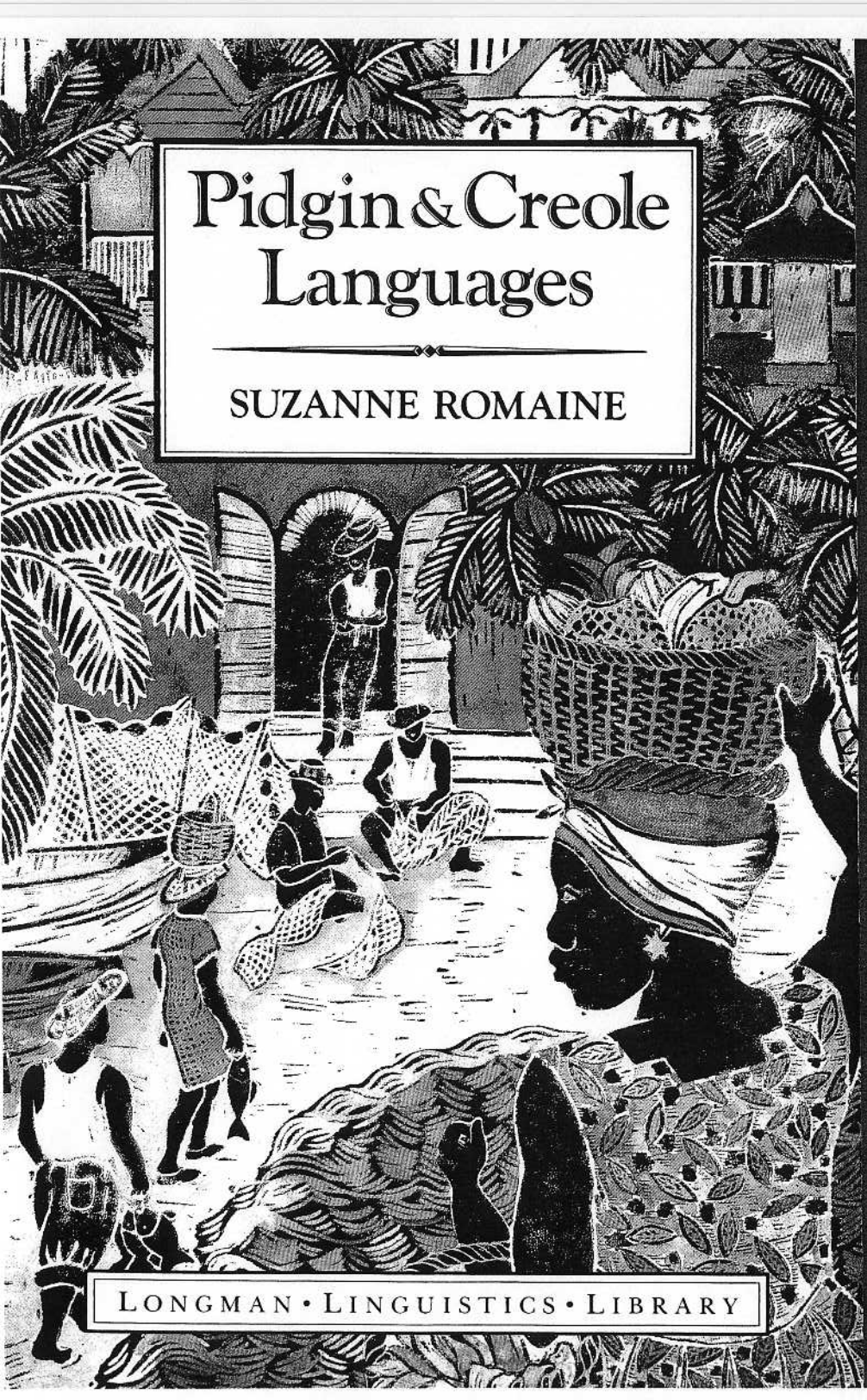
Pidgin & Creole Languages
SUZANNE ROMAINE
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2. I have transliterated this text into normal orthography from Hall's phonemic transcription.
3. The similarity between the two words **pidgin** and **pigeon** does, however, have some interesting consequences, as shown in 3.6.
4. I am grateful to Fiona Wright for making this comparison.
5. A similar situation is true of many minority languages which are not pidgins or creoles.
6. The name Tok Pisin is not universally used by its speakers. Children whom I interviewed in Lae did not use this term, but referred instead to the language simply as pidgin.

Chapter 2

Definitions and characteristics of pidgins and creoles

2.1 Some preliminary definitions of pidgins

DeCamp's (1977:3) comment on the lack of agreement over definitions of pidgins and creoles is a useful starting point for my discussion:

> There is no . . . agreement on the definition of the group of languages called pidgins and creoles. Linguists all agree that there is such a group, that it includes many languages and large numbers of speakers, and that pidgin–creole studies have now become an important field within linguistics. Yet even the authors of this book [in Valdman 1977b SR] would not agree among themselves on a definition of these languages. Some definitions are based on function, the role these languages play in the community: *eg* a pidgin is an auxiliary trade language. Some are based on historical origins and development: *eg* a pidgin may be spontaneously generated; a creole is a language that has evolved from a pidgin. Some definitions include formal characteristics: restricted vocabulary, absence of gender, true tenses, inflectional morphology, or relative clauses, etc. Some linguists combine these different kinds of criteria and include additional restrictions in their definitions.

Let us take a look at some problems in attempts to define the terms 'pidgin' and 'creole'. It will soon become apparent, as Traugott (1981:1) points out, that 'despite attempts to define the terms "pidgin" and "creole" in homogeneous ways, they have proved to defy such definitions'. DeCamp (1971a:15) defines a pidgin as a:

> contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers . . . it is characterized by a limited vocabulary, an

elimination of many grammatical devices such as number and gender, and a drastic reduction of redundant features.

A pidgin represents a language which has been stripped of everything but the bare essentials necessary for communication. There are few, if any, stylistic options. The emphasis is on the referential or communicative rather than the expressive function of language. As Hymes (1971:84) puts it: 'Pidginization is that complex process of sociolinguistic change comprising reduction in inner form, with convergence, in the context of restriction in use . . . Pidginization is usually associated with simplification in outer form.' It appears that pidgins should be recognized as a special or limiting case of reduction in form resulting from restriction in use, since other varieties of language display similar properties, *eg* dying languages, second languages, koinés, etc. (*cf* Chs. 6 and 7).

If we use Todd's (1974) definition of a pidgin as a marginal language which arises to fulfil certain restricted communicative needs among people who have no common language, then pidgins are probably more generally the outcome of any situation of language contact. Indeed, one could extend this idea, as Le Page (1977:222–3) has done, to refer to the communicative act of a speaker on a given occasion as an 'instant pidgin'. In other words, Le Page is pointing to the on-going need in all human communicative settings for speakers to negotiate a common set of meanings through the linguistic means available to them. Speakers in any situation will need to accommodate to one another even if they speak the 'same' language (*cf* Giles *et al.* 1973 on the notion of accommodation theory).

There has been some dispute in the literature over the number of languages which are necessary input to produce a true pidgin. DeCamp (1971a:22) says that any two languages in contact can result in an 'interlingual improvization' but more than two languages in contact are required for the development of a true pidgin. Whinnom (1971) too stresses that a pidgin always arises from a situation involving a target language and two or more substrate languages, where the socially superior target language is sufficiently inaccessible to the substrate speakers that there is little motivation to improve performance and where a defective version of language can be functionally adequate. Others, such as Schumann (1978), would say that similar conditions can occur when any individual foreign learner of a language has only limited exposure to its speakers and limited motivation to acquire it. In such cases even though there is only one 'substrate' language involved, he would speak of a process of pidginization at work in the acquisition process (*cf* 6.4). If we accept Whinnom's criterion, then it would not be appropriate to extend the term pidginization to refer to all situations which involve contact between only two languages. This would rule out situations of 'foreigner talk' (*cf* 3.1), or immigrant languages or the type of makeshift communication between tourists and guides described by Hall (1966) as a pidgin. In cases where speakers of more than two different languages must converse through a medium which is native to none of them, the kinds of restructurings are more radical than in these other cases.

2.2 Some linguistic features of pidgins

Among those who stress social explanations for the reduced and simplified nature of pidgins is Hudson (1980:63), who comments in particular on their characteristic lack of inflectional morphology. He suggests that inflectional morphology may in some sense be an unnatural mechanism for expressing semantic and syntactic distinctions. He notes too that it is strange that inflectional morphology is so widespread among natural languages, given that it benefits nobody, and makes a language more difficult to learn. It is often the finer details of language such as variable pronunciations of inflectional suffixes (*eg* the plural marker, as in **house/houses** and the past tense, as in **pack/packed**) which are socially diagnostic of the speaker's social class, sex, style etc. Hudson speculates that if a language variety is a pidgin, which no one uses as a means of group identification, there is no pressure to maintain inefficient aspects of pronunciation and grammar. Presumably there are also difficulties in borrowing and integrating inflectional morphology in the early stages of a pidgin's development.

A number of linguists have tried to explain the similarities which pidginized speech varieties show in the expression of grammatical categories and syntactic relationships by appealing to more general principles of linguistic organization motivated by specialization to the referential function. One such principle is that of paradigmatic univocity, as defined, for example, by Hjelmslev (1938:285), which refers to cases in which a stable relationship exists between form and meaning. For example, in standard Swahili, prefixes and infixes are used to express the subject and object of the verb, *eg* **ni-ta-m-piga** [I future him hit] – 'I will hit him'. The language gets significantly reduced in form

and function the further away one travels from the East African coast since it is used by many second language speakers as a trade language. Some have referred to these varieties as pidgins (*cf* however, Scotton 1979:111), while others such as Nida and Fehderau (1970) speak of koiné varieties of African vernacular languages (*cf* also Siegel 1985 on koineization). A koiné is a less drastically reduced variety than a pidgin. It shares mutual intelligibility with the superordinate language. At any rate, in these vehicular varieties of Swahili affixes are replaced by full and invariant pronominal forms, *eg* **yeye alipiga mimi** – 'he hit me' [*cf* full Swahili **alimpiga**]; **mimi tapiga yeye** – 'I will hit him' (*cf* Manessy 1977:137 and also Heine 1979:94–5). In most Bantu languages the object precedes the verb, but in the pidginized varieties, the object follows the verb so that word order becomes SVO. The grammatical category of tense tends to get lost. Embedding tends to be replaced by conjoining as a means of linking sentences; the listener is left to make the connections.

Mühlhäusler (1986:158–9) identifies a number of features of pronominal systems which characterize pidgins. He notes that the pronominal systems of stabilized pidgins illustrate the minimal requirements of pronoun systems in human languages. The most minimal system is evidenced by Chinese Pidgin English where there are three pronouns, first, second and third person, but no number distinctions. In Pacific Jargon English many utterances appear without an overt pronoun, where we would expect one in Standard English. Mühlhäusler (1986:158) cites the following from 1840 as an example:

> **Now got plenty money; no good work**. – 'Now I have lots of money so I do not need to work.'

This feature also emerged in Schumann's (1986) attempts to create pidgins artificially in an experimental setting. He gave learners a lexicon of 220 words (based on Bickerton and Givón 1978) and got them to communicate in specific tasks such as giving locations or directions on a map. Sokolik (1986) reports examples such as the following in Farsi pidgin, which show that there is a tendency to omit subject pronouns:

> **naxeir fahmidan**. [no understand] – 'I don't understand.'
> **naxier xastan mundan inja**. [no want stay here] – 'I don't want to stay here.'

There is a major typological difference between languages which allow sentences without subject pronouns and those which don't. Chomsky (1982) refers to this distinction as the pro-drop

parameter. Languages like English which require subjects to be realized lexically are considered non-pro-drop languages. We would predict that if speakers were applying the rules of their native language in inventing a pidgin that they would follow the parameter settings in that language. Thus, in the case of speakers of pro-drop languages, we would expect that parameter to remain in force. Then the absence of pronouns in the resulting pidgin could be said to be due to substratum influence. In the case of Farsi pidgin, however, the speakers' native language was English, so this explanation does not hold. Much the same argument applies to other cases of second language acquisition. White (1985), for example, has claimed that native speakers of Spanish (a pro-drop language) learning English transfer this parameter. It is interesting that in other instances of second language acquisition Meisel (1983b:202) claims that deletion of pronouns can be found irrespective of the first language backgrounds of the speakers. This suggests that pro-drop constitutes the unmarked case. Hyams (1983) has argued this for first language acquisition.

The pronominal systems of pidgin languages generally do not encode distinctions of gender or case. Thus, in Tok Pisin, the third person singular pronoun **em** can be used to refer to masculine, feminine and neuter subjects and objects, *eg* **em i go long maket** – 'he, she, it is going to market'; **mama bilong mi i lukim em** – 'My mother sees him/her/it'. This is a consequence of the fact that full lexemes are usually preferred at the expense of inflectional morphology to mark grammatical categories. This can be seen in the case of plural marking, where it occurs in pidgins. Mühlhäusler (1986:157–8) cites the widespread absence of number distinctions in nouns as typical of pidgins. In vernacular forms of Hausa, the formation of noun plurals involves a dozen suffixes and various modifications of the noun stem, *eg* partial or total reduplication and vowel alternations. In the vehicular variety of Hausa, the plural is formed by the addition of the full lexeme **deyawa** – 'much' to the singular form (*cf* Manessy 1977:140). Thus, there is a drastic reduction of allomorphy (*cf* also Heine 1979).

Another aspect of the principle of paradigmatic univocity is that it eliminates agreement markers which require the redundant expression of the same unit of meaning in several places in an utterance. For example, in the following English sentence, plurality is indicated in the noun and its modifier, as well as in verb agreement in the third person singular present tense: **Six men come** (*cf* **One man comes**). The equivalent utterances in Tok Pisin show no variation in the verb form or the noun: **Sikspela**

man i kam/Wanpela man i kam. Thus, there is a tendency for each grammatical morpheme to be expressed only once in an utterance, and for that morpheme to be expressed by a single form. Heine (1979:97) contrasts this Standard Swahili sentence with its equivalent in Kenya Pidgin Swahili to illustrate the elimination of redundant expressions of number, tense and agreement:

Standard Swahili: **Juma alileta vikombe viwili jana**
[Juma he past bring plural cup plural two yesterday]
Kenya Pidgin: **Juma naleta kikombe mbili jana**
[Juma aorist bring cup two yesterday]
'Juma brought two cups yesterday'

In Fanagalo (Pidgin Zulu), for example, the complex system of positive and negative conjugations of the verb forms, which are found in Southern Bantu languages, are replaced by a single negative element, **aikhona**, which appears in preverbal position (*cf* Heine 1973:133). Similarly, the allomorphy of the negative morpheme in standard Swahili is considerable. However, in the pidgin Swahili of West-Central Kenya negation is expressed by means of the invariable preverbal word **hapana**, as in the examples cited by Haiman (1985:164): standard Swahili: **simuoni** – [I not see him not] – 'I don't see him' [**mu** is the third person pronoun **him** + negator]; pidgin Swahili: **mimi hapana one yeye** – [I not see him] – 'I don't see him'. This means that analytic constructions as opposed to synthetic ones prevail in pidgins and pidginized varieties so that complex forms are decomposed into their component morphemes. A language which is analytic in structure indicates syntactic relations by means of function words and word order as opposed to synthetic languages, where such formal relationships are expressed by the combination of elements (*eg* prefixes, suffixes and infixes) with the base or stem word. The structure of words in an analytical language is morphologically simple, but complex in a synthetic language. In vehicular Swahili, for example, the locative suffix has been replaced by a preposition, *ie* a function word. This means that in standard Swahili a single word, albeit a morphologically complex one, encodes the meaning of constructions indicating location, *eg* **dukani** – 'in the shop', where **-ni** is the locative suffix. In vehicular Swahili, however, two words are required to express the equivalent meaning, *eg* **kwa dukani**, where **kwa** is a preposition meaning 'in/at' (*cf* Duran 1979). In one of the previous examples from Tok Pisin, I showed how possession is marked by a prepositional phrase headed by **bilong**, *ie* **mama bilong mi**.

Thus, where English can have possessive constructions such as **John's house**, where the inflectional suffix **-s** marks the possessive, Tok Pisin has the analytical construction **haus bilong John**.

Mühlhäusler (1986:160) cites as a characteristic feature of pidgins the fact that they make use of a few prepositions to indicate grammatical relations. For example, in the principal stable pidgins of the Pacific there is a one or two preposition system of indicating grammatical relations. **Long** [<'along'] is the most common form. Some also have the form **belong** [<'belong'], which shows a shift of function from verb to preposition. Chinook Jargon has only one preposition, **kopa**.

Haiman (1985:162) says that the phenomenon of grammatical agreement seems a clear case of the victory of the indexical aspect of language over its iconic aspect since categories such as number and case, properly associated with nouns, are copied onto verbs and adjectives. He adds that conjugation categories, noun class systems and the verbal concord systems to which they give rise, are notoriously dysfunctional. Generally there is little semantic homogeneity to the members of a noun class system and none at all to a verb conjugation. Similarly, pidgins often lack the copula, whose function is basically to mark tense and to distinguish between stative and non-stative predicates (*cf eg* the discussion in Ferguson 1971). Not surprisingly, there is a sharp reduction or disappearance of all these features in pidgins. Haiman concludes (1985:165) that pidgins seem 'to strip themselves spontaneously of this kind of luxury. Pidgins offer only one means of packaging redundancy: massive and wholesale repetition of the entire message. Repetition is stylistic rather than obligatory and (grammatical).'

Concomitant with the tendency to eliminate allomorphy pidgins usually display a fixed and invariable word order. In Haiman's (1985:162) terms, they avoid allotaxy, *ie* the use of different word orders for the expression of the same grammatical relationships. For example, in standard German different word orders are required in main and subordinate clauses. In main declarative clauses the finite verb must appear in second position, while in subordinate clauses it must be in final position. Thus, we can contrast:

Morgen kommt Frau Weber/Frau Weber kommt morgen – 'Mrs Weber is coming tomorrow'
Morgen kommt Frau Weber nicht, weil sie krank ist/Frau Weber kommt morgen nicht, weil sie krank ist – 'Mrs Weber isn't coming tomorrow because she is ill'

Or one could also have the subordinate clause preceding the main clause, in which case the verb of the subordinate clause is in final position. However, since the clause counts as one element in the larger sentence, the verb of the main clause occurs immediately after the verb of the subordinate clause. Thus:

Seitdem sie krank ist, kommt Frau Weber morgen nicht – 'Because she's ill, Mrs Weber isn't coming tomorrow'

Rabaul Creole German, however, has SVO word order (*cf* also Stammler 1922–3 on the German spoken in Estonia). It arose at the turn of the century as a lingua franca of the Catholic mixed race community in Vunapope near Rabaul. It became creolized in one generation. In the following sentence (cited by Volker 1982:49), we can see that the verb **muss** follows the subject instead of precedes it: **Wenn der Baby weinen, der Mama muss aufpicken** – 'When/if the baby cries, the mother must pick it up'. The verb form **weinen** is the infinitive form of the verb. Standard German would have the inflected third person singular form **weint**. We can see also the lexical influence of English in the words **aufpicken** – 'to pick up' and **baby** – 'baby'. Another characteristic feature is the lack of a gender system. Where standard German has a three gender system, Rabaul Creole German has only an invariant definite article **de** (pronounced **der** by some speakers). Standard German has **der**, **die**, **das**, variable forms which indicate gender, number and case distinctions. Rabaul Creole German shows deviation from standard German in certain declarative clauses which involve the use of complex verb forms. In Standard German when a verb form is made up of a finite (*ie* a form of the verb inflected for person, tense etc.) and a non-finite form, such as: **Ich habe das Buch gelesen** – 'I have read the book', the finite form (in this case, the inflected form of the auxiliary verb **haben**) must occupy second position, and the non-finite form (in this case the past participle) must go to the end. In Rabaul Creole German, either the auxiliary is omitted or the two verb forms appear in second position. Thus **I hat gelesen Buch** or **I gelesen Buch**.

Other pidgins show a tendency toward SVO order. For example, Pidgin Fijian and Chinook Jargon. With regard to the former Siegel (1983:11) says that Standard Fijian has a preference for VSO. Similarly, Thomason (1983:844) says that SVO is not a statistically dominant word order pattern in any of the Indian languages spoken in the Northwest. The basic word order is VSO. There are, however, pidgins which do not show a tendency towards SVO order. Hiri Motu seems to be OSV. Trader

Navajo, like Navajo, is verb initial or VSO (*cf* Silverstein 1972b) and Eskimo Trade Jargon is SOV (*cf* Stefánsson 1909). Another aspect of word order that has been noted in connection with pidgins is the lack of variant word orders for interrogatives and declaratives.

Givón (1979b) has claimed that SVO order is most common in pidgins because it is the easiest to process. That is to say that, in languages in which subjects precede objects, and the subject is separated from its object, the possibility of confusion between the two is reduced. Just as the tendency towards analytical structure makes the morphology of pronominal systems invariable, the invariable nature of pidgin word order leads to a greater isomorphism between form and meaning. Because pidgins are weakly grammaticalized, they depend heavily on context for their interpretation.

2.3 Pidgins as simple or simplified codes

These kinds of changes can be thought of as reductions in complexity. Southworth (1971:260), for example, notes that the most obvious characteristic of pidgins is their lack of complexity. The notion of simplicity is often invoked in the discussion of pidgins. In many popular accounts of pidgins simplicity is attributed to an alleged lack of grammar. For example, French (1953:58) says about Pidgin English in New Guinea:

> If the attempt to simplify vocabulary is fraught with difficulties, the attempt to simplify grammar is simply disastrous. The standard grammar has been jettisoned, and a new crude, and incredibly tortuous form of grammar has been built up in its place . . . So, far from being an independent language, pidgin takes over a whole ready-made phonetic and morphological system, crudely distorted by false ideas of simplification.

A number of linguists however have pointed to the lack of agreement in defining simplification and specifying the role it plays in pidginization. Hymes (1971:72) makes an important distinction between what is simple for the speaker in terms of production and what is simple for the hearer in terms of perception. The linguistic economies which result from the process of pidginization are of aid primarily to the speaker. Hymes (1971:73) observes that:

> . . . invariance in form, rather than allomorphic variation; invariant relation between form and grammatical function, rather than derivational and inflectional declensional and conjugational

> variation; largely monomorphemic words, rather than inflected and derived words; reliance on overt word order; all have in common that they minimize the knowledge a speaker must have, and the speed with which he must decode, to know what in fact has grammatically happened.

Corder (1975) argues that simplification does not correspond to any psychological process of the learner because learners cannot simplify a system which they have not internalized (*cf* however, Meisel 1983a). He proposes instead that second language learners have recourse not to strategies of simplification but to a universal linguistic base reflected in less elaborated varieties of a language, *eg* pidgins, children's speech, and second language learner varieties. Fully formed adult speech represents a complexification of this universal base to which language learners approximate by means of a process of elaboration. Linguistic elaboration is determined by the communicative demands and function of the discourse. Thus, Corder distinguishes between structurally simple codes, *eg* foreigner talk, and the simplified use of a complex code, *eg* mothers' speech to babies (*cf* 3.1).

I will use the term **simplification** here in the sense in which Mühlhäusler (1974:5.4) defines it as an increase in regularity. Similarly, Traugott (1973:315) points out that simplification is a 'descriptive term accounting for relationships within particular grammars, not an explanatory one accounting for what goes on in language'. I will look further at the notion of simplification as a psycholinguistic strategy applied to a target language in 3.1. Nevertheless, even as Mühlhäusler defines it, simplification will have psycholinguistic consequences, since one can expect that greater generality of rules and fewer exceptions in grammar make a language easier to learn.

Simplification of form does not necessarily entail impoverishment of meaning, *ie* loss or lack of certain means of expression (*cf eg* Mühlhäusler 1974:5.4 and also Samarin 1971:125). For example, in Tok Pisin there is a regular principle by means of which causative verb forms can be derived from adjectives by adding the suffix **-im**, thus: **bik** – 'large': **bikim** – 'to make large/enlarge'; **brait** – 'wide': **braitim** – to widen/to make wide'; **doti** – 'dirty': **dotiim** – 'to make dirty'. We can see that English expresses the Tok Pisin equivalents of these causative verbs with a variety of means, *eg* with a verb plus prefix or suffix, and by a periphrastic construction involving the verb **to make**. In the case of the causative equivalent for **dirty**, the only option available to English is to encode the meaning analytically. Thus, to

the extent that there is no single lexeme to encode the meaning 'to make something dirty', English can be thought of as more impoverished than Tok Pisin with respect to this feature of its lexicon. All languages differ of course in terms of codability, *ie* categories which have single word names are more codable (*cf eg* Brown 1958:235–41). English is also less simple or regular in that it has several forms to express the same meaning (*cf* also 7.2).

It is widely believed in popular accounts that pidgins are inadequate for the expression of certain ideas and concepts. Chatterton, for example, commented in a news bulletin (NBC 23 June 1976):

> My eight years in the House of Assembly [in Papua New Guinea SR] convinced me that Pidgin [Tok Pisin SR] as it is now is an inadequate medium for conducting the business of a modern nation. It could only be made so by a massive infusion of concise neologisms to express the often sophisticated and difficult concepts involved. I offer no opinion as to the possibility of this happening. I can only say that in the twelve years since the establishment of the House of Assembly in 1964, it has not happened, either in Pidgin or Hiri Motu. The tendency has been just to stick to an English word, and in the case of Pidgin prefaced by the disarming phrase 'ol i kolim'.

A look at some statistics on the use of Tok Pisin in transactions in the House of Assembly shows a dramatic increase from 40 per cent in 1964 to 95 per cent in 1973 (*cf* Noel 1975:78). In the first four-year period of its use it was restricted to certain topics or specific purposes. Now any business arising in the House of Assembly can be discussed in pidgin. In a survey of self-estimates of use of Tok Pisin on the part of students at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology in Lae, Swan and Lewis (1986) found that there was no evidence of any significant decline over the four years and no indication of a move towards the use of English. Some of the younger students appear to be using more Tok Pisin at university than at any previous time in their educational career since Community School. Swan and Lewis interpret the data as an indication of a very positive attitude towards the language even in an environment which strongly favours the use of English.

2.4 The pidgin lexicon

The most obvious place for impoverishment to take place is in the lexicon. Hall (1953:23), for example, compares the number

of lexical items which a speaker of an ordinary language has, *ie* 25–30,000, by comparison with the number of lexical items in Neomelanesian, *ie* 1,500.[1] He adds however that these 1,500 words can be combined into phrases so as to say anything that can be said in English. The implication is that there is no reduction in the overall semantic domains covered by a pidgin, but merely in the number of items used to map them. There have been few attempts to demonstrate systematically the nature of lexical reduction. Samarin (1971:119) counted the number of basic morphemes in Sango and found there were 700–1,000. This is nearly the same number which Swadesh (1971) found for natural languages.

Moag (1978:80) suggests that we need studies which compare the lexical inventories of a pidgin versus the first language of the same speakers. Another possibility would be to obtain identical texts in the pidgin and first language (*cf* also Samarin 1979). Moag (1978:80) has compared a selected lexical sample for Standard Fijian and Pidgin Fijian to illustrate that items in the pidgin cover a wider semantic domain, As an example, we can look at the words for different kinds of containers or baskets:

Meaning	*Standard Fijian*	*Pidgin Fijian*
case, box, basket	**kato**	**kato**
fishing basket	**noke**	
coconut leaf basket	**sū**	
woven leaf tray	**i lalakai**	

The general pidgin term **kato** covers a domain which is lexicalized by four different items in standard Fijian.[2] The small lexical inventory of pidgins is a consequence of their context-dependence. Generally, only a very small part of the vocabulary of the lexifier language is taken into the core of the pidgin lexicon. Pidginized African languages, for instance, show a drastically reduced ideophone inventory. Ideophones are words that alter in some way the meaning of another. The closest analog to their function in English would be semi-reduplicative forms found in expressions such as **hurly-burly**, or **teeny-tiny**. Some 8–9,000 ideophones are reported in Gbeya. However, pidgin Sango has only some three dozen. Samarin (1979) suggests that pidginization of function is responsible for pidginization of form leading to the loss of ideophones. Since pidgins communicate only a referential minimum, it is to be expected that items which further specify others would fall out.

Mühlhäusler (1986:165) observes that not only is the number of actual pidgin lexical items highly restricted, but also the

conventions as to the lexical information found within each item. I gave examples in 1.2 of words in Tok Pisin which had an English derivation but differed in meaning.

Haiman (1985:166) says that there is an inverse correlation between the lexical expansion of a language and the iconicity of its grammar (*cf* Saussure 1969:183). Haiman makes a distinction between 'lexical' and 'grammatical' languages. A lexical language has a large stock of primary roots, while a grammatical one has a small stock and makes up the deficit in periphrastic constructions. For example, in Tok Pisin, circumlocutions like **singsing long taim maus i pas** [to sing when the mouth is closed] – 'hum' are well known. Long-established languages are relatively more lexical, while pidgins, trade languages, second language learner varieties and child language are more grammatical. Pidgins have the properties of both lexical impoverishment and analytic structure. Established analytical languages like Chinese, however have only the characteristic of greater isomorphism. To the extent that analytical languages exhibit greater isomorphism, they are more iconic, less arbitrary and presumably more grammatical than synthetic languages like Sanskrit.

Let us compare some examples of the lexical structure of Tok Pisin and English:

Tok Pisin	*English*
gras	**grass**
mausgras	**moustache**
gras bilong fes	**beard**
gras bilong hed	**hair**
gras bilong pisin	**feather**
gras antap long ai	**eyebrow**
gras nogut	**weed**
han	**hand/arm**
han bilong diwai	**branch of a tree**
han bilong pisin	**wing of a bird**

The fact that meanings such as **grass**, **beard**, **feather** and **weed** are all expressed by means of separate, unrelated lexemes in English is an indication of its greater degree of lexicalization. In Tok Pisin, however there is a kind of diagrammatic iconic relation between these items, which is expressed by the fact that they are all encoded by means of constructions incorporating the word **gras**. That is to say that the words are motivated. I am using the term **diagrammatic iconic relation** in the sense used by Haiman (1980:515) to refer to a systematic arrangement of signs, none of which necessarily resembles its referent, but whose

relationships to each other mirror the relationships to their referents. Thus, one could say that **grass** has the same relationship to the ground or earth that feathers have to a bird, a beard to a face, etc. They are all coverings on different surfaces. Similarly, a hand is an appendage to a tree or bird just as a hand or an arm is an appendage of a person. The English words **arm** and **branch** are by comparison unmotivated and lexically arbitrary.

It is a direct consequence of their impoverished vocabulary that pidgins exhibit a high degree of motivation and transparency in compounding. As Haiman (1985:158) puts it, 'the greater the lexicon, the greater the opacity; the smaller the lexicon, the greater the transparency and iconicity of the linguistic (sub)system.' Voorhoeve (1962) claims that the relationship between size of vocabulary and number of grammatical rules is optimal in pidgins and creoles.

It is obvious that there will be gaps in the pidgin lexicon, particularly in the early stages of its development. These may be filled by borrowing or circumlocution, as seen in 1.2. Only at a later stage does the pidgin develop productive internal resources for expanding its lexicon (*cf* Mühlhäusler 1979; Jones 1983). Circumlocution is a strategy which involves letting the syntax make up for the lack of productive morphological processes which would be used to form words in the lexifier language. A stereotypical view of this process is given in Helton (1943:5):

> When you are stuck for a pidgin word to describe anything, think of what it is used for and use the word **something** for its name and state its use. For instance, a stud is used to fasten your collar, therefore a request to a native to **bring im something belong pass im neck** (collar) would have the effect of a native producing a stud.

Although this characterization of the improvisation process has some truth in it, once an innovation has caught on and used, it will become conventionalized in shortened form. Some evidence in support of this comes from Master's (1986) study of noun compounding in experimental Farsi pidgin. He found that learners often used the words **place** or **thing** as lexical anchor points in coining new words. These were then modified by other words. Thus, in Farsi pidgin terms such as **neveshtan chiz mahal** [write thing place] and **xandan chiz mahal** [read thing place] were introduced for 'bookstore'; **kone chiz mahal** [old thing place] or **mundan kone chiz borzorg mahal** [stay old thing big place] for 'museum'; and **felez mahal** [metal place] or **mundan felez mahal** [stay metal place] for 'bank'.

Initially these expressions served as descriptions. At this stage there was a preference for high analytical coding at the expense

of economy. Later, however in response to the demands of efficient communication speakers economized. Once these forms had been used several times they were reduced and stabilized compounds developed. For example, in pidgin German an expression denoting 'restaurant' – **platz wo kaufen diese dinge fur essen** [place where buy these things for eat], became shortened and stabilized as **essen kaufen platz** [eat buy place]. Here we see what was originally a description becoming a name or referring expression once the post-nominal modifiers become prenominal.

Stable pidgins often develop phrase-like formulas for the description of new concepts. Mühlhäusler (1986:171) gives the Hiri Motu formula O-V-**gauna** – 'thing for doing something to an object' as an example. It parallels the word formation process in experimental Farsi pidgin. Thus:

kuku ania gauna	[smoke eat thing]	'pipe'
lahi gabua gauna	[fire burn thing]	'match'
traka abiaisi gauna	[truck raise thing]	'jack'
godo abia gauna	[voice take thing]	'tape recorder'

Out of the raw material of a lexicon speakers create morphology and syntax. A similar process of conventionalization can lead to the introduction of inflectional morphology in the later stages of a pidgin's development. For example, many pidgins have affix-like classifiers which are attached to various elements, *eg* **-pela/fela** [<**fellow**] in Pacific Englishes. Mühlhäusler (1986:153) says that in Pacific Jargon English this element was found variably in a number of positions following and preceding nouns and following adjectives. It was also used as a kind of lexical anchor in the sense noted above in circumlocutions such as **fellow belong open bottle** – 'corkscrew'. Here **fellow** seems to mean 'thing'. For indigenous speakers, however, a gradual reinterpretation took place which served to grammaticalize **fellow** as a affix marking the word class of attributive adjectives.

There is also a correlation between brevity and opacity. As the lexicon of a pidgin expands the clumsy, but motivated compounds and periphrastic constructions disappear, *eg* Tok Pisin **kot bilong ren** is now **kotren** or **renkot**, and **waia i go antap** [wire it goes on top] is now **aerial**. Lexical expansion is motivated by a desire to give common concepts a reduced expression. As Zipf (1935:29) puts it: 'High frequency is the cause of small magnitude.'

Another property of the pidgin lexicon is multifunctionality. Wurm (1971:8), for example, says that 'a characteristic feature of Pidgin is the presence of many universal bases, *ie* words which

can function as nouns, noun and verb adjuncts, intransitive verbs and transitive verbs. The functional possibilities of pidgin bases are fundamental to the grammar of pidgin.' For example, in English the lexeme **ill** functions as an adjective, as in **he is ill**, or **an ill woman**. However, the corresponding noun is **illness**, derived by addition of the nominalizing suffix **-ness**. In Tok Pisin, however, the lexeme **sik** can function as both noun and adjective, *eg* **mi sik** – 'I am sick'; **sik malaria** – 'malaria'; **em i gat bikpela sik** – 'he has got a terrible disease'. Similarly, the lexeme **askim** can function as both verb and noun, *eg* **Mi laik askim em** – 'I want to ask him/her/it'; **Sapos you gat askim em i orait** – 'If you have any questions, it's alright (to ask)'. Silverstein (1972a:381) observes that the freedom from lexical specification increases the information content of each unit in the lexicon. The great majority of the lexicon of Chinook jargon (and probably most jargons *cf* 4.3) is made up of words which are grammatically and semantically ambiguous. Pidgins lack word formation rules with which to expand their lexicons. Although the use of the same lexical item in a number of grammatical functions constitutes a gain in simplicity, it also has the consequence that it violates the principle of one form equals one meaning (*cf* also Voorhoeve 1981 for a discussion of the theoretical consequences of multifunctionality).

2.5 Some preliminary definitions of creoles

The term **creole** [<Portuguese **crioulu** via English and French] originally meant a white man of European descent born and raised in a tropical or semitropical colony. The meaning was later extended to include indigenous natives and others of non-European origin. The term was then subsequently applied to certain languages spoken by creoles in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa, and then more generally to other languages of similar types which had arisen in similar circumstances.

The development from pidgin into creole involves an expansion of expressive forces in response to communicative needs. In Hymes's terms, the process of creolization involves an expansion of inner form and complexification of outer form. Valdman (1977a:158–9) refers to both these aspects as elaboration. Thus, a creole language is defined as (DeCamp 1971a:16):

> the native language of most of its speakers. Therefore its vocabulary and syntactic devices are, like those of any native language, large enough to meet all the communicative needs of its speakers.

As part of the process of creolization a great many iconic features are lost. Independent words become grammaticalized and begin to exhibit allomorphy (*cf eg* Sankoff and Laberge 1973). Reduced forms become crystallized and obligatory; reduced forms are reinforced by independent words, giving rise to agreement systems. For example in Tok Pisin, Sankoff (1977) discusses the process whereby the subject pronoun **he** has become generalized and cliticized as a preverbal predicative marker **i**, *eg* **yupela i kam** – 'You (pl) come'. Once the pronoun has undergone a process of phonological reduction from its full form, it is bound to the verb, and loses its force as a full pronoun and marks a purely grammatical function. Earlier in its history there is textual evidence of the full form **she**. Schuchardt (1889) has examples such as: **Woman she finish thing me speak him** (*cf* Mühlhäusler 1986:164). Churchill (1911) cites four cases. However, even at the time Churchill was writing **he** was the predominant form, *eg* **Queen Victoria he look out** (Churchill 1911:49).

The development of predicate markers can take place in the stabilization phase of a pidgin rather than as part of creolization. Mühlhäusler (1986:163–4) mentions the use of anaphoric pronouns as generalized predicate markers as a feature which is widespread across pidgins. It is found, for example, in some of the Indian Ocean Creoles, as in the example from Corne (1974–5:69) in Seychelles Creole:

ban zanimo i tan sa – 'The animals hear that'

Thomason (1983:847) reports its use in the speech of some speakers of Chinook Jargon (*cf* also 4.3) as in:

t'alap'as' pi lilu laska məlayt ixt-ixt laska haws
[coyote and wolf they live one-one they house]
'A coyote and a wolf lived with their houses side by side'

It is not always possible to tell, in cases where pidgins have developed predicate markers, whether equivalent constructions in the lexifier and or substratum languages provided the input. In the case of Chinook Jargon Thomason (1983:851) says that almost all the Indian languages whose speakers use Chinook Jargon have pleonastic subject pronominals, at least to a limited extent. However, the positioning of these markers does not always agree with their consistent preverbal position in the jargon. She says that it is not possible to conclude on the basis of present evidence whether the appearance of the subject markers should be expected as the outcome of native speaker

simplification. Tolai, which provided input to Tok Pisin, had a similar construction. However, Mühlhäusler claims that the use of **i** in Tok Pisin appears to be reinforced by it and not derived from it since Tolai uses different forms of the pronoun for different subjects. With third person singular subjects **i** is used. Mühlhäusler (1986:164) says that it is this coincidence with English **he** that probably promoted the rapid stabilization of **i** as a predicate marker in Tok Pisin (*cf* however, Keesing (forthcoming) for a substratum explanation).

Creoles can even develop case suffixes. This has happened in Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole with the result that the language is now typologically very like the Indo-European and Dravidian languages Sinhala and Tamil, rather than Portuguese. Portuguese influence was removed in 1658, rather early in the development of the creole. This meant that the substratum languages provided input during the creolization phase. Case suffixes have developed from postpositions, which were unstressed and gradually reduced. For example, the case marker **-ntu** is derived from the full form **junto** – 'joined'. The dative **-pə** is derived from a reduced from of the preposition **para**. The genitive comes from a reduced form of **sua**, the third person possessive pronoun. In some varieties the postposed genitive co-exists with the postposed case-marked construction. Compare these examples from Smith (1977:366–8): **pa:nu de mæ:zə** – 'cloth of table'/**mæzə-su pa:nu** – 'table's cloth'. In these next examples from Smith (1978:73) it can be seen that the creole is more similar in structure to Tamil than to Portuguese:

Portuguese: **Eu tinha dado o dinheiro a/para João**
[I aux have give past participle article money to/for John]
Tamil: **nān calli-yay jon-ukku kuṭu-tt iru-nt-an**
[I money-accusative John- dative past give past Aux was 1st singular]
Sri Lankan Portuguese: **ēw diñeru jon-pə jā-dā tiña**
[I money John-dative already give past]
'I had given the money to John'

This typological shift has involved a movement away from the Portuguese type which is SVO and prepositional to a Dravidian type which is SOV and postpositional with case marking.

It was apparently Bloomfield (1933:474) who first suggested a historical relationship between pidgin and creole. Hall (1953) carries this idea much further when he makes a pidgin origin an essential feature of his definition of a creole and postulates a linguistic life-cycle beginning with the spontaneous generation of

a pidgin followed by its evolution to a creole. Hall's notion of life-cycle will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4. Others, such as Bickerton (1981a), emphasize the discontinuity between a newly emergent creole and the antecedent pidgin based largely on the fact that creoles share a great many semantactic similarities which cannot be traced to their respective pidgin ancestors. These newly created features must in his view be the result of innate language universals, These will be looked at in 2.9 and Ch. 7.

2.6 Expansion and elaboration of creoles

Valdman (1977a:175) has observed that an important question in pidgin and creole linguistics is the degree of elaboration undergone by the terminus a quo of existing creoles. The standard view voiced by Hall and others is that pidginization and creolization are mirror image processes. This implies two stages in the development of creoles. The first involves rapid and drastic restructuring which produces a language variety which is reduced and simplified with respect to the base language. The second step consists of the elaboration of this variety as its functions expand and it becomes nativized.

It is by no means clear that all of the kinds of changes which typically go on in the expansion of a pidgin and under creolization involve an increase in complexity. For example, one characteristic of creoles is that they tend to have particles to express tense and aspect distinctions. Pidgins normally use adverbial expressions. Valdman (1977a:157) notes that it is not readily apparent how the signalling of tenses by means of particles instead of adverbs introduces greater complexity. Bickerton (1975a) traces the development of the verbal system of Guyanese Creole from a basically aspect-oriented system to a tense-oriented system via successive restructuring rather than the addition of new categories and more elaborated means of expressing them (*cf* 5.5). Labov (1970/1977) comments that although a language which relies on adverbs to express temporal distinctions may be rudimentary, it is hard to show that it is inadequate. It is not easy to understand why creoles develop obligatory tense markers, when there is no conceptual advantage in doing so, *ie* such a change does not increase the referential power of the language or add a new category. He concludes (1970/1977:36) that the main advantage which tense markers possess is their stylistic flexibility. They can be contracted or expanded to fit in with the requirements of different speech

tempos. Thus, this seems to be a case of simplification, but not impoverishment. Sturtevant (1917:166,175) points out a related aspect of simplicity. He notes that analytical languages are more economical in terms of the number of syllables required to communicate a given message because they avoid redundant repetition. Haiman (1985:165), however, says that this kind of economy is possible only if each morpheme is heard with total clarity. Frequent repetition results – by economy – in the diminution and decay of each morpheme. This, in turn, results in a demand for redundancy.

2.7 Towards a typology of pidgin and creole languages

In attempts by Stewart, Hymes, Fishman and others (*cf* especially Stewart 1962) to develop a typology to categorize kinds of languages/varieties according to their sociolinguistic characteristics, the main difference between a pidgin and creole lies in terms of the feature referred to as vitality. This means whether the language has a viable community of native speakers. Otherwise, pidgins and creoles share six features. That is, they lack standardization, historicity, and autonomy, but are reduced, mixed languages with de facto norms.

The feature **standardization** has to do with whether a language possesses an agreed set of codified norms which are accepted by the speech community and form the basis for teaching of it either as a first or second language. Codification has to have taken place and be accepted before a language can be said to be standardized. It isn't sufficient for a language to have grammars and dictionaries. Jamaican Creole, for example, has both (*cf eg* Bailey 1966; Cassidy and Le Page 1967), but it is not a standard language. Although its speakers have norms for use of the language, as is probably the case in all speech communities, these are not sanctioned by any externally recognized authorities of language or appealed to as arbiters in normative teaching. Standardization is a feature which is imposed on a language and not inherent in it, and may take place at any time. Some present-day standard languages have pidgin origins, such as Bahasa Indonesia, which is a standardized variety of pidgin Malay (*cf* Hall 1972 and Samarin 1980).

The feature **historicity** refers to whether the language has grown up through use by some ethnic or social group. This attribute is intended to divide first from second languages, on the assumption that the latter tend not to be used as markers of social identity or in an affective function. **Autonomy** has to do

with whether the language is accepted by its users as distinct from other languages or varieties. Speakers do not usually claim autonomy for non-standard varieties of a language, or for a pidgin or creole. This too is a difficult criterion to apply to a language as a whole since speakers may have differing attitudes towards its status. Sandefur (1984), for example, says that Kriol is regarded as a European language by second language and first generation creole speakers. Second generation creole speakers however regard it as an Aboriginal language and do not use it in the presence of whites. In the case of Tok Pisin many speakers regard it as an indigenous language, while others regard it as a language of colonialism (*cf* 4.3).

Tok Pisin is spreading as a general language of solidarity among Papua New Guineans of diverse ethnic origins. As indicated in 2.3 it is widely used and preferred in the House of Assembly. The former Prime Minister, Michael Somare, has on occasion chosen to speak abroad in Tok Pisin rather than English, even though he publicly endorses the use of English as the language of international relations. The *Post Courier* (14 Dec. 1977) carried the following report:

> Shortly before he met the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Fukuda, a few days ago, Mr Somare surprised Japanese officials by requesting a three-way interpretation. When the talks got underway, Mr Somare, whose English is excellent, spoke in pidgin. The secretary for Foreign Relations, Mr Tony Siagura, translated the pidgin into English, and this in turn was translated for Mr Fukuda by the Japanese interpreter. A Papua New Guinea Official said later Mr Somare believed he should use pidgin because he could express his thoughts better.

Somare's attitude towards the role of the two languages can be seen in the following report from *Wantok* (10 July 1976):

> Na praim minista i bin tok olsem: 'Miting yumi mas yusim Tok Inglis long skul na long bisnis na long toktok wantaim arapela kantri. Na mi no laikim Tok Pisin long wanem em i gat planti Tok Inglis insait long en. Miting planti yumi long olgeta hap i yusim Tok Inglis pinis, olsem mi laikim em i kamap na nasenel tok ples bilong PNG.' Na taim em i mekim dispela tok, em i yusim Tok Pisin.
>
> [The Prime Minister spoke thus: 'I think we must use English in our schools and for business and discussions with other countries. I don't like Tok Pisin which is mixed with a lot of English. I feel very strongly that we've used English for all sorts of purposes, and I want it to become the national language of Papua New Guinea.' At the time he made this speech, he was using Tok Pisin.

Here we see a desire expressed for the two languages to remain separate and to be used in different domains. English is viewed as the language to be used in an international context. It is interesting, however, that Somare takes a decidedly negative attitude towards the adoption of English words into Tok Pisin. Although he favours English as the best choice for a national language, it is clear that Tok Pisin has positive affective value for Papua New Guineans (*cf* also 4.3 and Romaine 1986).

The remaining two distinguishing features of pidgins and creoles are formal. **Reduction** means that the language makes use of a smaller set of structural relations and items in the syntax, phonology and lexicon than some related variety of the same language. **Mixture** has to do with whether the language consists essentially of items and structures derived from no source outside itself.

There are problems with virtually all these features when applied to either pidgins and/or creoles. With regard to the criterion of mixture, for example, it can be said that no language develops in isolation. There are hardly any 'pure' languages, though as Hall (1966:117) noted, some are purer than others (*cf* 3.4). There do not seem to be any clear criteria for determining how much mixture there must be in any given case of language contact before deciding that we are dealing with a case of pidginization or creolization as distinct from the effects of borrowing and interference. It is also not clear how much weight should be attached to mixture at the phonological as opposed to syntactic and lexical level. Some have defined a pidgin as a mixed language, which has the grammar of one language (the substrate) and the lexicon of another (the superstrate, *cf eg* Adler 1977:12). As Hoenigswald (1971:478) puts it 'The historian's problem is whether the outcome of nearly total lexical borrowing from one language (B) into another (A) can be distinguished from the outcome of the acquisition of B by speakers of A with substratum effects from B. In one case the outcome could be said to be a continuation of A, despite the B vocabulary, while in the other, the outcome could be said to be a continuation of B despite the A grammar.' A pidgin cannot be defined as simply the result of heavy borrowing from one variety into another since there is no pre-existing structure into which items may be borrowed. Thus, a so-called English-based pidgin is not a variety of English which has borrowed a substantial amount of its syntax from other languages. In fact, it seems that mixing at the syntactic and morphological level is virtually impossible in the formative stage of pidgin development. It becomes more important once stabilization and expansion have taken place (*cf* Mühlhäusler 1981b). As I have already shown in the case of Tok Pisin, it becomes more prominent when a pidgin comes into renewed contact with its original lexifier language. In Chapter 4 I will look further into this issue.

With regard to reduction, we can say, following Gilbert (1981:209), that there has been a tendency to define pidgins in terms of what they lack, *eg* copula, articles, inflectional morphology, etc. Moreover, this comparison tends to be carried out between present-day standard varieties of the lexifier languages and the pidgin without regard for the fact that both would have changed considerably. Moreover, the pidgin was more likely to have had more input from regional or non-standard varieties of the lexifier language. Posner comments (1983:195) that some of the developments which have been attributed to substratum influence in Haitian Creole may simply be ordinary internal developments which are not too far removed from what is going on in Canadian French today (*cf* also 3.5).

As far as the sociolinguistic features of standardization, autonomy, and historicity are concerned, Tok Pisin is a difficult case to assess. Firstly, it has undergone considerable standardization through its use by missionaries in publications, and the issue of standardization has been debated extensively by linguists (*cf* especially the papers in McElhanon 1975). Wurm (1985) discusses various attempts to develop standardized orthographies for the language. A proposal by Hall (1955b) was approved by the Director of Education and the Administrator of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and by the Minister for the Territories in Canberra. In an official publication issued by the Department of Education in 1956 it was recognized officially and was used with a few minor changes in Mihalic's grammar and dictionary (1957). A modified orthography was used in the translation of the New Testament (*Nupela Testamen* 1966). In 1969 an Orthography Committee was set up, and it recommended that the spelling system employed in *Nupela Testamen* be recognized as the official orthography, and that the variety of Tok Pisin spoken along the north coast of mainland New Guinea should be the standard. However, in the absence of official endorsement, the proposals were largely ignored by government departments and agencies. Even after independence in 1975 recognition is lacking. In 1981 the name Tok Pisin was accepted as the official designation of the language, and it now has official status along with English and Hiri Motu. This orthography is however accepted widely, as it appears in a more recent edition of Mihalic's (1971)

grammar and dictionary, in a course for foreign learners (Dutton 1973) and in *Wantok*, the weekly newspaper which has a circulation of over 10,000. There is considerable linguistic documentation of the grammar of Tok Pisin in the recent *Handbook of Tok Pisin* (Wurm and Mühlhäusler 1985) which could serve as the source of an official standard, and the basis for language planning and development. So far, however, there is no recognition of an official grammar.

Moag (1978:85) says that Pidgin Fijian meets the criterion of standard language if we take the main characteristic of such a language to be minimal variation in form. Siegel (1975) however has claimed that there are several kinds of Pidgin Fijian based on different regional dialects. Moag, however, ignores the aspect of codification, which does not exist for the language.

Another aspect of standardization which pidgin languages generally fail to meet is that although there is minimal variation in form in a standard language, there is maximal elaboration of function. Pidgins by definition are generally used for restricted communicative purposes. Expanded pidgins, such as Tok Pisin and West African English, however, may show a wider range of uses, and in some cases these may be equivalent to those which a native speaker of a non-pidgin language might command. Both Nigerian Pidgin English and Tok Pisin, however, have viable creole communities while continuing to serve as second languages for most of their speakers. In such a situation a speaker's dominant language may not be the language first acquired. This suggests a revision in our terminology, along the lines suggested by Mafeni (1971:112), who writes of his own language skills:

> I have the feeling I speak Pidgin more fluently than any other Nigerian language which I know and use. Although my mother tongue is Isako, Yoruba seems to be the dominant substrate in my variety of Pidgin.

We can use the term **primary language** to refer to the language which is best mastered by a speaker. This is not necessarily the first acquired language (or mother-tongue). All other languages of a bilingual person are secondary languages.

2.8 The minimal structural requirements of pidgins and creoles

If we start from a linguistic point of view in defining the characteristics of pidgins and creoles, we could ask what the minimal structural requirements for such languages are. Koopman and

Lefebvre (1981:216), for example, suggest that young pidgins are characterized by two features: (i) a vocabulary defined in terms of major features, nouns and verbs (*ie* [+N,−V] and [−N,+V]. Except for a few quantifiers, they show no class of words defined in terms of minor features; (ii) minimal sentence structure. That is to say, that there are no morphosyntactic categories, *eg* auxiliary. The impossibility of clefting, embedding and topicalization are accounted for by the fact that S is the highest node. They propose a simple phrase structure rule, S → (adverb) NP VP (adverb). Adverb positions are filled by adverbs which encode tense, mood and aspect and also negative markers.

As far as the minimal structural requirements for a creole are concerned, Koopman and Lefebvre (1981:216) propose the following: (i) vocabulary defined in terms of major syntactic categories, *ie* noun, verb, preposition, adjective, and in terms of morphosyntactic features, *eg* tense; (ii) the structure of the lexicon is reflected in base rules containing positions defined in terms of major and minor features. For example, there may be a provision for auxilaries and determiners. Assuming SVO word order, the minimal sentence structure for creoles is: S → NP (Negative) AUX VP (adverb), with further scope for embedding, topicalization and clefting provided by rules such as S → [±TOP] S.

The problem with such characterizations is that they are static and purely formal. They ignore the fact that pidgins and creoles are developing systems which may overlap in terms of the structural complexity reached at any point in their life-cycle depending on their functions. A more recent attempt to pinpoint specific features as typological traits of creoles can be found in Bickerton (1981a), which I will look at next.

2.9 Twelve features of creole grammars

Bickerton (1981a:Ch. 2) identifies twelve features which he believes to characterize creole grammars (*cf* also Taylor 1971:294 for twelve features, some of which are different):

(i) movement rules
(ii) articles
(iii) tense – modality – aspect systems
(iv) realized and unrealized complements
(v) relativization and subject-copying
(vi) negation
(vii) existential and possessive
(vii) copula