects of human communication, e.g. through saliency of meanings*

The idea is that the similarities between creoles have a common cause, and that it is not likely to be caused by some biological skill or through the specific languages in contact, as many structural features recur despite differences in lexifier and substrates. Universal cognitive capacities, used in order to streamline conversations, would be responsible for similarities in creole structures (Givón 1973, 1982).

2.3.10 Semantics

Lexical semantics has been understudied in creoles.

33. *Word meanings in creoles often deviate from the cognates in the lexifier because of influence from other languages*

The lexicon of creoles is derived from the so-called lexifier, but the fact that words in creoles and their lexifiers are cognates does not mean that they have the same meaning. Often the creole words have meanings closer to the semantic range in a substrate or adstrate language. For instance, Yilan Creole Japanese has one word for "hand, arm, elbow", like the most important substrate language Atayal

(Austronesian), even though the lexifier Japanese has several words for the different body parts. Among the 75 APICS languages, no fewer than 43 (57%) make no distinction between "hand" and "arm", whereas most lexifiers do distinguish the two.

Creoles tend to be high-context languages, with lesser emphasis on encoded meaning (semantics) and a higher emphasis on contextualized meaning (pragmatics). Creole semantics is characterized by hyperpolysemy. Since creoles have fewer word forms available, many lexemes consist of numerous lexical units. Finally, creole semantics reflect a tendency towards transparent packaging of meaning, partly through the use of multi-word units and partly through polysemy patterns.

2.4 Research on creole languages and the contributions to this book

The issues discussed in this chapter relate to the genesis of creoles, their subsequent development and the contemporary state of creoles. Thus, the following issues play a role with regard to the structure of creoles: the influences from the different languages in their genesis (substrates, superstrates), the influences of external factors (communication, cognition, biology) on creole genesis and the way they combine and mix. Whether creole languages form a distinctive type compared to non-creoles, and whether creoles descend from a pidgin or not is also discussed. All of these issues appear to be controversial at one level, except for one: all linguists who have studied creoles agree that creoles are natural languages, with the full range of expressability of the other natural languages of the world.

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