

5.1 TOK PISIN AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THEORETICAL ISSUES IN CREOLISTICS AND GENERAL LINGUISTICS

P. Mühlhäusler

5.1.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1.1 General background

Whilst the relationship between the study of particular languages and a theory of human language is one of mutual dependence, in the sense that descriptions of individual languages must be derived from sound general theories and that those theories in turn must be based on observations of individual languages, there would seem to be no particular reason, at first sight, why Tok Pisin should be more suited to the purposes of theoretical linguists than any other human language. In fact, Tok Pisin, alongside other pidgin and creole languages, has been ignored and at times scorned by theoretical linguists until the very recent past. However, in the wake of concern for linguistic universals and sociolinguistic theories, interest in pidgins and creoles has become very widespread, as can be seen from the veritable explosion of publications in this area. For a number of reasons Tok Pisin figures prominently in these discussions, notably:

- a) Tok Pisin is one of the very few languages whose entire linguistic development can be documented in considerable detail. It thus provides badly needed observational adequacy for the historical linguist.
- b) The rate of linguistic change has been so fast that predictions concerning rule-changing creativity can be checked within a short period of time.
- c) Tok Pisin is spoken both as a second and first language and thus affords valuable insights into the nature of creolisation. Its range of linguistic variation is thus wider than that of most other languages.
- d) Tok Pisin, like other pidgins and creoles, is more natural than most of the world's languages, since it developed under extreme pressure for communication in a multilingual context. Here, influence from specific traditional languages and attempts to introduce cultural refinements characteristic of old languages is virtually absent. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that a language such as Tok Pisin closely reflects the inborn human language capacity.

Thus, Tok Pisin can provide linguists with particularly valuable data against which to test their theories. It is impossible to do justice to all the issues raised in this area in a single chapter. All that I can realistically propose to do is to briefly outline some of the areas where evidence from Tok Pisin has been of particular relevance. I shall now deal with them as follows:

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(1) General linguistics

- a) terminological issues
- b) methodology
- c) linguistic universals
- d) markedness
- e) relationship between structure and function

(2) Creolistics

- a) theories of pidgin origin
- b) problems of linguistic discontinuity
- c) comparative linguistics and the interrelationship between Pacific pidgins and creoles
- d) Tok Pisin and Bickerton's bioprogram grammar

5.1.1.2 Terminological issues

Like any other branch of linguistics, creolistics has suffered from considerable terminological problems. Particular difficulties were experienced in defining pidgins and creoles. A detailed discussion can be found in Mühlhäusler 1974:11-25 and in Samarin 1975. Since definitions often determine the direction of research, it would seem profitable to look at some of them in more detail. The term pidgin has been defined, among other things, as:

- a) "A variety whose grammar and vocabulary are very much reduced The resultant language must be native to no one." (Bloomfield 1933:474)
- b) "A language which has arisen as the result of contact between peoples of different languages, usually formed from mixing of the languages." (UNESCO 1963:46)
- c) "The vocabulary is mainly provided by the language spoken by upper stratum (sic) of a mixed society, adapted by the lower stratum to the grammar and morphology of their original language." (Adler 1977:12)
- e) "... more or less deformed European words strung together with a minimum of grammar" (Bodmer 1880 quoted from Mühlhäusler 1974:14)
- f) "... the grammatical structure has been simplified very much beyond what we find in any of the languages involved in their (= pidgins') making." (Jespersen 1922:227)
- g) "Two or more people use a language in a variety whose grammar and vocabulary are very much reduced in extent and which is native to neither side. Such a language is a 'pidgin'." (Hall 1966:xii)
- h) "It (i.e. Pidgin English) is a corrupted form of English, mixed with many morsels from other languages and it is adapted to the mentality of the natives; therefore words tend to be simply concatenated and conjunction and declension are avoided." (Baessler 1895:23-24 translated from German)

Note that there are a number of problems with such definitions:

- i) Those who stress the makeshift character of pidgins (a "supplementary tongue for special forms of intercourse" Reinecke 1964:537) ignore

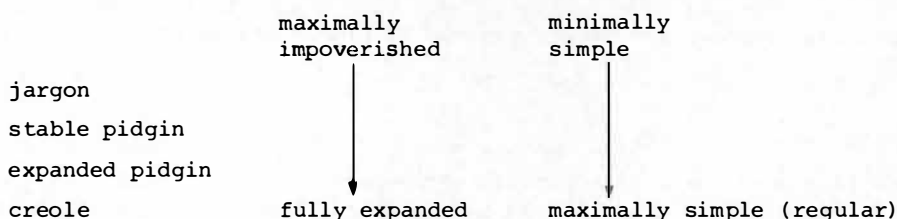
the fact that pidgins can develop to a considerable degree of stability and complexity.

- ii) There is a tendency to confuse simplification (greater grammatical regularity) with impoverishment (lack of referential and non-referential power). There is also considerable uncertainty as to whether simplification is greatest in incipient or extended pidgins.

Studies in the area of interlanguage (e.g. Corder 1977 and Traugott 1977:132-162) have drawn attention to the insufficiency of the notion of simplification (or simplicity) in some pidgin and creole studies. The latter points out that (153ff):

The natural semantax hypothesis suggests that a large number of linguistic phenomena often called 'simplification' does not in fact involve processes of simplification The result of acquisition may be an internalized system simpler from a comparative point of view than others' systems, but in itself it is not simplification.

The complex problem as to the relationship between simplification in the sense of rule generalisation on the one hand and naturalness and markedness on the other, cannot be solved here. However, data from developing pidgins support the view that impoverishment and simplification are inversely related: as the referential and non-referential power of a language increases, so its content must become more structured. A basic jargon used to exchange information in a limited contextual domain does not need structure. In its initial phase it is little more than a list of phrases or lexical irregularities. We thus get the following picture:



Agheyisi's view (1971:24) that:

It is possible that most of the factors which contribute to the development of the simplified variety known as the pidgin are most active during the pidginization process. This process is said to extend chronologically from the period of initial language contact through the stage when the resulting pidginized speech becomes sufficiently regularized and stabilized to have associated with it certain unique features by which it can be recognized and distinguished from other systems.

can no longer be upheld.

- iii) Pidgins are not mixed languages in the sense most often intended. First, it appears that the most mixed component of grammar is the lexicon, where syncretisms of various types are common (see chapter on etymologising (2.6)), and not syntax. Secondly, mixing at the syntactic and morphological levels is virtually absent in the formative phase of pidgins and becomes more important only after

stabilisation and considerable expansion have taken place. It is most pronounced in the post-pidgin phase, i.e. when a pidgin comes into renewed contact with its original lexifier language. The various aspects of mixing in pidgin development are discussed by Mühlhäusler (1982c).

- iv) Pidgins are classified and often defined as being based on 'lexically' a principal lexifier language, typically the language spoken by the socially dominant group. Two objections can be levelled against this view. As pointed out by Dennis and Scott (1975:2):

"... we will avoid calling the creoles 'English-based' or 'Portuguese-based' etc., since we can see no grounds for deciding that the lexicon is the base of the language, as opposed to the semantic-syntactic framework of the language.

A second reason is that the mixed or compromise character of pidgin lexicons is typically ignored. Thus, whilst most Tok Pisin words can be related to an English etymon, a very large proportion (probably as many as 50% in its formative years) can also be related to items of other languages. This is typically ignored in cognate counting.

In view of the above considerations I would like to propose a new definition of a pidgin:

Pidgins are examples of partially targeted or non-targeted second-language learning, developing from simpler to more complex systems as communicative requirements become more demanding. Whilst pidgin languages by definition have no native speakers, they are social rather than individual solutions and hence characterised by norms of acceptability. For such stability to develop three or more different languages must be involved in pidgin formation.

5.1.1.3 Methodological issues

Pidgin languages, at least in their early phases of development, exhibit a number of characteristics which should have endeared them to both structuralist and transformationalist grammarians:

- a) They are probably the only languages where the notions of 'free variation' or 'optional rule' make sense.
- b) They belong to the very restricted number of cases where idiolectal grammars can be pinpointed.
- c) In incipient pidgins the lexicon can indeed be regarded as a 'list of irregularities'.

Whereas a number of structuralist grammars of pidgins have been written (e.g. Hall 1943a for Tok Pisin), the above mentioned 'advantages' of pidgins were not used for theoretical argumentation, nor were they taken up by transformationalists. Instead, the latter dismissed the importance of pidgins on the following grounds:

- a) It was believed that languages can be learned perfectly only by children before maturation and that access to universals such as enable children to speak any human language is only imperfectly found in adults. It is for this reason that some transformationalists have dismissed pidgins as parasites upon 'true' languages.

- b) Establishing the grammaticality of strings involved the testing of speakers' intuitions. In second-language speakers such intuitions are only imperfectly realised and probably absent in the initial phases of pidgin development.¹
- c) Transformational grammars are static in that they describe an idealised invariant system. Since one of the principal characteristics of pidgins is their dynamically changing and hence variable nature, the problem of selecting an abstract 'typical' pidgin is great.²

To these may be added other considerations. Transformationalist descriptions are meant to be neutral between speaker and hearer's grammar. Such a description would fail to do justice to the complex patterns of unidirectional intelligibility, semi-intelligibility and the great distance between production and perception skills in pidgin languages. Similarly, the view that one is dealing with a homogeneous speech community (a term which is highly controversial even for old established languages, cf. Romaine 1982) is simply inappropriate. Many pidgins arise precisely for the reason that social and linguistic distance between groups can be maintained, and the development of speech communities in the conventional sense typically occurs late in their development.

Many post-transformational directions in linguistics, in particular the dynamic or quantum linguistics developed by Bailey, Bickerton, DeCamp and others, gained much of their impetus from pidgin and creole studies. The dynamic account of language (also referred to as lectology) is characterised by:

- a) The incorporation of development or time in grammatical description: implicational patterns of the type 'a implies b' can be interpreted as b was added to the grammar later than a.
- b) The central role of linguistic structures. The analysis of linguistic variation aims at describing linguistic patterns rather than correlations between linguistic and social variables.
- c) Its being panlectal, i.e. describing all variants of a language. Actual speakers will normally be competent in smaller parts of such panlectal grammars. It will also be found that language users will have more comprehension than production grammar. It must be pointed out, however, that the description of the panlectal patterns takes precedence over the assignments of subgrammars to individual speakers.
- d) Its being able to predict changes by referring to metaprinciples such as naturalness.

Summaries of the differences between earlier and lectological models are given by Bailey (1973) and, for pidgin and creole linguistics, by Mühlhäusler (1980b). Whereas this model allows for a descriptively adequate account of the complex variation patterns characterising much of pidgin and creole grammar, the very complexity of such descriptions makes it practically impossible to write complete grammars. My description of variability in Tok Pisin plural marking occupies more than 50 pages (Mühlhäusler 1981a) and would have been considerably longer had it been based on an adequately selected sample of speakers. The practical limitations of fieldwork for creole variation studies are discussed by McEntegart and Le Page (1982). The main task facing the descriptive linguist is to find a plausible compromise between abstract description and detailed observation of variability. A rule of thumb is that variation studies are most profitably

carried out in those areas of grammar that are subject to conscious manipulation by speakers of the language.

An important aspect of all the models discussed so far is the implicit belief that the referential (cognitive, truth-value) function is the primary function of language. Again, this is true only of incipient pidgins and middle-class western academic discourse and would have been yet another reason for linguists to take pidgins more seriously. All other languages including present-day Tok Pisin are probably dominated by the so-called nonreferential functions. I do not propose to solve the difficult problem of the numbers of and boundaries between these functions. However, what is interesting from the point of view of developmental theories of language is the order in which such functions are acquired in pidgins and first languages. Compare Halliday's findings with those of Mühlhäusler (1980b:46):

HALLIDAY 1974	MÜHLHÄUSLER 1980b ³
a) instrumental	a) referential (representational)
b) regulative	b) directive (regulative)
c) interactional	c) integrative (connative, interactional)
d) personal	d) expressive (personal)
e) heuristic	e) phatic (interactional)
f) metalinguistic	f) metalinguistic
g) imaginative	g) poetic (imaginative)
h) representational	

I will return to this point in the section on form and function.

In conclusion, pidgins are of particular importance to linguistic methodology because they highlight a number of problems which have been virtually ignored in the study of classical or modern standard languages. Most significantly, they are largely free from cultural influence in their grammatical structures and have no written tradition to influence the perception of language phenomena.

5.1.1.4 Linguistic universals

There are two principal approaches to the study of linguistic universals:

(1) The Greenbergian approach (cf. Greenberg 1963 and elsewhere) based on the comparison of surface characteristics of a large number of languages. Examples (from Greenberg 1963) are:

Universal 34: No language has a trial number unless it has a dual.
 No language has a dual unless it has a plural.
 (This is an unrestricted implicational universal.)

Universal 42: All languages have pronominal categories involving at least three pronouns and two numbers. (This is an unrestricted independent universal.)

Universals of the Greenbergian type can be easily falsified with evidence from new languages, as has been done for universal 42 by Laycock (1977e:33-41).

(2) A second approach to linguistic universals is that of Chomsky (e.g. 1965) and other transformationalists. It consists of postulating a small number of abstract universal principles which are said to enable children to learn any language. Examples include:

- a) The grammars of all languages have a category VP (verb phrase). (This is a substantive universal.)
- b) The semantic component interprets syntactic deep structure. (This is an organisational universal.)
- c) If the phrase X of category A is embedded within a larger phrase ZXW which is also of the category A, then no rule applying to the category A applies to X but only to ZXW. (This is the A-over-A principle, a formal universal discussed by Chomsky (1968:27-47).)

It should be noted that these latter are universals of formalisation and that their alleged status as mental realities is largely removed from empirical verification. Both Greenberg's and Chomsky's approaches to universals are deficient in a number of ways:

- a) As suggested by Bickerton (1981), they compare languages consisting of mixtures between cultural and (biologically founded) natural grammar, i.e. systems which are strictly speaking not comparable. At best, one will obtain an arbitrary mix between natural and cultural universals and one is likely to miss out on a very large number of natural universals which have been overlaid by cultural grammar in individual languages.
- b) Both types of universals are static, i.e. based on fully developed adult grammars. They are therefore difficult to relate to findings from pidgin, creole and child-language development.

However, even within the above two frameworks, a number of linguists (e.g. Givón 1979, Mühlhäusler 1974 and Kay and Sankoff 1974) have noted the special role of pidgins and creoles in universals research. The three authors independently arrived at the conclusion, expressed by Givón 1979:4:

Thus the reduced or simplified characteristics of pidgins which arose under such conditions may simply reflect the fact that universal grammar is a highly un-marked type of grammar.

and on p.24:

... they might be a precious source of data about the elusive beast we have all been questing with only a scant measure of success this far - Universal Grammar.

This view has been attacked on two grounds:

- a) The basis of comparison consisted of randomly chosen endpoints of development. Thus, universals such as the absence of the copula were arrived at by comparing incipient pidgins with highly developed ones. Many of the initially postulated universals (e.g. the absence of plural marking of pidgin nouns) were subsequently disconfirmed with evidence from more developed pidgins (e.g. Tok Pisin where we find *ol meri women* against *meri women, woman*).
- b) Since pidgins are created by adults after maturation (e.g. after the so-called critical age for language acquisition) one could not expect them to reveal the nature of the universals base. Universals could only be observed in the formation of first generation creoles, i.e. when a pidgin was converted into the first language of a new speech community. A strong advocate of this view is Bickerton (e.g. 1976).

As regards the first objection, it is now accepted that the basis for universals research should be pidgin development. Research findings point to a universal program of pidgin expansion, consisting of implicational universals of the type that B is not acquired before A. An actual example is plural marking. This will always appear with nouns in subject position referring to human beings, then be extended to other grammatical positions (direct object, indirect object, after prepositions in that order) and degrees of animateness.

These findings from pidgin expansion are supported by identical findings for the development of grammar in second-language learners (i.e. the grammar such learners use in spontaneous conversations rather than the formal classroom environment). It appears that the stages any learner of any language has to undergo are those already independently established for pidgin expansion (cf. Corder 1977). It must be pointed out, however, that pidgin expansion is subject, to a greater extent than creole formation, to external pressures and cultural borrowing. However, the comparison of a sufficient number of pidgins would soon filter out such situation-specific idiosyncrasies and leave the analyst with a universal program. More detailed comments on the biologically and psychologically-founded universals in pidgin development are given by Mühlhäusler (1982c).

5.1.1.5 Linguistic markedness

Related to the question of linguistic universals is that of markedness, as was indeed suggested by Givón in the quotation above. Marked categories are acquired late by children, lost early in aphasia and are therefore less likely to be found in the world's languages. The presence of a marked category always implies that of an unmarked one.

Markedness studies of real languages have suffered from the following deficiencies:

- a) Their results were often affected by cultural considerations.
- b) There is considerable conflict between markedness in different components of grammar. Thus, less markedness in the phonological component tends to promote greater markedness in the morphological one.

Pidgin languages do not suffer from such considerations since:

- a) They develop maximally independent from cultural pressure,⁴ especially when the original lexifier language is remote or removed (as has been the case with Tok Pisin for most of its history), and when speakers of many different languages are involved in communication via a pidgin.
- b) As in other types of second-language development, the grammar of Tok Pisin has been dominated for most of its history as a second language by considerations promoting the optimisation of perception. It thus affords valuable insights into morphological naturalness, as is illustrated by Mühlhäusler (1982c).

It thus emerges that the widespread equation:

unmarked = natural
marked = unnatural

can no longer be maintained. Instead, one should reserve naturalness for biologically and psychologically based phenomena and markedness for those which are caused or affected by cultural forces.

5.1.1.6 The relationship between form and function

A number of directions within linguistics, most notably sociolinguistics and stylistics, are concerned with the relationship between linguistic forms and speech functions. However, attempts to establish correlations between linguistic and non-linguistic parameters have usually run into considerable difficulties for one or more of the following reasons:

- a) It is widely ignored that the rate of change for linguistic and external parameters is not the same. Thus, correlations at different points in time will lead to very different results.
- b) Different functions are typically expressed by a single form and different forms may express a single function. This means that the assumption of form-function bi-uniqueness is not met.
- c) Most correlations are propensities rather than clear-cut cases.

Most of these problems have to do with the fact that traditional languages as spoken by adults possess only a very small number of clearly separable functions (Halliday 1974 macrofunctions) which are to be correlated with a very large number of forms. In the case of developing systems such as pidgins or child language the situation is different. Not only are there more distinguishable language functions (Halliday's microfunctions), there are also fewer forms to relate them to, especially in the incipient phases of development. Pidgin data thus constitute an ideal testground for the interdependency of forms and functions. However, any test must take into account that pidgins experience a constant expansion of formal and functional resources and that the correlations therefore must be of dynamic kind. A distinction must also be made between natural and cultural developments on both the formal and the functional side. One reason why previous correlationist studies have had so little success may lie in the indiscriminate mix of those two factors in the data studied.

There are many other areas where pidgin data bear on questions of linguistic theory. A number of them are discussed in a recent volume edited by Valdman and Highfield (1980), to which the interested reader is referred. The remainder of this chapter will deal with the narrower range of questions asked within pidgin and creole studies.

5.1.2 TOK PISIN AND PIDGIN AND CREOLE LINGUISTICS

5.1.2.1 Introduction

Not so many years ago the theoretical discussion of pidgins and creoles was restricted to two main topics: a) the explanation of their origin and b) their mixed character and subsequent potential contribution to a theory of language mixing. In recent years the relevance of both these questions has come under attack, the former from Bickerton (1976) who points out that the study of external origins fails to do justice to the psychological nature of these languages, the latter by Mühlhäusler (e.g. 1982) who claims that these languages are not mixed in any of the accepted senses (see subsection on substratum influence). As a consequence, a number of new issues have emerged which are now being widely discussed. Some of them will now be dealt with in greater detail.

5.1.2.2 Theories of pidgin origin

We can distinguish between the following explanations of pidgin formation:

- a) theories of Pidgin English origins
 - i) nautical English theory
 - ii) foreigner talk/baby talk theory
- b) general theories of pidgin formation
 - iii) relexification theory
 - iv) universalist theories

In addition we find theories which stress observed differences between pidgins. They include:

- v) common core theories
- vi) substratum theories

I will now discuss these proposals, though it would seem to be unreasonable to expect that any single cause is a sufficient explanation of the complex formation of a pidgin.

5.1.2.2.1 Nautical English

The idea that the origins of pidgin English can be traced back to the language of English sailors and whalers is a very popular one. An example of this folkview is given by F. Robertson in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, 23 October 1931, 'This Fascinating "Pidgin": pp.10-11

The recipe for the language is interesting: Take one sea full of British sailormen, hardy, daring, very British and profane, and leave it in a cool place for two days; extract their speech; then bring to boil and extract what speech remains. Add a coconut shell each of Chinese, Malay, German and Kanaka and bring to boil a hundred or so times, then season with a little war or two; add a few drops of Mission sauce and sprinkle with blackbird pepper and recruiter salt. Strain through Kanaka lips and serve with beer on boat days, or with undiluted Australian any other time.

Unfortunately, no documentation is given and this lack of data is also characteristic of other authors. An exception is Schellong (1934:87-98) who provides some interesting observations of the development of pidgin on board the Pacific trade vessels.

More serious attempts to trace back varieties of pidgin English to nautical English are those of Churchill (1911) and Reinecke (1937:534). The latter points out that

One of the most favourable situations for the formation of such dialects is found aboard merchant vessels which ply the seven seas and ship large numbers of foreign sailors - and indeed the seaman is a figure of the greatest importance in the creation of the more permanent makeshift tongues.

The role of nautical English also features prominently in the work of Hall (e.g. 1966:120). He claims that by applying the comparative method to pidgin English data, one will find that it

... is essentially an approximation of such features of lower-class seventeenth-century English speech as its speakers saw fit to use in their contacts with non-Europeans in the course of their trading, 'Blackbirding', and colonizing activities. If we have to assign a specific locality to our proto-pidgin-English, it will have to be somewhere in the lower reaches of the Thames, on either bank of the river, in the docks and settlements in such parts of London as Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Wapping, Shadwell and Limehouse, and in other English seaports such as Plymouth.

More recently Hancock (1976:23-36) has researched the language used on trade vessels and the results of his investigations may prove significant to the understanding of the history of Jargon English in the Pacific area.

It is unlikely that nautical English will account for more than a minority of structural characteristics of Tok Pisin, and it must further be remembered that its influence was felt mainly in the years before 1900. The main value of further studies will be their explanatory value for lexical diffusion in the Pacific (e.g. the travels of such words as *kalabus prison*, *bulmakau cattle* or *kapmari earth oven*).

5.1.2.2.2 Foreigner talk (FT) or baby-talk explanations

Recent years have seen a number of significant changes in the experts' opinions about second-language acquisition. These changes have also been reflected in the various writings on the origin of pidgins and creoles. Hypotheses concerning second-language learning and pidgin development are based on the following main theories:

- a) behaviourist learning theories
- b) mentalist learning theories
- c) theories which accommodate both behaviourist and mentalist principles

For the proponents of the behaviourist approach, the question of the origin of pidgin languages was relatively easy to answer. Since languages are learnt by imitation, pidgins were said to reflect the FT (or baby-talk) register used by speakers of the superordinate language when addressing uneducated foreigners. In addition to imitation of FT, interference (or substratum influence) was considered a second force in the development of pidgins. According to Bloomfield (1933:472):

Speakers of a lower language may make so little progress in learning the dominant speech, that the masters, in communicating with them, resort to 'baby-talk'. This 'baby-talk' is the master's imitation of the subjects' incorrect speech. There is reason to believe that it is by no means an exact imitation, and that some of its features are based not upon the subjects' mistakes but upon grammatical relations that exist within the upper language itself. The subject, in turn, deprived of the correct model, can do no better now than to acquire the simplified 'baby-talk' version of the upper language.

Under the impact of Chomsky's devastating review of Skinner (1964:547-578) there was a vigorous reaction against behaviourism as an explanation of language learning and the development of pidgins. Instead, it was now widely accepted that

humans were born with an innate capacity to construct well-formed grammars out of imperfect input data, and a similar case can be made for pidgin formation. In the wake of universalist views of human language capacity, the question of the linguistic input in the formative years of pidgin languages was pushed very much to the background.

Both the behaviourist and the purely mentalist approach to the problem of the origin of pidgin grammar were programmatic rather than empirical. Very little actual support has been adduced for either hypothesis. Developments in language learning and pidgin-creole theory in the 1970s have led to a more realistic approach to this problem, incorporating both behaviourist and mentalist views on first (cf. Vorster 1974) and second (e.g. Clyne 1978, Ferguson and DeBose 1977) language learning.

Some data on the type of reduced English used by expatriates are given in the chapter on the internal development (2.4). Such data illustrate one serious problem for imitation theories. Many of the constructions in the input are so variable and inconsistent that they provide little help for the incipient learner.⁵ A second problem with FT explanations is that the influence of reduced varieties of English is not spread evenly throughout the development of a pidgin. Thus:

- a) The linguistic impact of FT is restricted to the very early stages of pidgin development; once a pidgin has developed its own stable grammatical structures, FT (because of its very instability and lack of linguistic sophistication) cannot contribute anything to the further growth of a pidgin.
- b) As a pidgin develops, its mutual intelligibility with FT decreases.
- c) As a rule, FT will continue to be used by speakers of the superordinate language as long as they are in a secure and superior social position.

In conclusion it can be said that there is little doubt that foreigner talk versions of English were widely used in the areas where Tok Pisin originated and developed. However, the existence of such varieties tells us little about their impact on Tok Pisin as spoken by the local population.

This then takes us to the end of explanations stressing the English character of Pidgin English. Let me just briefly point out a number of seldom-stated consequences of such explanations:

- a) They allow for multiple origins and thus avoid the problems of accounting for the complex sociohistorical links between various pidgins.
- b) They perpetuate the myth that in culture-contact situations it is the dominant language (that of the dominant group) that 'wins', ignoring the multitude of sociolinguistic factors of real life contexts.
- c) By postulating that "the correspondences between ... Melanesian Pidgin and English ... are all-pervasive - that is they are found in all branches of linguistic structure" (Hall 1966:118) the principal task of pidginists is seen as that of spelling out the deviations of pidgins from their European model.

There appears to be no need to uphold the position outlined here any longer. Not only do we have ample data to disconfirm it, we also have models of pidgin formation and development to incorporate more adequate data. These will be outlined further on in this chapter.

5.1.2.2.3 General theories of pidgin formation

As more and more pidgins and creoles became known in the 1950s and 1960s, it became obvious that there were very noticeable structural similarities between varieties that shared few lexical properties. Again, explanations for this phenomenon must be seen against the background of prevailing attitudes towards language learning and transmission. Thus, relexification theory enabled linguists to maintain the idea of models being imitated, whereas universalist explanations could only become fashionable, in spite of the fact that they had been put forward as early as the 1880s by scholars such as Schuchardt and Coelho, once the pendulum of linguistic thought had swung towards mentalist explanations of language development.

5.1.2.2.4 Relexification theory

In its strongest form relexification theory claims that most European-based pidgins and creoles are related via a special process involving the maintenance of grammar and the replacement of lexical units. The grammar is said to be that of 16th century Pidgin Portuguese or possibly medieval Mediterranean Sabir. The possibility of relexification or, as Hall (1975:183) puts it, "the substitution of vocabulary items for others, with the maintenance of a stable syntactic base", was first suggested by Thompson (1961). Whereas Thompson suggests that the West African slaver's jargon (Pidgin Portuguese) (p.113):

... may have been the pattern for all the West Indian Creoles just as, in the Eastern and Pacific worlds Portuguese creole dialects, well known to Europeans of many nationalities may have provided the model for the two great branches of Pidgin English, China coast pidgin and Neo-Melanesian ...

Laycock (1970c:ix) merely considers the possibility that relexification of Pidgin Portuguese may have played some role in the development of Tok Pisin. This suggestion is dismissed by Hall (1975).

There are a number of arguments against Thompson's views of Tok Pisin development including:

- a) Structural dissimilarities between Tok Pisin and China coast Pidgin English.
- b) Historical considerations: since trade contacts with China were very weak, the first and pidgin-speaking Chinese arrived long after the stabilisation of the language.

In addition, and more importantly, there are a number of more general reasons why relexification explanations are seldom satisfactory:

- a) Relexification is a timeless concept and ignores the fact that pidgins are developing entities. It is not made clear at what point relexification should have occurred. Since there was no

stable pidgin grammar when contact with the outside world was greatest (the jargon stage) no syntactic base could have been maintained. It is true that Tok Pisin eventually developed grammatical features which are shared by many creoles. However, all available evidence points in the direction of independent development.

- b) Relexification theorists do not normally ask the important question, whether a given instance of relexification constitutes an abrupt break in linguistic tradition or not.

For this the analyst requires information as to the absolute length of time needed for relexification, communicative problems and changes in the composition of the pidgin-using community.

The difference between the two types of relexification can be illustrated by the following examples from Tok Pisin:

	gradual change		abrupt change
Stage 1	beten	<i>to pray</i>	binen <i>bee</i>
Stage 2	beten o prea	<i>to pray</i>	
Stage 3	prea	<i>to pray</i>	bi <i>bee</i>

In the first case (a) continuity is maintained by the joint use of both lexical items in a synonym pair. In the second case (b) the word for *bee* was introduced twice at different stages in the development of Tok Pisin by different speakers. The external explanation for this difference is that the discussion of non-traditional religion has been one of the central functions of Tok Pisin for most of its existence. On the other hand, there is no such tradition for talking about beekeeping. A comparison of arbitrary stages of the language, as practised in diachronic structuralist analyses would not capture this difference, though no descriptive problems would arise within a developmental framework as proposed by Bailey (1980b).

It seems likely that both types of relexification have played a role in the development of virtually all pidgins and creoles (for the latter only in the formative period), whereas languages that are spoken natively are subject almost exclusively to gradual relexification. To isolate the respective role of the two types of relexification in the development of Tok Pisin is an important precondition for determining the amount of linguistic continuity found in this language.

Such considerations as have just been discussed firmly indicate that relexification cannot explain the formation of Tok Pisin, though its role in subsequent development must be acknowledged.

5.1.2.2.5 Universals of pidginisation

The relevance of pidgins to the study of linguistic universals having already been discussed earlier in this chapter (section 5.1.1.2), I will restrict myself to the discussion of universals in pidgin formation.

The greatest advantage of universalist explanations is that they can account for the many structural similarities between historically unrelated pidgins and creoles. As a general principle, universals of language are appealed to whenever there is conflicting input and/or disruptions in transmission. It is also important that universals of pidginisation should be seen as a developmental

program rather than a pool of constructions from which individual pidgins can fish at random.

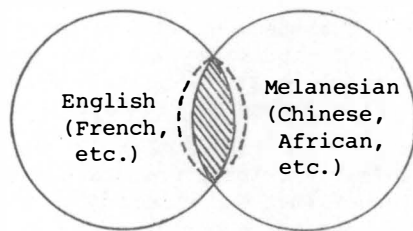
Another very important point is that appeal to linguistic universals is characteristic of social solutions to interlinguistic communication (i.e. when many speakers form a new language community) and is much less common in individual attempts. Thus, the very first stage of Tok Pisin's development, the jargon stage, is characterised by a number of different communicative strategies, whereas its stabilisation on the multilingual plantations and subsequent expansion in a multilingual context is shaped primarily by universal forces of pidgin expansion.

Comparative evidence on pidgin development is still scarce, and it is not inconceivable that the hypothesis of a single language independent expansion program is too restrictive to cover other pidgins. However, it would seem wise at this stage to put forward a strong claim and revise it as needed. The evidence available thus far certainly suggests that linguistic universals are the most satisfactory explanation of the origin of Tok Pisin structures.

A developmental universalist hypothesis has no difficulty in accounting for observed differences between 'synchronic' grammars of different pidgins; they are seen as reflecting different stages in pidgin development. However, before the emergence of developmental models such differences strongly militated against universalist proposals and in fact enhanced the plausibility of the last two major theories of pidgin formation which will now be discussed.

5.1.2.2.6 Common core theories

Among the various explanations of pidgin formation put forward by Robert A. Hall at various stages in his scholarly life, the idea that pidgin grammar is the common core between the grammars of the languages in contact attracted the largest number of followers. The structural resources of a pidgin language are seen by Hall (1961) as follows:



The structural resources of a pidgin language.
Hachured area represents the overlapping of
the 'parent' languages.

Such a view appeared highly plausible, especially in a climate where behaviourist learning theories prevailed. The shaded area can be interpreted as that of learning facilitation in contrastive analysis. Thus, pidgin learners take the easiest way out by concentrating on precisely those structures which are learnt with least effort. However, there are some very serious objections to such an explanation:

- a) The areas of facilitation may turn out to be those parts of grammar that have least communicative relevance.
- b) The common core model is totally static and ignores the fact that at different points of linguistic development a different core would obtain. This is particularly true in the case of Tok Pisin, one of whose 'parent' languages, Tolai, has undergone very significant changes over the last few decades.
- c) This view assumes that the speakers of the pidgin resulting from such language contacts are perfect bilinguals, i.e. have equal access to all systems involved. Obviously, what is common to two languages can only be established once they are fully known. At the time that Tok Pisin grammar developed, however, access to English was virtually unavailable to most of its speakers.
- d) There is a great deal of factual counterevidence. Tok Pisin had grammatical properties not shared by all systems in contact even very early in its linguistic development. The distinction between inclusive and exclusive first personal plural pronouns (yumi vs. mifela) is an example.

It is admitted that identification of constructions across the languages in contact played some role in the formation of Tok Pisin. Lexical mergers, for instance, have been discussed in the chapter on etymologising (2.6). A syntactic example is the development of the Tok Pisin predicate marker *i* out of the English anaphoric pronoun *he* and the predicate marker *i* of Tolai and related languages. It should be noted, however, that the eventual conditions for the use of the Tok Pisin predicate marker do not exactly match those of either Tolai or English. Thus, a common core explanation does not give the full picture even in such instances.

5.1.2.2.7 Substratum theories

Opinions as to the importance of substratum influence on the grammar of Tok Pisin vary, ranging from its assessment as a minor subsidiary force in its development (e.g. in Hall 1966) to the view that "its syntax ... has features of a Melanesian kind, and certainly bears but little external resemblance to that of either of its Western European forebears." (Wolfers 1971:413)

As I have pointed out elsewhere (Mühlhäusler 1982a), the field of substratum studies is in a state of disarray and there would seem to be little point in appealing to substratum influence when encountering an un-English construction in Tok Pisin until one knows what can be borrowed and to what extent borrowing leads to new structures which are not encountered in either of the languages in contact.

Let me illustrate the problems of establishing substratum influence with a practical example. Most attributive adjectives in Tok Pisin appear before the noun. A small group, however, appear after the noun (so-called postmodifiers), including:

botol bruk	<i>broken bottle</i>
tok giaman	<i>untrue talk</i>
banana mau	<i>ripe banana</i>
han kais	<i>left hand</i>
het kela	<i>bald head</i>

graun malumalu	<i>swampy ground</i>
ples nogut	<i>bad place</i>
wil pas	<i>stuck wheel</i>
tok tru	<i>true talk</i>
buk tambu	<i>holy book</i>

Wurm (1977b:515) suggests that Tok Pisin postmodifiers reflect substratum influence from Tolai:

The appearance of adjectives of different classes preceding or following the nouns which they determine attributively is a typical feature of the Austronesian Tolai which shows the phenomenon uniquely amongst New Guinea Austronesian languages. It may well have entered Pidgin from this source.

There are a number of problems with this suggestion, however. First, it is not clear what grammatical rule is involved here. If it was simply the rule that 'some but not all attributive adjectives appear postnominally', then one could point to a similar rule in English, manifested in, for instance:

money galore
president elect
court martial
 etc.

This view would then support a superstratum grammar view as well as a substratum and a common core view. We thus have to examine the adjectives affected in both English and Tolai. It soon becomes clear that those adjectives which appear postnominally in English do not do so in Tok Pisin.

Influence from Tolai could manifest itself in two ways, either in the form of a different word-order with a newly borrowed item of Tolai origin (thus conforming to the often held principle that "ordering of syntactic constituents can be borrowed only if the phonetic form of at least one member has also been borrowed") or in the form of calquing. Let us examine both possibilities against the historical evidence available.

The only items of Tolai origin in the list of postmodifiers are mau *ripe*⁶ and malumalu *swampy*. The former word is documented long before the latter and thus seems to be the best candidate for triggering off a new word-order rule in Tok Pisin. However, as pointed out by Mosel (1980), "Tolai mao *ripe* appears before the noun and not after it as in Tok Pisin". As regards malumalu, it does not belong to the group of Tolai adjectives which can appear postnominally and furthermore seems to be an intransitive verb for most Tolai speakers anyway.

The explanation that the new word-order is a result of direct substratum influence is thus disconfirmed by the data. The second possibility is indirect influence or calquing. This possibility is alluded to by Mosel (1980) who points out that both Tolai tuna *true* and Tok Pisin tru are postmodifiers (Tok Pisin has a variant trupela, however). The available historical evidence, however, suggests that tru was not the first adjective to appear postnominally. The only postnominal attributive adjective mentioned in Brenninkmeyer's 1924 grammar is nogut *bad*. He writes (p.10):

If the adjective appears after the noun, it becomes predicative and is linked to the subject by means of

he = *he is*, as in pig he fat, boy he nice ...

banana he 'mao', kaikai he no tan

Exceptions: no good which followed the noun without the he and save *intelligent, wise*.

Man no good
 Man save
 Boat no good

(This appears to have developed in the defective pidgin of
 beginning learners of the language.)

(translation mine)

The corresponding Tolai adjective *kaina bad* is only found before nouns, however. This clearly indicates that the rule emerged in Tok Pisin without any direct or indirect support from either Tolai or English. The fact that further adjectives were subjected to it subsequently may have something to do with substratum influence. What is important, however, is that in most cases, there are very significant differences between Tolai and Tok Pisin adjective ordering, as documented in detail by Mosel (1980).

One is reminded of Bickerton's more general statement on the role of substratum influence in pidgins and creoles (1979a:3):

Although there are here and there some sweeping similarities
 which tease you and provoke you to go on with the search,
 you never find any language which has quite the same kinds
 of structures as the creole language does.

This statement is borne out by Mosel's thorough investigation into structural influences of Tolai on Tok Pisin (1980). Some of her conclusions on individual parts of grammar are of relevance to the present discussion:

a) on phonology (p.23)

3. Tok Pisin phonology is not identical with Tolai phonology. Otherwise one would expect, that Tolai loanwords have been retained in their original form and that English loanwords have been regularly adapted to Tolai phonology. But the Tolais' influence on the development of Tok Pisin was not as strong as to impose their phonology on Tok Pisin. 4. Furthermore, the Tok Pisin phoneme system is not so much reduced as to contain only those phonemes which are common to all substratum languages involved in its development; for the development of Tok Pisin has been and still is a constant process determined by mutual learning of its speakers from each other. Thus, for instance, the phoneme /s/, which is absent in Tolai, has been introduced as a separate phoneme in the Tolais' pidgin. Secondly, Tok Pisin exhibits the distinction between lax and tense vowels, which is absent in Patpatar-Tolai languages, whereas vowel length, which is distinctive in Patpatar-Tolai languages, is not distinctive in Tok Pisin.

b) on the number system (p.63)

Though in Tok Pisin and the Patpatar-Tolai languages the system of the cardinal numbers is structured according to the same principle, one should be careful not to regard this as a convincing proof for substratum influence. For this kind of decimal system is so simple, that one need not to take substratum influence into account to explain its development.

c) on reduplication (p.109)

The divergencies between Tolai and Tok Pisin suggest that the general idea underlying reduplication in Tolai on the one hand and in Tok Pisin on the other is different. Apart from intensifying reduplication, in Tolai all instances of the second type of reduplication have in common that they express some kind of imperfective aspect, while in Tok Pisin the only function of word level reduplication is to signal some notion of plurality. For that very reason neither durative nor habitual nor continuous action (which cannot be understood as actions consisting of a number of similar actions) are expressed by reduplicated verbs in Tok Pisin. Both concepts are related and overlap insofar as they both include repeated action. Thus substratum influence of Tolai upon Tok Pisin can be excluded as far as verbal reduplication is concerned.

d) on the verb phrase (pp.126-127)

The only structural features shared by Tok Pisin and Tolai verbal phrases are:

1. the use of an introductory particle, i.e. the use of the predicate marker in Tok Pisin and the subject marker in Tolai.
2. the possibility of verbal chaining.

These similarities are rather marginal in comparison with the divergencies between Tolai and Tok Pisin, and since the use of the predicate marker in Tok Pisin can be traced back to ancient Bichelamar, it is only verbal chaining that may have resulted from substratum influence (cf. p.95ff).

Divergencies between Tok Pisin and Tolai are found in

1. the meaning of verbal phrases of the structure
pm/sm + NP,
2. the position of the negative particle,
3. the tense and aspect marker system,
4. the expression of the passive voice,
5. the expression of wish, competence, ability, obligation and permission.

e) on sentence structure (pp.134-135)

As shown in the table below, there are only a few types of sentences which show the same structure both in Tok Pisin and Tolai.

Sentence type

1. Non-verbal declarative sentences

(1) existential sentences	-
(2) equative sentences	-
(3) locational sentences	-
verbal declarative sentences	
(1) stative sentences	-
(2) intransitive sentences	+
(3) transitive sentences	+
(4) descriptive sentences	+
(5) equative sentences	- (+)
(6) subjectless sentences	-

2. Interrogative sentences

+

3. Imperative sentences

+

- = this sentence type has not the same structure in Tolai and Tok Pisin
- + = this sentence type has the same structure in Tolai and Tok Pisin
- (+) = this sentence type has the same structure in Tolai and Tok Pisin in a very few cases.

The few cases in which Tolai and Tok Pisin sentence structure coincide cannot serve as a proof of substratum influence. For the structure of interrogative and imperative sentences in Tok Pisin can also be explained as the result of simplification of English sentence structure; and the structure of intransitive, transitive and descriptive sentences is similar to that of the corresponding English sentences as well.

It should be remembered that Mosel's analysis is a synchronic comparison of present-day Tok Pisin and Tolai. This means that some of the similarities found (and there are not many) are the result of Tolai having been influenced by Tok Pisin and Tok Pisin's having independently developed constructions which look like corresponding Tolai constructions. An example are de-adjectivised causatives, discussed by Mühlhäusler (1979d), and verbal chaining, or verb serialisation. The latter construction is felt to be so un-English by many linguists, that its only possible source is a substratum language. Since the discussion of verb serialisation continues to occupy a prominent place in pidgin and creole theorising I will look at the Tok Pisin evidence in more detail.

Tok Pisin shares verb serialisation with many other pidgins and creoles, some of them apparently historically unrelated. Thus, the presence of verb serialisation in the West Indian creoles is often traced back to African influence, most recently (1982:113) in Holm's review of Bickerton 1981. Holm writes:

An important case for substratum influence is the existence of a variety of serial verb constructions in many West African languages like Yoruba as well as in the creoles spoken by the descendants of Africans:

Yoruba	ó	fi	̀be	gé	ērā
Krio	i	tek	n f	čēčē	dī bif
Djuka	a	teke	nēfi	koti	a meti

literally 'he take knife cut the meat'

i.e. *He cuts the meat with a knife* (Huttar 1975). Many such constructions are found across lexical boundaries in both creole and African languages, pointing to widespread features in the syntax of many African languages which survived in the creoles. However, for the sake of his argument Bickerton claims that "creoles and West African languages invented verb serialization independently, but for slightly different reasons" (p.120). In reference to the examples from Huttar 1975 quoted above, he asserts that it is impossible to tell whether Saramaccan has this kind of serialization, although the present balance of evidence seems to be against it. Saramaccan is well known as being, among the three Surinam creoles (or, for that matter, among all the Caribbean creoles), the one which best preserves African lexical and phonological characteristics This being so, and if serial constructions also reflect African influence, one would expect to find that SA [Saramaccan] had more such constructions than

DJ [Djuka] and SR [Sranan], rather than the reverse There is no explanation for the pattern in terms of substrate influence. Aside from Bickerton's puzzling position that would seem to allow for substrate influence on the lexical and phonological levels but not on the syntactic level, there is the more serious implication that Saramaccan lacks serial verb construction. Many Saramaccan serial verb constructions are in fact given in the Huttar paper which Bickerton quotes and lists in his bibliography.

The examples given by Holm can easily be translated into present-day Tok Pisin by simple relexification as in *em i kisim naip katim mit he cut the meat with a knife*. The sources for such apparent similarities in the Atlantic and Pacific pidgins and creoles have been discussed by Hall (1966:76ff). He suggests that (p.78):

South Seas pidgin expressions may have originated independently of those that have an undoubtedly African base; or they may have been introduced into the South Seas by sailors and traders who had picked them up directly or indirectly from African contacts.

i.e. both explanations are compatible with substratum explanations. However, evidence from the historical development of Tok Pisin makes them implausible.

- a) It must be noted that verb chaining in Tok Pisin is a very recent phenomenon. It became widely used only after the Second World War, i.e. long after it could have been borrowed from South Seas traders and sailors (in whose language it appears to be generally absent) and a long time after intensive contact with Tolai had discontinued.
- b) According to Mosel (1980), some structural correspondences between Tok Pisin and Tolai verbal chaining can be found, though in the majority of cases, there are significant differences. Some of the most productive patterns of Tok Pisin verb chaining have no counterpart in Tolai. Again, it must be remembered that most of them appeared once contact with Tolai had become unimportant.

There appears to be a good reason why substratum influence is not very likely in verb chaining in pidgins and creoles. Utterances containing more than one verb are of greater complexity than single verb utterances and therefore appear later in the development of pidgins. When contact with an influential substratum language is greatest, the language is simply not ready to borrow such complex structures, but when verb chaining does become needed (because of the lack of prepositions) the substratum language is no longer available. This fact is generally ignored by linguists who compare abstract static systems rather than developments of pidgins and creoles. In spite of the fact that this is still common practice, it must be stated categorically that no comparison between the endpoints of pidgin development with alleged sub- or superstratum languages can yield any reliable information as to their role in pidgin formation.

5.1.2.3 Theories of origin: conclusions

- a) The role of the various factors involved in shaping Tok Pisin can only be assessed within a developmental framework. As has

been illustrated in the chapter on the internal growth of the language (2.4), different forces are operative at different stages of its linguistic development.

- b) No single cause explanation can adequately account for the complexities of Tok Pisin's development. However, it appears that the most important and most lasting single force involved is a universally motivated program for second-language development. Since the evidence from the many languages in contact tends to be conflicting, the only solution for many areas of grammaticalisation lies in linguistic universals.
- c) It appears that a construction has a better chance of being adopted if it is supported by a conspiracy of developmental forces. Common core solutions or substratum influence have a better chance of being adopted if they also are in agreement with universal tendencies of development. This means that, in many cases, individual factors will fail to give a sufficient account.

5.1.3 DISCONTINUITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOK PISIN

5.1.3.1 General remarks

Even a cursory examination of the descriptive and theoretical literature on pidgins and creoles will reveal a strange preoccupation with historical continuity. Given the widespread acceptance of the uniformitarian principle in historical linguistics and the tendency to closely correlate linguistics with well-defined geographic or social entities, this comes as no surprise. The development of pidgins and creoles, in spite of its obvious special character, is treated in the same way as language change resulting from diffusion. Three common strategies in the treatment of these languages are:

- a) To ignore or play down phenomena other than internal development so as to be able to postulate 'normal' family trees (e.g. Hall 1961:413-415).
- b) To postulate special kinds of relationships such as relexification, whilst still using the family tree model.
- c) To apply general developmental principles to the expansion of pidgins and creoles (some examples are discussed by Sankoff 1979:23-47).

By the use of such strategies the evidence from pidgin and creole development comes to support allegedly-normal principles of language development rather than refuting them. Again, this is understandable; pidginists and creolists have been eager to demonstrate that their languages are normal members of the community of languages and hence legitimate topics for linguistic study. One of the standard arguments is that these languages are just quantitatively different. Pidgins, in particular, are languages stripped to the bare essentials and hence ideal representatives of human language. A final reason for seeking historical continuity in pidgins and creoles is their speakers' desire to trace their linguistic and social roots. Thus, Papuan Pidgin English is traced back to an old trade language and renamed Hiri Motu, Cameroonian Pidgin English is traced back to early West-African contact languages, and so forth.

Such are the reasons for seeing pidgin and creole development as a) proceeding from less complex to more complex systems, and b) taking place within a well-defined geographic area and speech community. However, the view that we are dealing with stable communities of speakers and stable patterns of transmission can easily be falsified if one considers the external conditions which led to the development of these languages. An important consideration, pointed out by Hall (1962:151), is that the very existence of a pidgin is a function of its usefulness as a second language:

Pidginized languages normally come into existence for a specific reason, last just as long as the situation which called them into being, and then go quickly out of use. Only if the situation changes radically does such a language acquire a longer lease on life and, by becoming creolized, pass over to the status of a 'normal' language. From this point of view, although even a pidginized language is not a true organism, we can speak of pidgins as having 'life cycles', and of their being 'inherently weak' in that, not their linguistic structure, but their social standing is normally not hardy enough to enable them to be used outside of their original context.

Put differently, the degree of linguistic sophistication and the functional scope of a pidgin are highly sensitive to external factors. In view of this, one cannot expect that the development of a given pidgin will always proceed from an initial simple jargon to a more complex stage and extended pidgin followed by either linguistic decline or creolisation. Instead, within one and the same geographic area, a pidgin can, rapidly, change its linguistic and social nature, becoming useless and hence structurally reduced only to be subsequently revived.

One of the most fundamental questions of historical linguistics is: "In what sense is it possible for a language to undergo changes of the kind familiar from the historical grammars, and yet remain the same language?" (Harris 1977: 17). Historical linguists working with 'normal' languages have chosen either to ignore the problem or to propose a number of ad hoc solutions, including the appeal to continuity of speech communities, intelligibility and geographic boundedness. More recently, those working on the description of linguistic continua have been able to show that historical continuity involves the addition of low level rules to a grammar and that the development from internal resources can be pictured as a continuum composed of implicationally patterned rules.

Occasional mention is made of discontinuities between grammars, but most of these discontinuities are seen to be the result of minor discrepancies between the grammars of successive generations rather than sudden breaks in a linguistic tradition. That the problem of identity from stage to stage is of a very different dimension when it comes to the description of pidgins and creoles has been stated by a number of observers, particularly concisely by Hoenigswald (1971:476):

More than in the case of natural languages one expects to run into problems of identity from stage to stage. It is difficult enough to be quite sure, both in theory and in practice, when a given ordinary language is a descendant (under change) rather than a collateral relative of a given older language. It has been said that to discover a line of descent is to discriminate what has gotten handed down from mother to infant over the generations from what has

passed through other channels. If this is true, the pidgins, with their special mechanism of exclusively secondary transmission () should indeed be troublesome to place on a family tree. And if it is further the case that pidgins are typically born and then again dropped from use in shortlived bursts of activity, the whole linear notion of 'gradual' change is not even a superficially useful approximation to the truth.

Such problems will now be illustrated with a historical sketch of the development of Tok Pisin, highlighting disruptions in social and linguistic patterns. This sketch is meant to be supplementary to the more detailed accounts of the internal and external histories of the language given elsewhere in this volume.

5.1.3.2 Discontinuities in the history of Tok Pisin

The earliest accounts of Pidgin English in the area of present-day Papua New Guinea date from the 1860s and 1870s when whalers and traders (most of them based in Samoa) entered into brief contacts with the indigenes of New Ireland, New Britain and the Duke-of-York Archipelago. The language samples I have obtained suggest a great deal of variation in this Jargon English, i.e. it constituted individual attempts of a small number of islanders to communicate with their visitors rather than a socially institutionalised pidgin language. The use of these unstable varieties was dependent on the presence of Europeans. Considering the rapid turnover of personnel and the short average life of the trading posts, the life-span of each of these jargons must have been rather limited - a possible exception being the Duke-of-York Archipelago, where there may have been a more gradual transition to a stable pidgin. In any case, most of the earlier jargons had probably disappeared when Germany proclaimed New Guinea a colony and thus laid the foundations for more permanent culture contact.

Large-scale contacts between Europeans and New Guineans began around 1880 when increasing numbers of islanders were recruited for the German plantations in Samoa. By about 1890 about 1,000 had been returned from Samoa, bringing with them a better knowledge of European ways and, above all, a stable pidgin, Samoan Plantation Pidgin English, which they had learnt during their indenture. There was indeed a very rapid increase in the number of Pidgin English speakers soon after the inception of the Samoan labour trade.

Schuchardt (1979:20) reports on a letter written to him by Hernsheim, one of the leading traders in this area in 1883:

In New Britain, where, according to his information, no native understood any European language some seven years ago, now everyone, particularly the children, speaks the English in question, sometimes quite fluently. He has often heard natives make use of this idiom among themselves when they are talking about Whites or their possessions.

A firm pattern of language transmission soon became established. Young men between the ages of 16 and 20 went to a plantation, mainly to Samoa before 1900 and increasingly to plantations in other parts of German New Guinea thereafter. On their return they brought with them a good knowledge of Tok Pisin (as the stabilised plantation language deserves to be called), the rudiments of which they taught to the next generation of young men. The social functions of the

language were equally well defined. It was used primarily as a means of vertical communication between Europeans and Papua New Guineans, and secondarily to talk about European social and economic innovations, particularly those relating to the plantation economy. Hence the name Tok Vaitiman, which was used to refer to Tok Pisin until the mid-1920s.

The fact that English was withdrawn as a target language between 1884 and 1914 had two principal consequences. It greatly sped up the process of stabilisation of Tok Pisin as a system separate from English and it led to incipient relexification with German words. By 1920 up to about 25% of the 1,000 word lexical inventory was of German origin (cf. Mühlhäusler 1979c:199-207). Both trends were reversed with the departure of the Germans and their replacement by Australian settlers and administrators. As a result, in those areas where contact with Europeans was most pronounced, Tok Pisin became increasingly anglicised and unstable, as can be seen from many contemporary complaints, for instance the following one in the *Rabaul Times* of 8 November 1935:

Unfortunately, ever since the Australian occupation of New Guinea, the correct pidgin-English has been steadily undergoing a process of mutilation and corruption, until at this present stage - after over twenty years of barbarous treatment - pidgin-English has become almost unrecognizable and in many instances is unintelligible to the native.

At the same time, in the more isolated rural areas, Tok Pisin became firmly established as an indigenous lingua franca, experiencing considerable structural and functional expansion. It was used as the medium of intercommunication by speakers of many hundred vernaculars, which, among other things, meant that the role of Tok Pisin's original substratum languages, the closely related languages of the Blanche Bay-Duke-of-York and New Ireland area, became increasingly unimportant. The learning age dropped from 18+ to 12 and younger, though the plantations continued to function as the 'high schools' for linguistic proficiency in Tok Pisin. As regards its social functions, it had developed into a means of expressing all aspects of the newly emerged contact culture, as characterised in Mead's valuable article of 1931. Note that Tok Pisin is now referred to as Tok Boi, 'the language of the indigene in European employment'.

The events of the Second World War brought an end to the situation just outlined. The breakdown of the Australian administration, the missions and the plantation economy, accompanied by large-scale population displacement, led to an almost total disruption of the traditional forms of language transmission. As a result, a whole generation of Papua New Guineans grew up with little or no knowledge of Tok Pisin. Mead (1956:371) remarks:

These young men in their early twenties represent a particularly difficult problem because the war cut them off from both the continuing teaching they would have received from the Mission and from the ordinary sort of long-term work for the European in which their elders had been schooled. They were just reaching adolescence when the Japanese occupation started, and very few were old enough to do much work for the Americans. Their knowledge of Neo-Melanesian is inferior to that of the older men and they do not have the same sense of free communication with Europeans which their elders learned as work boys.

Similar observations are made by Orken (1954:863) about the Tolai people of the Rabaul-Kokopo area, once the centre for the use of Tok Pisin:

I have been working in the immediate vicinity of Rabaul and Kokopo for over two years now and I am convinced that whatever was the situation pre-war, most of the children and women, and a considerable number of young males now have but a rudimentary knowledge of Pidgin and consequently use it very sparingly in their village life.

The resumption of Australian control in 1945 did not mean a return to old patterns. Instead, an ambitious program for the economic and educational progress of the country was pursued. As well as an increasing urbanisation and social and geographic mobility, these policies meant formal instruction in the English language for a large number of the population, even in the more remote areas. The result was the development, at least partly independent of the earlier tradition of Tok Pisin, of a new anglicised variety of the language, a kind of post-pidgin continuum, discussed first by Hall (1955b:91-109). Its main result is the crystallisation of a separate sociolect, Urban Pidgin (cf. Mühlhäusler 1979c:140-153 and 288-308), which is only partially intelligible to speakers of the traditional rural Tok Pisin.

The influence of Australian English culture and language receded somewhat in the years immediately prior to independence (1970 to 1976). During this period, Tok Pisin was adopted as the language of nationalism and its independence from English was stressed, a fact reflected in the increasing use of the name Tok Pisin.

Most recently, yet another significant change has occurred. Instead of becoming a strongly centralised nation, independent Papua New Guinea is characterised by strong regionalism, reflected in powerful regional governments. In some areas, Tok Pisin is being superseded by local *lingue franche* and Laycock (1982b) predicts social and linguistic compartmentalisation of the language, including its structural decline in some areas.

Finally, a few words must be said about creolisation. Contrary to our initial more abstract model, which postulates a steady increase in linguistic sophistication in Tok Pisin up to the point of creolisation, one can observe a number of forces diminishing the achievements of first generation creole speakers. Because even creolised Tok Pisin has to be used in an environment of largely second-language speakers, some of the more drastic changes made by children developing the creole are given up once they have to communicate in an adult community. In some areas, where the usefulness of first-language Tok Pisin is particularly low, e.g. in the case of Rambutyo Island discussed by Mühlhäusler (1977b:569), one can observe considerable regression along the developmental dimension. Creolisation followed by repidginisation is also a recognised force in the development of West African Pidgin English (cf. Todd 1979) and in many West Indian creoles.

This very sketchy survey of the external conditions underlying the structural development of Tok Pisin makes it clear that, during a timespan of little more than 100 years, we find:

- a) A number of significant breaks in the composition of the speech community, including the decline in the importance of European speakers, the severing of links with Samoa, the decline of the plantations and compartmentalisation into regional and social varieties.
- b) Several changes in the substratum and superstratum languages, including the change from English to German and back to English,

the decline of Tolai and, a fact which I have not discussed in this section, the growing importance of speakers of non-Melanesian languages, in particular Highlanders.

- c) A number of changes in the social functions, mainly a development from a master-servant language to an indigenous lingua franca to either regional lingua franca or creole.

All these external factors have left traces in the linguistic development of Tok Pisin and it is possible to identify at least three qualitatively different and mutually barely intelligible varieties.

5.1.3.3 Discontinuity: conclusions

We are led to conclude that many of the conventional ideas about linguistic continuity do not apply to languages such as Tok Pisin. Rather, we find:

- a) Pidgins and creoles typically develop in the context of social upheaval and population displacement. Although such breaks are perhaps greatest in the initial formative period of pidgins and creoles, and while I agree with Sankoff (1979:24) that "the plantation system is so crucial because it was unique in creating the catastrophic break in linguistic tradition that is unparalleled", changes in the external setting can and often do occur repeatedly at different stages of development.
- b) Pidgins and creoles are geographically highly mobile, as they tend to accompany population movements. Labels such as West African Pidgin English or New Guinea Pidgin English can therefore be very misleading, since being spoken in one geographic location at two different points in time does not warrant the assumption of historical continuity in the case of a pidgin.
- c) The frequent disruptions of established patterns of transmission of pidgins and creoles tend to lead to either language replacement or qualitative changes between different historical stages. An example is the occurrence of pidginisation followed by creolisation followed by repidginisation.
- d) Observations about the sociohistorical context of pidginisation and creolisation suggest that an understanding of continuity and discreteness of the external development of such languages should take methodological precedence over a description of their linguistic development.
- e) As a consequence of (c), one finds that the notion of earlier and later rules underlying the implicational patterns of Baileyan variation grammars can only apply to stable self-contained periods of development. Implicational scaling can furthermore provide a powerful heuristic tool in that gaps, breaks and reversals of perceived patterns can support the extralinguistic evidence concerning breaks in the continuity of transmission.

5.1.4 THE COMPARATIVE METHOD IN PIDGIN AND CREOLE STUDIES

5.1.4.1 Introduction

Questions regarding the relationship between various pidgins and creoles, their relationship to substratum languages and the reconstruction of proto-pidgins have occupied a prominent place in pidgin and creole linguistics for a long time. Most workers on these topics employ the comparative method, i.e. they look for systematic correspondences in the phonological, morphological, syntactic and core-lexical levels of pidgins and creoles, and they construct family trees depicting the linguistic (or genetic) interrelationships between these languages. Some recent such studies on Pacific pidgins include those of Clark (1977) and Dutton (1980).

That many traditional assumptions about linguistic change do not apply in the case of pidgins and creoles has already been pointed out in this volume (e.g. in the chapters on internal history (2.4), and etymologising (2.6), as well as in the section on discontinuity in the present chapter). However, in order to give a complete argument some of my previous points will be briefly repeated in the discussion which follows.

The most important corollary assumptions held by those who apply the comparative method to pidgins and creoles are, in the words of Hall (1966:115):

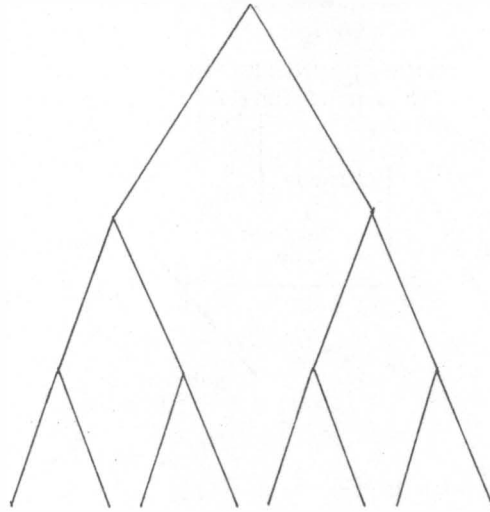
- a) that among languages related through having come from a common source, the process of differentiation has always been gradual; and
- b) that, among such languages, the relationship has always been 'pure', that is, there has been little or no introduction of structural patterns (...) from any source outside the language family concerned.

Hall argues that such corollaries are too restrictive and that neither gradualness nor structural purity are fully present in pidgins and creoles, a point which is not controversial. He continues to argue, however, that the family tree model is nevertheless applicable to these languages, and this, I feel, is highly controversial. I therefore propose to examine the notion of family trees in the light of Hall's defence of the comparative method.

5.1.4.2 Family tree relationships

Family trees in everyday life have one surprising property: they allow one to trace back only one of the two sexes of ancestors. Thus, whereas it is perfectly possible to trace one's grandfather's grandfather's greatgrandfather, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to do the same for one's grandmother's grandmother's greatgrandmother. In other words, family trees are cultural interpretations or artifacts rather than objective mirrors of reality (particularly since biological fatherhood is much more difficult to prove than biological motherhood).

Family tree models of languages are similarly selective. It is assumed that languages typically develop by diffusion, more particularly inheritance, which means diffusion from one generation to another. Accordingly, later languages are traced back to one single earlier language directly higher up in a family tree, which in turn is traced back to a single node, until the presumed ancestral language is reached. The familiar form of the family tree model thus is as follows:



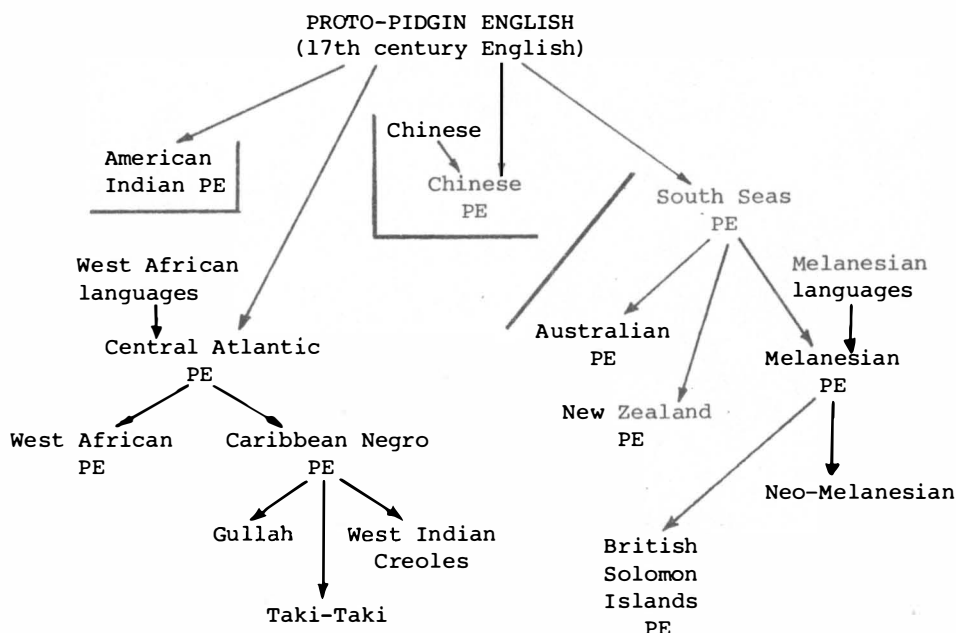
The applicability of such a family tree model to pidgins and creoles is defended by Hall (1966:117ff) as follows:

But even though all languages are 'mixed', some - to paraphrase Orwell's famous expression - are more 'mixed' than others. We are left with the question whether, in fact, the more mixed languages are so mixed as to invalidate the assumption of genetic relationship, particularly as applied to languages of whose history we have no detailed knowledge. In theory, a language might conceivably combine elements from two or more sources so that they were perfectly evenly balanced and so that they would be, therefore, unclassifiable according to our customary assumption. Yet, in practice, such a condition of perfect balance is never found - not even in any of the pidgins and creoles that have been investigated in more detail than say, Schuchardt or Jespersen were able to do, and not even with their (admittedly extensive) carry-overs, in structure as well as vocabulary, from Chinese, Melanesian, African, or other substrata. In Haitian Creole, the proportion of French structure is both greater and more fundamental than that of African-type structure; and the same is true of Chinese Pidgin English, Neo-Melanesian, Sranan, Gullah, etc., in relation to English and the various substrata involved.

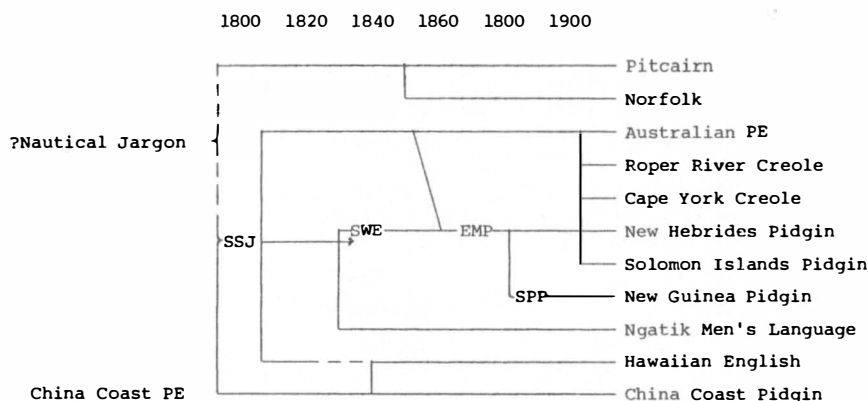
and (p.118)

Even with the data available at present, it is evident that the ancestral form of any given group of related pidgins and creoles can be reconstructed, using the accepted techniques of comparative linguistics, and that the 'proto-pidgin' which we reconstruct in this way shows a reasonable correspondence to certain features of the 'source' language which we already know from other materials.

An actual tree illustrating these views is given by Hall (1961:414):



A more detailed tree of Pidgin English in the Pacific, taking into consideration some of the complex interrelationships between Melanesian and other varieties of Pidgin English is given by Clark (1980:48):



SSJ = South Seas Jargon (Polynesia and Micronesia)

SWE = Sandalwood English (New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides)

EMP = Early Melanesian Pidgin (New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, Queensland, Fiji)

SPP = Samoan Plantation Pidgin

(For the sake of simplicity, the positions of vernacular languages have not been shown.)

Historical relations indicated by comparative and documentary evidence

While such family trees appear neat and possess a certain plausibility, I feel that they are grossly misleading.

The principal task of those who wish to find out about pidgin origins and relationships would seem to be to discover whether features are shared because of:

- a) common historical links
- b) identical lexifier languages
- c) (genetically closely related) substratum languages
- d) universal principles of pidgin development
- e) accidental factors.

It is a well-known fact that shared links with English pose many special problems. For instance, they necessitate the development of a special set of lexical items for comparative purposes which bears little similarity to the Swadesh list commonly used in comparative work. The list of lexical and grammatical features used by Clark (1980) looks as follows:

	New Guinea	Solomons	New Hebrides	Cape York
<i>all</i> ₁	ol	-	ol	ol
<i>all</i> ₂	ol	-	ol	ol
<i>all same</i>	olsem	olsem	olsem	olseim
<i>all together</i>	olgeta	olketa	olgeta	olgeta
<i>along</i> ₁	-	-	-	lo(ng),la
<i>along</i> ₂	long	lo(ng(o))	long	lo(ng),la
<i>been</i>	bin	bin	bin	bi(n)
<i>belong</i>	bilang	blong	blong	blo(ng),bla
<i>bullamacow</i>	bulmakau	bulumakau	bulamakao	(bullamacow)
<i>by and by</i>	(ba(i)m)bai	baebae	bambae	baimbai
<i>catch</i>	kis-im	kas-em	kas-em	kech-im
<i>fellow</i> ₁	-pela	-fala	-fala	-
<i>fellow</i> ₂	-pela	-fala	-fala	-pela
<i>got</i>	gat	gar-em	gat	gat
<i>he</i>	i	i	i	i
<i>him</i>	-im	-im,-em,-m	-im,-um,-em	-i(m)
<i>kaikai</i>	kaikai	kaikai	kakae	kaikai
<i>kill</i>	kil-im	kil-im	kil-im	-
<i>man bush</i>	+	+	+	-
<i>piccaninny</i>	pikinini	pikinini	pikinini	pikanini
<i>pigeon</i>	pisin	pisin	pijin	(pigeon)
<i>plenty</i>	planti,plenti	plande	plante	plenti
<i>savvy</i>	save	save	save	savi
<i>something</i>	samting	samting	samting	-
<i>stop</i>	stap	stap	stap	stap
<i>suppose</i>	s(a)pos	sapos	sipos	(suppose)
<i>too much</i>	tumas	tumas	tumas	tumach
<i>what name</i>	wanem	wanem	wanem	wanim
<i>where</i>	-	wea	we	wee
<i>you me</i>	yumi	yumi	yumi	yumi

(continued overleaf)

	Roper River	Norfolk	Hawaiian	China Coast
<i>all</i> ₁	al	-	-	-
<i>all</i> ₂	-	-	-	-
<i>all same</i>	-	-	o:r se:m	ólsem
<i>all together</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>along</i> ₁	la(nga)	lɔŋ(f)ə	-	(lɔŋ)
<i>along</i> ₂	la(nga)	-	-	-
<i>been</i>	bin	bIn	bin	-
<i>belong</i>	bla(nga)	-	-	(b(ə)lórj)
<i>bullamacow</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>by and by</i>	baymbay	bɛmbɛə	baimbai	bajmbaj
<i>catch</i>	gej-im	-	(catch)	kæčI
<i>fellow</i> ₁	-bala	-	(fellow)	(-fɛlə)
<i>fellow</i> ₂	-(m)bala	-	-	-
<i>got</i>	gat	gAt	gott,gatto	læv gat
<i>he</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>him</i>	-im,-um	-	-	(-əm)
<i>kaikai</i>	kaikai	-	-	-
<i>kill</i>	gil-im	-	-	-
<i>man bush</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>piccaninny</i>	biginini	-	-	-
<i>pigeon</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>plenty</i>	-	plente,plænte	purenti:	plenti
<i>savvy</i>	jabi	-	sabe	sævi
<i>something</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>stop</i>	-	-	stopp	stap
<i>suppose</i>	buji,buñi	səpos(ɛn)	sapo:z	səpōs
<i>too much</i>	dumaj(i)	tu	to: mačč	tūmæčI
<i>what name</i>	wanim,wanem	-	-	-
<i>where</i>	(weya)	-	-	-
<i>you me</i>	yunmi	-	-	-

Distribution of comparative features

While Clark avoids the problems associated with points a-c and e, he has considerable problems with universals of pidgin development, as he himself acknowledges. These difficulties are enhanced by the insufficient attention he gives to changes over time and the time dimension in general. Let us look at the problem in more detail in relation to two particular items: a) the pluraliser *all* (ol) and the relativiser *where* (we). Clark's discussion of *all* (1980:46-47) is more satisfactory as some historical information is given. He suggests that the plural marker *all*₂ is derived from an earlier third person plural pronoun *all*₁. *all*₂ is not documented for Australia and the Solomons. Later, Clark suggests a complication arising from the fact that the pluraliser *all* is documented before the third person plural pronoun *all* (p.47):

An equally difficult and related problem is the relation between *all*₁, *all*₂ and *all together*. If *all* was in fact in use as a pluralizer as early as the sandalwood period, it cannot very well have derived from the pronominal *all* as suggested earlier. If anything, the opposite direction would be indicated. Moreover, *all together* as plural pronoun considerably antedates *all*₁:

- (56) [European speaker, New Hebrides, 1877] '... suppose
you let him some boy go along a Queensland, we buy

him altogether, my word, good fellow.' (Giles 1968: 41n.)

- (57) [Solomons, 1884] 'What for Government Agent no let boat's crew help 'em boys, when altogether want go Queensland?' (Rannie 1912:46)

Such examples weigh against the earlier suggestion that *all* was the original pronoun and the NH and SI *all together* an innovation. But these problems can only be clarified by a more detailed study of records after 1885.

Such a study has been carried out by Mühlhäusler (1981a), which included additional evidence from Papuan Pidgin English and Queensland Kanaka English. From my data some interesting findings emerge:

- a) It appears that virtually all the pidgins under investigation have encoded the plural marker by means of *all*₂ at some point in their development. Papuan Pidgin English exhibits this feature in the data before 1890 but in later texts *oltugeta* is used instead. Torres Straits Pidgin (closely related to Clark's Cape York Pidgin), on the other hand, began with *oltugeta* in the 1890s and only developed an *ol* plural in the 1970s. A static comparison of present-day Torres Straits Pidgin (Broken) or Cape York Pidgin with Tok Pisin data would seem to wrongly suggest a shared linguistic tradition.
- b) In Tok Pisin's predecessor Samoan Plantation Pidgin nominal plurals were signalled variably (if at all) by means of *plenti*, *all*₂ and *oltugeta*, though it appears that *ol* was in the process of replacing the other possibilities. I feel that similar variability was also of importance in other varieties of Pidgin English such as appear in Clark's table. The selection of one or the other variant as typical and hence a basis for comparison is likely to seriously affect the results of a comparative analysis.
- c) In Tok Pisin before 1920 all three pluralisers found in Samoan Plantation Pidgin are also encountered. In addition, *-fela* is used as a pluraliser with nouns and pronouns. There are also indications that the distinction between *ol* (*all*₂) and *oltugeta* was occasionally used to distinguish a paucal (i.e. referring to a few) from a plural meaning (cf. Brenninkmeyer 1924).
- d) There are considerable regional variations within languages such as Bichelamar. These differences may reflect differential patterns in the recruiting to the main plantation centres of the area.
- e) The reasons for choosing *all*₂ appear to be manifold. They include borrowing from prestige varieties (possibly Torres Straits Pidgin from Tok Pisin), continuation of established traditions (shared 'drift' of SPP and Tok Pisin), independent innovations (Papuan Pidgin English?) and possibly phonological condensation of *oltugeta*.
- f) It appears that there are a limited number of sources for pluralisers which are in agreement with universals expansion patterns for pidgins (the use of plural affixes found in the superstratum languages is not one of them). All of them are tried in all the recorded pidgins, though only one of them tends to get selected in each variety. The selection may be determined by sociological and other external factors.

Given the lack of uniformity and continuity in plural marking and its transmission, the applicability of the comparative method is in grave doubt. This also goes for the next feature, the relativiser *we* (from English *where*).

There are a number of factual additions on this item:

- a) As pointed out by Clark (1980:18) it is also found in Krio, Cameroons Pidgin, Jamaican Creole (*we*) and Gullah (βe). In fact, this was taken by Todd (1979) as strong evidence in favour of a shared history of Krio and Cameroon Pidgin English.
- b) Contrary to what is suggested by Clark's table, the relativiser *we* is also documented for Tok Pisin, though it is a recent development and not found in all areas.
- c) The presence of *we* in Torres Straits Pidgin is very recent. Whereas Dutton (1970) could obtain no relativisers in spite of elicitation and a considerable corpus of texts, I had no problems in eliciting a relativiser *we* in 1978. It does not appear that it was borrowed from any of the surrounding pidgins.

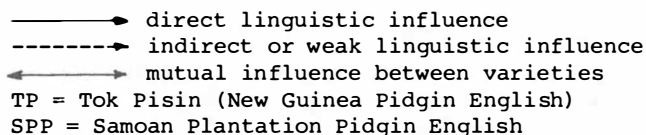
These findings again suggest that the comparative method will give very misleading results as to the shared history of a number of pidgins and creoles. It would seem that its reliability in the morphosyntactic area is very low indeed, and that any attempt to construct family trees on the basis of such evidence is misguided.

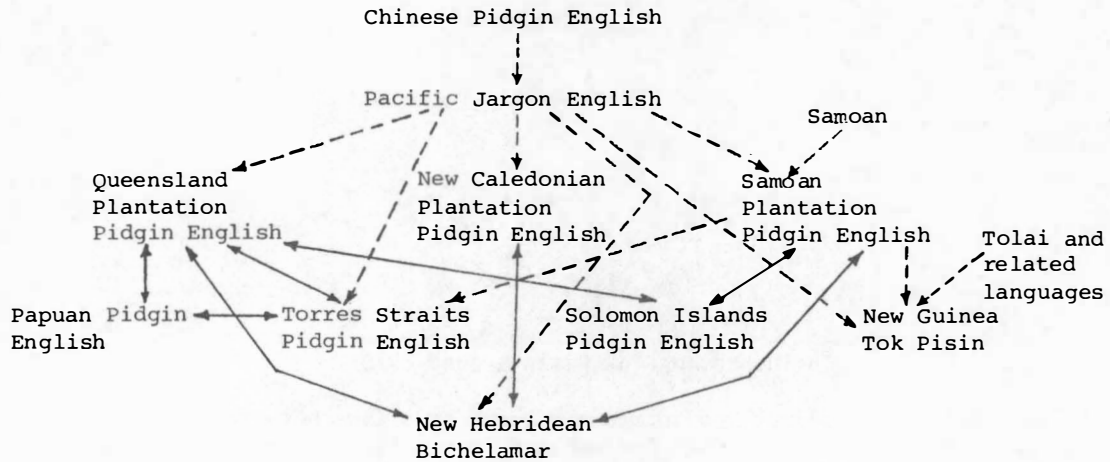
However, it does seem worthwhile to carry out a different type of comparative pidgin linguistics, namely the sequence in which grammaticalisation occurs. Thus, it would be interesting confirmation of the hypothesis that pidgins expand by following a universal program of grammaticalisation if the sequence in which we emerged as a relativiser in Tok Pisin (first in locative contexts as in *ples we em i stap the place where she lived*, then in temporal ones as in *taim we em i kamap the time at which he arrived*, and finally in all other contexts, such as *pikinini we i pundaun the child who fell down*) was the same in other pidgins.

Even the more restrictive goal of constructing family trees on purely lexical evidence cannot be achieved, unless the nature of the resulting trees is changed very drastically. The two most important changes would be:

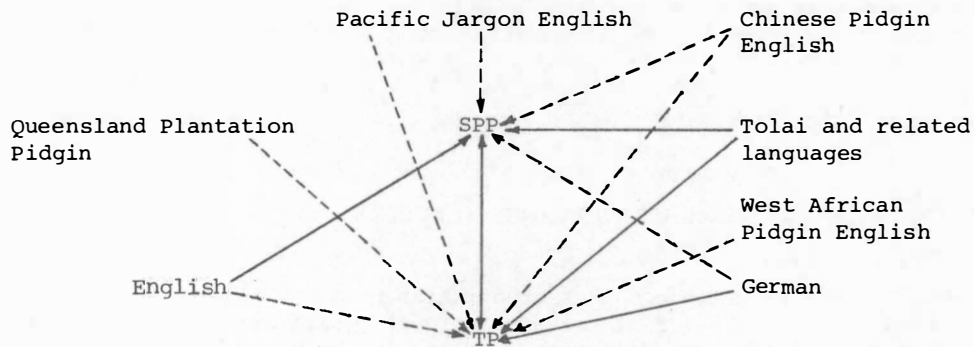
- a) To acknowledge that there is only partial continuity in the development of pidgins and that therefore a different 'family tree' is required at each point of pidgin development.
- b) To abandon any attempt to trace back pidgins to a single ancestor. As I have shown in the chapter on etymologising, the lexicon of a language such as Tok Pisin can be very mixed.

If we apply these two principles to the construction of 'family trees' for Tok Pisin, we may get something like this:

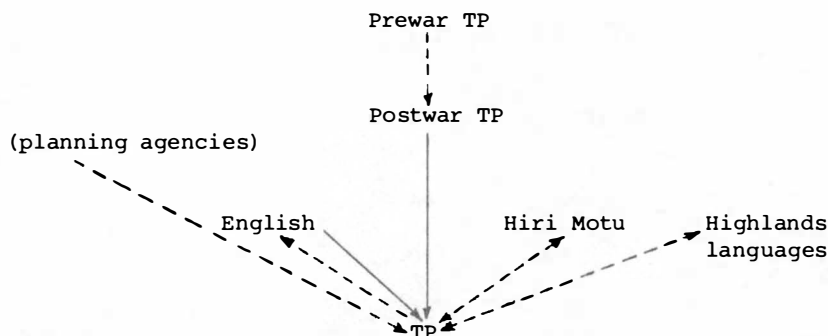




Pidgin English in the Pacific around 1880



Linguistic influences on Tok Pisin around 1900



Influences on Tok Pisin around 1975

Note that only in the first two charts are there any links between Tok Pisin and other Pacific varieties of Pidgin English and that many of these earlier influences are entirely restructured or replaced in later varieties.

5.1.4.3 Comparative method conclusions

The comparative method has been found to be inadequate for several reasons in this chapter, the principal reason being that it concerns itself with arbitrary abstract states and not developments in time. In addition, insufficient attention is paid to the enormous synchronic variability found in languages such as Tok Pisin at all stages of development and the ambiguous nature of many lexical items and some syntactic constructions, i.e. ambiguous in the sense that to a European they tend to look European and to a New Guinean New Guinean. As long as the numerous methodological and practical difficulties are not sorted out there appears little point in carrying out further comparative research of the type discussed here.

5.1.5 TOK PISIN AND BICKERTON'S LANGUAGE BIOPROGRAM

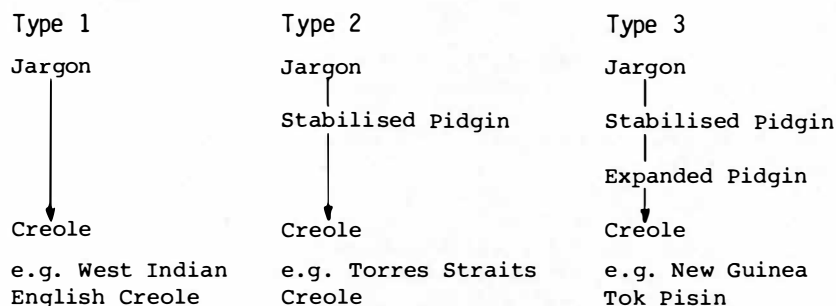
5.1.5.1 Introduction

Among the major challenges that creolistics poses to general linguistics as practised by the followers of transformational generative models of grammar is the theory of bioprogram grammar as developed by Bickerton (1981). Bickerton argues that, where normal language transmission breaks down, children have very limited access to linguistic input and therefore have to appeal to their natural language bioprogram. Thus, in first generation creoles, children may hear from their parents a greater impoverished pidgin. Nevertheless they end up speaking a highly structured, qualitatively clearly different creole - so different in fact, that it can be unintelligible to their parents. Whereas in such untargated first-language acquisition the resulting language is maximally natural and bioprogrammatic, in the acquisition of 'full' languages children are faced with an additional task, that of restructuring their bioprogram to bring it closer to the culturally defined language of their parents. This process is not straightforward and many natural-creole structures can be found in early child language acquisition, a fact which has been widely overlooked because psycholinguists ignored the possibility that creolisation could be involved here.

Finally it is argued that, since creole structures were not in the input they must be biologically preprogrammed, such a program reflecting the phylogensis of human language. It should be noted at this point that the bioprogram is a dynamic developmental one (its different stages being implicationally ordered) rather than a ready-made set of universals à la Chomsky.

5.1.5.2 Types of creolisation

Second-language pidgins differ widely in structural complexity. They range from rudimentary jargons to stable extended pidgins, the latter approximating other human languages in terms of complexity. Creolisation may occur at any point in pidgin development and one therefore has to distinguish between the following three types:



If any second language becomes the first language of a speech community, its deficiencies need to be repaired. Depending on the developmental stage at which creolisation occurs, different types of repair can be observed:

Type 1, with a creolised jargon:

Repair is needed at all levels, i.e. there is need for a natural phonological and semantic system and perhaps also a pragmatic system.

Type 2, with creolised stable pidgin:

The repair requirements in this case include the addition of derivational depth to existing basic structures and the development of pragmatic rules.

Type 3, with creolised expanded pidgins:

The main repair requirements of a nativised expanded pidgin appear to concern its stylistic and pragmatic potential. The transition between the pidgin and its corresponding creole is gradual rather than abrupt.

5.1.5.3 Is Tok Pisin a special case?

Bickerton argues that true creolisation is only encountered in type 1 and that the differences between pidgin and creole varieties in the case of types 2 and 3 cannot serve as a basis for statements about bioprogram language. He states (1981:3-4):

In New Guinea, the percentage of superstrate speakers was low, but the pidgin existed for several generations alongside the indigenous language before it began to acquire native speakers. Thus Tok Pisin was able to expand gradually, through normal use, rather than very rapidly, under the communicative pressure of a generation that had, for practical purposes, no other option available as a first language. The bilingual speakers of Tok Pisin had ongoing lives in their own languages and, perhaps more importantly still, in their own traditional communities; whereas in the classic creole situation, people had been torn from their traditional communities and forced into wholly novel communities in which the value of traditional languages was low or nil. The two situations are not commensurate, and we would expect to find, as we do, that while Tok Pisin differs from English much more than Réunion Creole does from French, it lacks, again, a number of the features found in the classic creole languages, and possesses a number of features which those creoles, in turn do not share.

Accordingly, in the text that follows, I shall use the word *creole* to refer to languages which:

- 1) Arose out of a prior pidgin which had not existed for more than a generation.
- 2) Arose in a population where not more than 20 percent were native speakers of the dominant language and where the remaining 80 percent was composed of diverse language groups.

The first condition rules out Tok Pisin and perhaps other (e.g. Australian Aboriginal) creoles;

Thus, it would seem that Tok Pisin can reveal little about the nature of biologically based grammars if Bickerton's arguments are accepted. It is indeed true that, in type 3 creolisation, the difference between the pidgin and the subsequent creole in many areas of core grammar, such tense marking (Sankoff and Laberge 1973) or number marking (Mühlhäusler 1981a), is not terribly great. At other levels of grammar, however, e.g. that of word-formation, I have found qualitative differences between extended and creolised extended Tok Pisin (Mühlhäusler 1979c:309-315).

However, it seems too restrictive to confine the operation of the bioprogram to children acquiring their first language before puberty. There appears to be ample evidence that the order in which new grammatical constructions emerge among second-language learning adults is very similar to that found in first-generation creole development. It is interesting to observe that, of the areas of grammar distinguishing a particular type 1 creole (Hawaiian Creole English) from its pidgin predecessor, the four areas where this language shows 'substantial identity' with all other creoles (existential possessive, adjective as verb, questions and passive equivalents) are also shared with Tok Pisin, as is the copula encoding which is present in many creoles. Bickerton's remark (p.72) that "the degree of identity is quite remarkable when we consider that HCE shares none of the substratum languages of the other creoles" is not more remarkable than the observation that, in the case of Tok Pisin, such apparent recourse to universal bioprogram grammar was taken by second-language speaking adults. In fact, adults and children appear to behave very much in the same manner: when there is no input, or highly conflicting input, they will turn to their bioprogram; when there is sufficient input they will try to incorporate it into

their developing system, even if it involves having to commit a large number of unnatural linguistic acts.

5.1.5.4 Bioprogram grammar: conclusions

Evidence from the linguistic development of Tok Pisin could be of crucial importance in arguments about language bioprograms, for, as has already been pointed out, during periods of its development substratum and superstratum influence was minimal indeed. Tok Pisin appears to meet all the essential criteria which favour the appeal to bioprogram strategies of linguistic development and moreover can be documented in considerable detail. The conditions under which bioprogram acquisition is favoured can be summarised as follows:

- a) The target is maximally remote, i.e. in cases of both untargeted first-language acquisition (first-generation creole) and untargeted second-language acquisition (pidgin).
- b) The resulting system is a social rather than an individual solution. In the case of a pidgin developing in a highly multilingual environment the strategy of transfer is highly restricted (cf. Meisel 1982) and the developmental sequences thus appear to be the same. It is also interesting to observe that natural interlanguage grammar is most likely to emerge where learners find themselves in a natural discourse setting (rather than in the classroom).
- c) Bioprogram development is found primarily in the first stages of any type of language acquisition. Large-scale comparison of incipient acquisition should yield interesting data on biogrammar.

The objection that there are well-documented differences between first- and second-language acquisition is frequently raised. In a model of language which treats grammar as an independent variable (i.e. independent of other possible innate cognitive skills) such differences are significant. However, since grammar develops to serve a number of functions, such as making requests or establishing social bonds, it can be expected that the sequence in which such functions become important to language learners also influences grammatical development. The order in which children acquire new functions differs quite significantly from that found in adult second-language acquisition and pidgin formations, as has been shown. All this means is that the activation of certain bioprogram developments is dependent on the presence of specific environmental factors, factors which can be relatively easily isolated in the history of Tok Pisin.

While the linguistic relevance of type I creole languages is receiving wider acceptance, the relevance of pidgin development to the study of natural grammar, linguistic universals and markedness theory still awaits wider recognition. A more detailed discussion of these issues is given in my review of Bickerton 1981 (Mühlhäusler 1983c).

5.1.6 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Linguistic theory, when it comes to the crunch, must not only be constructed in such a way that it can be mapped onto observable data, it must also ask what sort of data are the most suitable for answering the questions of linguistic theory.

As Bickerton (1981) points out in a preface to *Roots of language*, it is the former slaves, servants and exploited peoples

who fought for decency, dignity, and freedom against the Cartesian savagery of Western colonialists and slave-makers;
whose tongues, having survived to confound pedagogue and philosopher alike, now, by an ironic stroke of justice, offer us indispensable keys to the knowledge of our species.

This view is also very much applicable to Tok Pisin, whose origins lie in the often violent encounters between European colonisers and entrepreneurs and the local population of Papua New Guinea.

If I was pushed to single out the most important lesson that can be learnt from the study of pidgins and creoles I would opt for the fact of their changeability. Pidgins and creoles, more than any other language, bear witness that any theory of language which does not incorporate time-dependent change will fail to adequately characterise its subject matter. The factor of change is crucial to understanding of linguistic universals, since the most useful universals are of the implicational type. The investigation of change has also shown itself to be an important way of finding out about linguistic markedness, since developmentally earlier aspects of grammar are also the ones that are less marked. Again, a better knowledge of linguistic change was seen to be essential in an understanding of the complex relationship between linguistic forms and functions.

Insights into the nature of language change do not, however, always give support to existing hypotheses. In some instances, the incorporation of time and change into a descriptive framework exposes the irrelevance and/or misguidedness of previous conceptions.

One example is the application of the static comparative method to pidgins and creoles. The available evidence we have discussed in this chapter clearly suggests that the only possible basis for a comparison of different pidgins and creoles, or of these languages with alleged substratum and superstratum languages, can be a dynamic developmental one.

The lack of historical-developmental considerations is of particular severity in the discussion of the various theories of pidgin origin. Many available explanations confuse the formative years with later developments, or simply try to account for timeless abstractions. The various explanations of pidgin formation can only be of true value if related to particular stages of pidgin development. Simplification and substratum influence were shown to be developmentally very late and hence inadequate explanations of pidgin formation, while universal processes were seen to be particularly prominent in the early formative years. Common core grammar, on the other hand, appears to be a virtually useless explanation at any point in pidgin development.

Next to changeability, pidgin languages, and Tok Pisin in particular, afford important insights into rule changing creativity. The astonishing grammatical and lexical sophistication of expanded Tok Pisin is indicative of the fact that major grammatical expansion and rule changes can also occur in adult grammar, a fact frequently denied by the proponents of critical threshold views of language development.

Finally, a study of Tok Pisin greatly promotes our understanding of what is natural (biologically founded) and what is cultural (abnatural) in human languages. In cases of untargeted second-language learning and expansion, as in Tok Pisin, the majority of innovations appear to have their foundation in

preprogrammed language universals. Far from being unnatural or parasitic, as sometimes claimed by main-stream linguists, pidgin languages may be considerably closer to the natural foundations of language than most of the so-called 'natural' languages.

Because of the short timespan in which Tok Pisin developed from a broken version of English into a highly sophisticated pidgin and a creole, linguists can observe many phenomena of language development in situ. Further intensive work on this language is bound to lead to further significant findings for general linguistics.

NOTES

1. Anyone who has tried to get judgements about grammaticality from speakers of a pidgin will agree that this is a highly unreliable method (not that it makes much sense for speakers of other languages as pointed out by Labov 1972b).
2. That pidgins and creoles need a quantum rather than a static framework of description was pointed out by Le Page in his foreword to Bailey 1966: xi-xii.
3. Note that there are problems with the translation of terminology in this area.
4. A comparison of markedness in pidgins and normal languages affords some interesting insights into the difference between cultural markedness and naturalness. Thus, in English feminine or female is more marked than masculine or male, a fact which can be seen from ordering in conjuncts: boys and girls, men and women (but not vice versa). In child language development and pidgin development no such fixed conjunct order appears to emerge naturally.
5. It is interesting to note that some constructions of English foreigner talk, such as the plural *-s*, left traces in the lexicon of Tok Pisin (e.g. *anis ant*, *masis match*) but never became part of its grammar.
6. I will ignore *tambu sacred*, *taboo*, as in *buk tambu holy book*, *bible*, because of its phonological properties and the fact that the word is widely found in other Oceanic languages and Pacific pidgins. Moreover, it is not listed as a postmodifier in Brenninkmeyer's 1924 grammar.

6. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

