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Trabajo Fin de Grado

**English-based pidgins
and creoles:
development and main
features**

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Junio, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	ABSTRACT	3
2	INTRODUCTION	4
3	PIDGINS AND CREOLES	5
	3.1 Pidgins and pidginization	5
	3.2 Creoles and creolization	9
4	THE CREOLE CONTINUUM	14
5	HISTORY OF PIDGIN AND CREOLE STUDIES, AND THEORIES OF CREATION	16
	5.1 Monogenesis theory	18
	5.2 Polygenesis theory	19
	5.3 The superstrate and substrate theory	20
	5.4 The mixed language theory	21
	5.5 Universalist theory	21
	5.6 The foreign talk and baby talk theories	23
6	LINGUISTIC CHANGES	23
	6.1 Syntax	23
	6.2 Morphology	24
	6.3 Lexis	25
	6.4 Pronunciation	26
7	ENGLISH-BASED PIDGINS AND CREOLES	29
	7.1 Jamaican Creole	30
	7.2 Papua-New Guinea	31
8	FINAL REMARKS	33
9	REFERENCES	34

1. Abstract

ABSTRACT

The objective of this project is to explain the notions of pidgin and creole. It is a detailed approach to these notions emphasizing the importance of their processes of creation, as well as the history that influences them directly. In order to do this, I begin by giving detailed definitions of these concepts, differentiating one from the other and explaining their characteristics. Later, I continue with the explanation of the situation after the development of both concepts, the so-called Creole continuum. After that, I explain the different theories and hypotheses about the creations of those languages and their reasons. Following this, I expose the general linguistic characteristics of both, sometimes with a difference between the two concepts and some others not, since the differentiation is not so clear on some occasions. Finally, I exemplify these concepts with two language varieties in which one of the influences is English, to end with the final conclusions.

Keywords: varieties, English linguistics, creole, pidgin

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo se basa en profundizar en las nociones de *pidgin* y *creole*. Se trata de un acercamiento detallado a estas nociones recalcando la importancia de sus procesos de creación, así como la historia que les influye de manera directa. Para ello, comienzo estableciendo definiciones detalladas sobre dichos conceptos, diferenciando uno de otro y explicando sus características. Después, prosigo con la explicación de la situación tras el desarrollo de ambos conceptos, el denominado *creole continuum*. Tras ello, explico las diferentes teorías e hipótesis sobre las creaciones de dichas lenguas y sus motivos. A continuación, expongo las características lingüísticas generales de ambas, a veces con una diferenciación explícita y otras no, ya que dicha diferenciación no es a veces clara. Por último, ejemplifico dichos conceptos con dos variedades lingüísticas en las cuales una de las influencias es el inglés, para terminar con las conclusiones al trabajo.

Palabras clave: variedades, lingüística inglesa, *creole*, *pidgin*

2. Introduction

This project is an approach to the concepts of pidgin and creole with an open view, not focusing on a particular perspective. How pidgins and creoles are created is also explored with regards to their inner historical developments, making an emphasis on the social and individual factors that make possible the creation of those unique language varieties.

After the abstract and the introduction, the third section is devoted to the definition of pidgins and creoles, and the correspondent pidginization and creolization processes. Here are developed the main features and the inner characteristics of both of them, contrasting the ideas of different authors so that a wider and better definition can be obtained.

The fourth section makes reference to the creole continuum, the processes that intervene in the creation of pidgins and creoles, such as basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal features.

The fifth section pays attention to the different theories proposed throughout the years of study of these language varieties, a few of them being more important or supported by a larger number of experts than others.

The sixth section is focused on the linguistic changes that are produced in the languages in which English has an influence as a lexifier, therefore those changes were a result of the comparison between pidgins and creoles and the English language. It is focused on syntax, morphology, lexis and pronunciation.

In the seventh section these pidgins and creoles are exemplified by centring on two varieties in which English plays a fundamental role, Jamaican Creole and Tok Pisin.

Finally, the last two sections are devoted to the final remarks of this project, and the references used.

The topic of this project is the result of my personal interest in it. During my academic formation in the University I have been taught in different areas, and in one of them the notions of pidgin and creole appeared. It was studied very shortly, due to the numerous topics that we had to deal with. But I was particularly interested in these two notions and wanted to know more, so I decided to look for information about them and thought that it would be something interesting, enriching and not very frequently explored to write my final dissertation.

3. Pidgins and creoles

This section is going to be devoted to the main important features and characteristics of pidgins and creoles, and their processes of pidginization and creolization. As Bickerton states (2016: 5):

It is generally assumed that speakers of different languages at first evolved some form of auxiliary contact-language, native to none of them (known as a *pidgin*), and that this language, suitably expanded, eventually became the native (or *creole*) language of the community which exists today.

Following this idea, a distinction between the two of these terms is made, taking into account the different common elements shared by both of them.

3.1 Pidgin and pidginization

Pidgins and creoles are linguistically relevant to the understanding of linguistic change in our days. They can be seen from different perspectives and explained from various points of view, and although the usual target of study is normally the protolanguages from which they descend, those pidgins and creoles are relegated to a second place. Therefore, a distinction has been made between the old languages, which are considered more interesting in terms of analysis, and the so-called new languages, such as pidgins and creoles. These new languages have gained popularity among scholars recently because they are a perfect illustration of how a language can change and, especially, to assess the changes that are in progress. They are also a clear example of how external and internal factors are suitable characteristics to affect the development of a language in its different internal components.

The definition of a pidgin can be obtained from different perspectives, but the majority of authors, like Mühlhäusler (1986), Romaine (2006) or Bickerton (2016), agree in a number of key factors in order to define it. Hence, a pidgin is a type of language that is created artificially and not as a result of a natural development. It develops in a particular context in which various speakers of different languages are, for some reasons, together and they need to communicate. As Gramley (2012) explains, regarding history, pidgin languages tend to develop in a specific context in which slavery, trade of human beings and/or plantation labour appear. Therefore, it can be said that they are contact languages, in the sense that they are a product of human interaction in particular and fixed situations. Another characteristic of pidgins is that they have the possibility of being a temporary and provisional means of communication, or also the

possibility of being a somewhat permanent and fixed code of language. According to these two previously stated features, they are also defined as marginal languages. But the most important factor regarding them is that they cannot be considered the native language of any of its speakers, it is an artificial language that is used as a tool in a moment in which the speakers of different languages are in need for communication, and because of that they are labelled as non-native languages. These pidgins have the property of being a mixture of a native language and a non-native one, which tends to be the language of a colonial power. From these colonial and native languages, they use construction, sounds, words and strategies for communication, in which the most relevant features are normally the ones that appear in a dominant language, which is usually the colonial one. It is clear that a pidgin is created by borrowing different elements of several languages, but these elements can be adopted in a reduced way, which is a mechanism that speakers use in order to simplify and lower the difficulty of languages, making it simpler. This reduction affects fundamental factors of the languages such as aspects of not only syntax, but grammar in general and the usage of the languages. In other words, a pidgin is used in fewer situations and it permits a reduced stylistic differentiation. In this sense, the term can be further defined as a reduced language.

Thus, a pidgin is a reduced language which is used in particular situations in which the speakers are not native language speakers of it and they need it in order to be able to communicate with other people, and this language becomes impoverished in the sense that it is reduced and mixed. In terms of linguistics, they contain a huge variety of characteristics and properties of different languages, but pidgins carry an important load that will be provided by a dominant language that came from the speakers with the highest social prestige and most of the vocabulary comes from this dominant language. For a language to be considered a pidgin, however, it needs to have a set of norms and be stable.

But there is a huge variety of pidgins regarding these definitions. Some pidgins are more make-shift or improvised, which means that the native language of its speakers is more present (for example, trade jargons, explained below) than other pidgins, which have been used for a long period of time, being more structured in their systems, even containing internal ways for the derivation of words, a more elaborated syntax and a changing and expanded phonology (in contrast with the previous jargons, these are termed by Mühlhäusler, 1986, stabilized and expanded pidgins).

As can be seen, as Gramley (2012) states, the wide definition of a pidgin implies taking into account factors from society, linguistics and history. They cannot be mistaken with other terms that possess some of these characteristics, like a trade jargon, which is defined as a reduced variety of a pidgin in contrast with an extended one; a lingua franca, which is a simplified and reduced form of a particular language used for communication in limited situations with non-native participants; a koiné, which is a standard variety of language that has emerged as the result of the combination of two or more varieties of the same language; and a dialect, which can be considered a diversification of a language which is opposed to other types due to particular features such as age, class, region, gender, etc.

According to the ideas expressed by Bickerton (2016), during the first contact between the dominant language or superstrate, frequently the European group, and the non European language or substratum, the speakers of the latter learn the European language. Then, this pidgin creation is established in a particular group, and they are the ones that are in charge of spreading the new language within the rest of the groups which are being dominated. Little by little this non native group of language users become the majority of the population. Therefore, the version adopted by the first group is now different from the one that uses the majority of the group.

The main reason why these pidgin languages appeared was European colonization, which took place from the seventeenth century up to the nineteenth century. As Mufwene (2008) states, this colonization process built the perfect path for the creation of those new varieties of an already existent language. The term ‘pidgin’ does not have a clear etymology, but it seems to come from the English word *business*. Many of these new languages came from the slavery process and the trade routes from the European countries to the colonies in the Atlantic, South American and Pacific, in which the dominant powers created a group of people that was forced to learn a new language if they wanted to communicate, and therefore to live.

Focusing on that slavery process, particularly focusing on European colonization and imperialism in Africa, it produced a linguistic change and shock to the people that suffered it. Thousands and thousands of people were taken from their homes and transferred to Central and South America, especially in the Caribbean area. Once they were there, their native languages became useless, and in order to survive they produced a simplified version that served only for certain purposes. This situation was not something unexpected for the slave traders, who deliberately and consistently mixed

people with different backgrounds and different languages. This was a way of controlling them, so they could not rebel against the master due to the fact that they were not able to communicate to each other appropriately. This situation was directly copied in North America as well.

But communication, in its most basic form, was really necessary, either between the master and his or her slaves or between the slaves themselves. In that particular moment the creation of the pidgin took place, a language with a specific purpose of basic and simple communication. These languages extended its use to other situations such as the trading situations in Africa; therefore it was originally considered a trade language.

History is the most important factor in the development of pidgins around the world. The Americas and Africa were used as the major market of slavery globally. Indian people did not become a suitable target due to the fact of their economic background, and foremost, because of their ease of getting sick. Originally, European people were used as indentured servants, using marginal people as slaves. But they rebelled, or ran away, so the final option was the use of African people. They were disciplined, they were not Christians, therefore they were not considered as equal human beings by the surrounding society at the time, and also the colonizers could take thousands of them. If they tried to escape, they were brought back and punished severely, as an example to the others.

Once they were captured and transferred to their respective new places, the creation of the languages for basic communication proceeded in two ways: pidginization and creolization. As stated by Gramley (2012), “[both] of these processes represent reactions to the radically changed social situation of their users and stand in stark contrast to relatively slow development of the more traditional forms of English.”

Regarding the process of pidginization, the movement of people from one place to another by force provoked a lifestyle change in those people. The differentiation between microcosm and macrocosm is highly relevant here. Microcosm here can be understood as those things related to a human being as an individual, such as a person’s behaviour or feeling; their intimate and unique world. Macrocosm refers to the view of a person as a part of a group, the different things related to that group such as manners, politeness markers and social status. In the case of those pidginization and slavery processes, they were not able to transport the macrocosm to their new ways of living, such as the notions of kings, courts, guild, market or armies. Regarding the microcosm,

it indeed was transported in terms of religion, oral traditions, family structure, etc. These are aspects that reflect an essential presence in the notion of the language. They had to create words to express ideas and perceptions which were necessary to them and some others that were not used or necessary were left behind gradually, until they disappeared.

3.2 Creoles and creolization

A step beyond pidginization is creolization. For a pidgin to become a creole it must acquire a vital characteristic, which is having native speakers. Thus, a creolization is the evolution of a pidgin language into a creole in the sense that the language acquires the feature of having native speakers of its own. This is a really complex process, explained through different perspectives. It is the case of children who are born in an environment in which their input or linguistic information received is a pidgin. They acquire this artificial language as their own, therefore naturalising it and producing the creation of a more complex language whose boundaries are opened to new necessities. In the process of changing from a pidgin to a creole, or from an artificial to a native language, the pidgin language changes in its nature. One feature that clearly shifts in the change is the feature of reduction. The new creole expands syntactically, morphologically and lexically. The reason why this expansion occurs is understandable in the sense that the contexts of usage are widely amplified, due to the fact that the language is not restricted to certain situations but it is used for all the needs of communication. In some cases, even expressions in written texts become standardized. In that sense, the notion of marginality cannot be applied anymore to the list of creole characteristics. Also, the mixture from which the pidgin came out and the contact that described the creation of the pidgin cannot be taken into account as a final synchronic feature, they are only historical features. These features do not affect the language directly but in a vague manner; they affect its origin, but not their current developmental processes.

Now it is relevant to observe the acquisition of a pidgin and its creolization from a nativist's theory. One of its precursors was Noam Chomsky (1964), who proposed that, in his view, children are born with a capacity that is innate and universal to develop language in the same way as other biological functions are, such as vision, for example. However, for the development of the language it is necessary that children are in an environment with other people who speak to them and interact with them, but the biological endowment of children will make the task of appropriating the language of

their community easier. Humans are born with some kind of device that makes us predisposed to acquire the language, that is, a systematic perception of the language around us that allows the construction of an internal linguistic system. Chomsky refers to this phenomenon as the LAD —the metaphorical Language Acquisition Device. The LAD, therefore, is part of the human genetic endowment inherited by the child. This language in particular, the creole, is the result of the acquisition of a native language under a weakened input, learned by children through these LAD's. Directly related to this, Bickerton (2016: 125) states that “[a] Mother could not teach these children to speak, for the simple and inescapable reason that Mother herself did not know the language —the language didn't exist yet. But even so, without Mother, those children learned how to speak.”

Etymologically, according to Mufwene (2008: 556), ‘creole’ is a term which was originally created in the Iberian colonies, apparently in the sixteenth century. It made reference to the people who were born in the American colonies but were not indigenous people. In other words, it refers to the people whose merely immediate ancestors belong to the metropolis and not to the colony. It was first adopted in the metropolis in Spain, then it was transferred to France and finally the term arrived in England by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The surprising thing is that by the middle of this same century, the term was already extended to all the descendants of African people and European people who were born in the colonies.

But this meaning did not include yet the notion of the language we are dealing with. It is not until the eighteenth century that the notion of creole as a language is being used by speakers. The real purpose of naming the language and the majority of the things related to the colony as ‘creole’ was in order to distinguish the colonial population from the metropolis. Although it is not clear how the term was associated to the current notion of creole, some speakers of pidgin and creole languages thought of themselves as speakers of a dialect of the superstrate, or colonial, language.

Furthermore, according to the external history of creoles, a distinction among different types can be made Arends (1994: 15) and Bickerton (2016: vii). They are plantation creoles, fort creoles and maroon creoles:

1. Plantation creoles were that kind of creoles that evolved from the pidgin spoken in the particular areas. In the Atlantic zone of Central and South America, there were plantations in which a huge number of slaves coming from the West African coast between Senegal and Angola were purchased. It is interesting that

at the beginning of the process of colonization, Amerindian people were also used as slaves and indentured workers. In the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, the main way whereby they got to people was by means of indenture. They were workers under contract who had to work for a specific time for the metropolis and were treated as slaves. Here, after the slaves settle and begin to create the pidgin, this particular kind of creole emerged.

2. Fort creoles were used in the fortified posts that existed in the West African coast from which the Europeans displayed their commercial transaction businesses. In there, they were in need of using a way of communication, both among the African slaves and also between the African and the European people. The appearance of interethnic communication among European people living in the households with African women is highly relevant, therefore using some kind of contact language that finally ended up in creoles, specifically when speaking to those children who were living in those houses. According to Hancock (1986), one of these creoles is the Guinea Coast Creole English, which appears due to the interaction between African and European people in Upper Guinea.
3. Maroon creoles: the third group is the one less explored so far. The contact situation is that of slaves that ran away from their plantations and formed their own communities in other parts of the different countries. They were relatively isolated if we compare them with the previous examples. Today, most of these communities have been occupied by the dominant society of the place in which they lived. There is an exception, however, the Surinam maroons. They are spread in several tribes, preserving traditions and culture up to our current day. Great variations cannot be expected since the base came from a plantation creole, but as they have developed out of the influence of the metropolis, some divergence can appear.

Regarding the role of the substrate language in the development of the creole, a distinction can be made between endogenous and exogenous creoles, according to the ideas expressed by Arends (1994: 17). The former group refers to those creoles in which the native language of the population undergoing the creole process was spoken, for example Kituba in Africa. The latter group refers to those people who were transported from one place to another, as can be seen in the creoles that were created in the

Americas. This distinction is also useful to understand the influence that the substrate has in the development of the creole, in the sense that in those endogenous groups, the opportunities of using the native language instead of the creole is higher, therefore the influence of the substrate will also be higher. On the other hand, those exogenous groups had really restricted opportunities to produce and speak in their native languages; therefore the superstrate language will perform an essential role in the creation of the creole.

In this process of development of a creole, demography factors become essential. There are two reasons for this. The first is that some of these demographic factors establish preconditions for the creolization process to take place. Some models assume that the creole is created when the children of the first generation after the pidgin learn the language as their mother tongue. Therefore, demographic results are suitable to provide some information regarding extra-linguistic proofs for some theories of creolization. In a second stage, there are some factors that are extremely important because thanks to them it is possible to assess the nature of the creolization process, even though they are not directly related to the conditions for this process. One of the key factors regarding this stage is the quantity or number of black and white people in the colony. The reason why this is relevant is because the presence of models speaking the superstrate language is a vital condition for the transmission of this language to the second language learners. This can be further divided in two main important events, following Arends (1994: 22). The first event refers to the moment in history whereby the number of black and white population is levelled. The second event refers to the moment in which the number of local people born there, both creoles and whites, reaches the same quantity as the colonizing white population. It is in here when the creolization process takes place, or at least the conditions are fulfilled, although some further important factors may appear, such as the rate of import of slaves or the development in white population numbers.

Some examples of English based creoles proposed by Bickerton (2016) are the Guyanese Creole and Hawaiian Creoles. As an example of the Guyanese Creole variety we can contrast the sentence in Standard English “there was a knife” with the sentence in Guyanese Creole *it a wan naif*. In the middle of these two sentences, the explanation would be the use of the existential “there”, whose absence transformed it into the sentence “it exist one knife”. Therefore it represents a very straightforward and

presumably easier way of expressing the same thing by having the substrate language as reference in the superstrate one.

It is true that the relation existing between pidgins and creoles, and their origins and typological relation, has been a subject of debate that lasts until today. These two forms of language appear to face any previous conventional model of language change, since neither do they belong to forms of the European language, from which they took almost the majority of their vocabulary, nor to the native language that their speakers possessed. The most extended perspective is that creolization is the result of pidginization, that is to say, that it is necessary to have a previous history of an already created pidgin for a creole to exist. What this perspective implies is a development that has two stages. The first development implies that a quick and severe change is produced to restructure a simpler and reduced language variety, which refers to the pidginization process. The second development is composed of making the variety more elaborate, becoming native to the speakers or serving as the first language to most of its speakers. Therefore, the linguistic tools of a creole should be adequate to comprise the communicative needs of the different speakers.

But what is interesting is the level of stability that the creole acquires during its nativization. It has to do with the internal structural complexity and degree of expansion that the previous pidgin has undergone during its life cycle. The fact that the creolization process occurs at any time during the developmental continuum of the creole is essential to understand why the creole looks the way it does. For example, if the creolization occurs when the pidgin is still a jargon, then the expansion that the creole must suffer is higher in order to fulfil the capacities and necessities that the pidgin lacks.

Nonetheless, there is an actual possibility in which the pidgin might expand without the nativization process. Whenever this situation occurs, the two languages, the pidgin and the creole, are to be overlapped in terms of complexity and structure, and discerning differences between them could become a really hard task taking into account that they are similar in a huge variety of aspects.

An example of this process is the complexity and lexical richness of pidgins like Tok Pisin or Vanuatu Bislama in comparison with many early creoles. Therefore we can conclude that the creolization process is not the only example for the complexity of this kind of languages, and probably the ‘same’ language is suitable to exist as both a pidgin and a creole.

4. The creole continuum

Following Bickerton's (2016) ideas, there is a change that is suitable to appear among creole population which is known as decreolization. According to Bickerton (2016: 44), "[this] can affect any creole which has remained in contact with its superstrate, as most have." Then, decreolization may result in the creation of a continuum of varieties in an intermediate level between the already existent creole and the previous superstrate. The process can be long and intense enough, and then it provokes that this continuum makes the creole disappear. However, it is extremely difficult to assess the main difference between the new variety and the creole. The comparison between a proper creole and a decreolized one may only produce a sense of difference that may not exist in their original conditions.

In its life-cycle, a creole language tends to co-exist with a standard language, from which the creole commonly derives its lexicon. The process of decreolization occurs when this creole version tends to evolve step by step towards the standard variety of the language, creating a range of intermediate varieties which is known as a post-creole continuum.

There are some demographic differences in the process of decreolization too. It is not the same for a creole to be spoken in a place in which it is popular and acceptable than in a place in which its related standard variety of language has remained an official language. Therefore, as Gramley (2012) proposes, there is no strict differentiation between the basilect creole and the acrolect standard, merely a continuum of varieties in an intermediate level known as mesolect.

The basilect is the broadest form of a creole, the linguistic variety which is located at the bottom of the continuum. It is the most stranded variety to the acrolect. The mesolect is the intermediate varieties between the basilect and the acrolect. It is more prestigious socially than the basilectal form, and it is spoken by servants and slaves, even in plantations. Finally, the acrolect is the most prestigious variety of a language, also known as the standard. It is the main source of influence for the rest of the varieties spoken in the region. For example, in Jamaica, the acrolect would be Standard English, whereas the basilect would be Jamaican Creole:

Basilect	Mi a nyam
Mesolect	Me a eat < me eatin' < I eatin' < I is eatin'
Acrolect	I am eating

Table 1. An example of different forms taken by the same expression in Jamaica, according to Singh (2000: 74)

In these countries where English is the official language, creoles are seen as a form of English, more specifically a broken variety of English, even a ‘bastard’ or ‘bad’ variety. A pejorative connotation towards what this language represents is implied, taking as example Jamaica or Guyana. This situation is possible even in countries where the population does not have English as an official language, but the access to the English language, through the radio or press, is so common and usual that the social status of the creole is really low. In Central America it is the case for a group of varieties. Even in some places a curious situation arose, due to the fact that in places like Surinam, whose official language is Dutch, an English-based creole, called Sranan, is regularly used. Therefore, it has English as its lexifier but the acrolectal form is not English, but Dutch.

In these places there is a crucial difference among the acrolect and the other varieties that lie in the middle or in the continuum. Basically the reason why speakers make a difference among the versions is their reluctance to speak any version that differs from the standard. It is surprising that instead of enriching this sense of pride and self-consciousness as a different society, the tendency is to be more approximate to the acrolect rather to their basilectal identities.

In fact, as Gramley (2012) states, there is a great deal of controversy referring to the existence or not of this intermediate level or continuum. Instead of dividing the language according to that set of principles, it has been classified focusing on distinct varieties. Depending on that, whenever two varieties coexist, one of them will presumably obtain a more prestigious status than the other. This other is considered as the low or vernacular language, producing a clear example of diglossia, which is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a term that refers to the situation whereby two languages or varieties are used by the same group of speakers in different conditions.

Speakers lose the features of their basilect from the top down, in order to adapt their language to the Standard. However, the movement is not solely in the direction of adapting to the acrolectal version. Even the standard itself is ready to embrace some creole elements, merely when speakers of a creole are willing to move up in society and they obtain more social prestige. Thus, even though they try hard to adapt themselves to the Standard version, they will carry a load of elements of the creole versions.

This ambiguity raises the issue of what makes a creole a creole, either its particular socio-historical nature of development or the specific structural characteristics. According to that, a creole cannot stop being a creole because it has lost some of its features, since those basilectal and mesolectal features still exist in the communities where the creole is used. There is no measuring rod in order to test the structural differences from the base, especially when we refer to the feature of composition of that base, because it does not have the same relevance in all the possible settings. It is clear that history, social issues, contact and developmental factors play an essential role in the processes of creolization and decreolization.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight the fact that the decreolization process occurs in a moment in which the colony settlement has already disappeared or it is in the process. The society at this time tends to assimilate its previous culture and way of living, but the presence of the metropolis is still too important and this makes the language change towards the standard instead of changing to previous situations.

5. History of pidgin and creole studies, and theories of creation

The different creoles around the world seem to have nothing but the name in common. The vast majority of them are not spoken in the same area, but they are considered to share some features in common in order to be studied as a whole and unified group. Therefore, there is an implicit presupposition that the creole languages as a unity share some features that need to have a theory behind in order to explain them.

The first written materials we have in which creoles appear are the dictionaries and religious texts that the missionaries wrote; they did this in order to educate the slaves in the Christian belief through these translations, in the eighteenth century. Hence, the best way to assure that the slaves understood what they were being taught was approaching their local languages and adapting their texts to them.

In the Virgin Islands appears the first instance of the English term ‘creole’ attributed to a language, around the middle of the eighteenth century. A Moravian missionary referred to the creole Negerhollands as a *carriolsche*. Here was written the first grammar of a creole by a local family. From then onwards, the phenomenon of creoles has been studied as a historical development.

The study of creole languages as a systematic field of research started about a century ago, more or less. Schuchardt’s articles started as a unification of the historical developments of Romance languages, then Hesselning’s works started to focus on the influence of Greek and its dialects in the Roman Empire times, then to Byzantine time up to Modern Greek. Both scholars share a number of exemplifications and studies, such as simplification, reanalysis or complexity, which were really useful for creole studies.

It is not until the second part of the twentieth century that the field of creole studies begins to gain importance among linguists up to today, when it remains in the centre of linguistic studies. The reason for this is the independence of several countries from the metropolis and the necessity of a cultural identification.

The principal effort in the research of pidgin studies is to create a theory that explains the origin, formation and development of the languages implied. There is a necessity to research and find some shared properties among creoles. The property may vary depending on the theory studied:

- One property is the assumption that creoles are more similar to each other than what we traditionally understand by “languages” can be. It is clear for linguists and scholars that creole languages share some structural factors. It is this resemblance that makes them believe that this cannot simply happen by chance, or because of the similarity among the different European languages. There must be something else that is the reason why so many common characteristics are present in creoles.
- Another extended belief about creole languages is simplicity. Creole languages are said to be simpler and easier than any other language due to their formation and appearance. That it is why a creole is supposed to be syntactically, phonologically and morphologically simpler than other languages are.

- A creole language is supposed to have a more mixed grammar than any other language is supposed to possess. A lot of people have actually distinguished between language and biology when they refer to the complexity of a creole. Some of them just propose that due to the fact that a huge amount of speakers of creole have European, Asian, Amerindian and African ancestors, the language that they produce is nothing more than a combination of different parts of the European vocabulary and some features of semantics and syntax of their different languages from Africa or Asia.
- Internal variability is said to appear with more frequency in pidgin and creole languages than in any others. They are characterised by being dynamic systems instead of languages as such, and they often coexist with their superstrate language.

These four assumptions are integrated from different perspectives in the theories of the genesis of creole languages proposed until today. These theories have been proposed in order to somehow explain these variability, similarity, simplicity and mixing features. Some of them may coincide with the assumptions proposed by other critics, and some of them may explain this phenomenon from a different point of view.

5.1 Monogenesis theory

This theory tries to explain the genesis of creoles. According to this, creoles are said to come from a specific and unique source. It showed up after various comparative studies about creoles, expressly when the different scholars involved in the study noticed that there were some important similarities among the different versions and their correspondent superstrate language. This theory is commonly known as the *lusogenesis* theory. The reason behind that name is the fact that Portuguese people were the first that colonized the Coast of Africa and created groups of slaves there. Therefore, it is clear that there was a contact with the Portuguese language since the first part of the sixteenth century. Following this idea, Portuguese people were the pioneers in the transportation of slaves to European countries, therefore spreading this Portuguese as a *lingua franca*.

But yet this theory did not explain the rest of European language based creoles. The solution was the creation of the *relexification* process, a process whereby a language changes a great deal of its lexicon in order to acquire from a lexifier language,

but without changing its grammar. Following Muysken's ideas, this means that creoles kept the grammar base from the proto-creole and adopted the new vocabulary that was imposed by the colony. The truth is that Portuguese vocabulary appears in many creoles all over the world, for example, as stated by Bickerton (2016: 74), "Crioulo¹ *ba* clearly derives from *kaba*, which in accordance with its Portuguese etymon is stressed on the final syllable. Papiamentu² *lo* equally clearly derives from Portuguese *logo*".

However, some criticism has been posed to this theory. For instance, some other models apart from the Portuguese are plausible to be used at the pidgin stage, although this pidgin stage precedes many of the developments of the creole.

There is also a variant of the monogenesis theory called the *restricted hypothesis*, which is less ambiguous. It is restricted to the creole languages that come from the English and French languages in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. It proposes the idea that there was a unique pidgin that existed in the West African Coast that afterwards created the original source for a huge range of creole languages. Then, the common features that these creoles possess are attributed to the existence of this early pidgin.

Nowadays, this theory lacks validity for many scholars.

5.2 Polygenesis theory or parallel development

This theory is based on two main features: the existence of an African substrate and the slave situation in plantations.

The African lexical influence has a relevant importance, in the sense that, although an African language could not have survived many generations of slaves, some words were maintained. Also calques and reduplication that came from the African language appear as loan translations. Focusing on that, reduplication came to be a really productive mechanism in order to create new words in creoles through calquing the African models. For example, in Jamaican creole we find *putta-putta* and in the Yoruba language *pòtòpotò*, both of them meaning "mud", therefore implying an African source. The influence of the lexis of the African language on creoles impregnates the entire vocabulary and, consequently, the effect on semantic features, and it also does in compound words, idioms and reduplications.

¹ Crioulo is a Portuguese based creole language spoken in Cape Verde.

² Papiamentu is a language spoken in Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire, in the Caribbean.

As stated before, the presence of the microcosm and the macrocosm spheres in the colonies relies directly on those cultural components of African slaves. It directly affected the development of linguistic features, because the language maintained usually came from the private field.

5.3 The superstrate and substrate theory

This theory about the creation of pidgins and creoles tries to explain the language left by the dominators of the colony in the dominated place. The term *superstrate* was coined by Wartburg in 1933. In accordance with this theory, the language spoken by the colonized population had a second place role in the formation of the creoles. They were socially and economically inferior to their colonizers, so they were interested in acquiring their language in order to improve their situation. They were imitating the more prestigious form, even though they thought that they were talking the same language and not a distortion of it.

For the colonizers, pidgins and creole languages were only a simplified version of their European languages, adding some substrate elements to it. They thought that the fact that colonized people, treated as savages and beasts in most of the cases, could learn and use and distort their language was a dishonourable offense. As mentioned previously, the speakers of the creole, whenever they got access to education, observed that their language was different from that superstrate language; therefore they tended to adapt it to the Standard (decreolization).

It is from the sixties onwards that the substrate language started to gain importance. Up to this moment language had been viewed from the colonizers' perspective, but as the decolonization process took place, the substrate language and whence its culture became more and more relevant.

The substrate language is considered to be submerged to that superstrate counterpart. Normally it is substituted by another because of the dominance or invasion. But the curious thing about this theory is that it points out that the submerged language does not just disappear, it leaves some features in the language spoken by the people who are forced to learn the new one. That is when pidgin, and subsequently creole, are created.

5.4 The mixed language theory

This theory was proposed by Schuchardt in 1890. He linked the language mixture to those pidgin and creole languages, but this mixture was understood as a rough mixture without having a proper structural pattern. Nowadays, the followers of this theory of creation state that the language is impure *per se*. Language mixture is not only that of a superstrate European language and an African or American substrate. Every language is a mixture on its own, as happens with English, having a mixture of French vocabulary and a particular grammar. Grammar can be also directly copied by another language, an example of this is *Lingua Geral* in colonial Brazil, whose vocabulary is Tupi and its grammar is Portuguese. Therefore, what this theory concludes is that languages are all mixed variations of other ones, in spite of the existence of languages with a higher degree of mixture.

5.5 Universalist theory

This theory is firmly supported by a well-known expert in this field, Derek Bickerton. Its main source came from the generative grammar proposed by Noam Chomsky in the sixties. What this theory proposes is that creole languages are more similar to each other than to their superstrate languages, due to the force of universals. If we assume that a creole forms a class that is synchronically definable, there should not be more approximate features between Melanesian Pidgin English and Haitian Creole French than between Melanesian Pidgin English and English.

Universalists claim that a creole is capable of showing more closely the universal grammar and the components that are innate to human language ability. The notion that universal grammar is exemplified by creoles is the core of the bioprogram hypothesis initially proposed by Bickerton in 1981 (edited again in 2016). It focuses on radical creoles, which are those creoles that have suffered a sudden creolization without having a big superstrate influence.

Following this universal theory and the bioprogram hypothesis, Bickerton (2016) proposed a number of features that are shared by creoles and that were not inherited from their previous pidgins, therefore constituting an example of the mechanism of the bioprogram:

1. The elements in which an emphasis is put are moved to initial position:

Se mache Jan mache al lekol “Walk, John walked to school” – Haitian Creole French.

2. The use of the definite article for presupposed specific NP (Noun phrases); indefinite articles for asserted specific NP; and zero for nonspecific NP. Taking into account the Hawai’i Creole English:
Presupposed → She wen go with *da* teacher – “the”
Asserted → She get *one* white truck – “a”
Nonspecific → Young guys they no get job.
3. Tense, mood and aspect are expressed through three preverbal morphemes. Now, taking into account the Haitian Creole French, we get:
Tense → *Li te mache* → he walked
Durative → *L’ap mache* → he is walking
Mood → *L’av(a) mache* → he will walk
4. Realized complement can be marked in a different way than the one used for either unrealized or unmarked complements.
5. Whenever the head noun is the subject of a given relative clause, creole languages mark relative clauses.
6. Non-definite subjects, the constituents of verb phrases which are non-definite too and the verb are negated in negative clauses:
Guyanese Creole English → *Non dag na bait non kyat* “no dog bit any cat”
7. For existential and possessive expressions, the same lexical item is used.
8. Creole languages use different forms for the meanings of the verb “to be”.
9. Adjectives are suitable to appear as verbs.
10. Intonation marks the difference between declarative sentences and questions; there are no differences in the word order.
11. Question particles appear at the end of the sentence and are optional.
12. Formally distinct passives do not appear.
13. Creoles form several verb constructions whereby two or more than two verbs have the same subject.

A comparison between the Hawaiian creole and the English-pidgin from which it came was proposed by Bickerton. He isolated the different characteristics he could find that did not belong to the language of origin, and therefore they cannot be

explained through them. Regarding the list above, he concludes that the creation of these rules is a result of the cognitive strategies used by the speakers of that creole.

The second step Bickerton took was comparing the different characteristics that he observed in the previous comparisons in the Hawaiian creole and other creole languages. Afterwards, he proposed that there were a great number of similarities among creole languages; hence there was a mental process that covered the defects that the previous languages had.

5.6 The foreign talk and baby talk theories

Proposed by Bloomfield in 1933, baby talk is a theory consisting of a language that is simplified by their speakers in order to adapt it with the purpose of communicating with children. Directly related to that, Ferguson proposed the foreign-talk theory, consisting of the language used by a person with a particular native language who wants to communicate to another person who does not understand this language.

The main feature of these theories is the assumption that European settlers adapted their speech when they spoke to the African slaves. According to this, they left out unnecessary endings and used a reduced way of talking.

Some criticism of it is that although there are a group of conventions about the way in which people simplify their languages, there are only imprecise similarities in the process of doing this.

6. Linguistic changes

As has been discussed in section 3.1, pidgins are simplified languages that are born from the mixture of different languages. This section is devoted to explaining the different simplification processes regarding syntax, morphology, lexis and pronunciation that affect pidgins and, by extension, creoles.

6.1 Syntax

Pidgins can be further divided regarding the syntax. This division can be made taking into account whether the pidgin is more recent in time and it has not expanded very much or whether it is older and it has had enough time to expand and stabilize.

On the one hand, the first option is clearly exemplified in Bickerton (2016: 21). Here appears Hawaiian Pidgin English, in which the native language of the speakers functions as the provider of the grammatical input:

difren bilifs dei get, sam gaiz
 ‘Some guys have different beliefs’

On the other hand, according to Mühlhäusler (1986: 159), Tok Pisin represents an example of stabilized and expanded pidgin. It is undergoing the process of creolization; therefore its grammar is more complex than the previous example. In the example below we have an instance of a resource extensively used in the formation of pidgins and creoles, the grammatical reanalysis. *Pela* comes from the English word “fellow”, and in this context it marks the plurality of the first and second person pronouns, thus it was grammaticalized.

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	Mi	Mi-pela
2 nd	Yu	Yu-pela
3 rd	Em	Em ol

Table 2. Mühlhäusler’s (1986) example of reanalysis.

A contrast made between the two different kinds of pidgin, the recent and the stabilized, is that the first tends not to have any means of expressing tense, number, and aspect, only relying on pragmatics. When this pidgin starts to stabilize, these different categories start to appear.

6.2 Morphology

The differentiation made in the previous section is also helpful regarding morphology. The more recent pidgins are more likely to have a limited vocabulary, which means that a reduced group of words will have to possess more meanings and / or functions. If the number of prepositions in Standard English and Tok Pisin is contrasted, the evidence is clear enough. Whereas Standard English has several hundreds of prepositions, Tok Pisin only has two, one for space (*long*) and another for possession or association (*bilong*). Therefore, this pidgin will depend profusely on the pragmatic functions of the language in order to express the specific meaning that they lack.

As has been said, reanalyses are important frequent sources for areas of grammar, like morphemes, and also for semantics, reduplication etc. It is a recurrent fact that the morphological structure of the lexifier is no longer retained. Thus, inflections, such as the ‘s’ of the third person singular of the present tense and for the plural of nouns, are omitted from the borrowed word. It is usual then that a single word can imply the idea for both the present and the past, as can be seen in *haus*, *haus ai stei go in*, *jaepan taim*: “When I lived in Japan I stayed inside the house” (Bickerton, 2016: 26).

6.3 Lexis

Also, there are some cases whereby two words in English are transformed into just one in the pidgin. Taking as an example the Tok Pisin which appears in Mühlhäusler (1986: 167), Tok Pisin *tudir*, *lego*, and *sekan* come from English *too dear* (expensive), *let go* and *shake hands* (make peace). This is useful for words and expressions extensively used, which instead of becoming a collocation, are transformed into one word.

These changes are clearly exemplified in the terms used for kinship. The use of either a creole or a pidgin with English as its lexifier in a society with a different cultural background may provoke certain differences or restructuring of certain lexical fields. That is the reason why Tok Pisin has *papa* as ‘father’ and *mama* as ‘mother’, but there is an important distinction between the paternal family and the maternal family. For the paternal family there is a clear differentiation between the word for ‘uncle’, *smolpapa*, and ‘aunt’, *smolmama*. On the contrary, both the maternal uncle and aunt are called *kandare*. This is explained by Mühlhäusler (1986: 169) as the relative importance of men and women in this society. Therefore, there is an extra-linguistic pattern that affects the new language and its development transforming the information that is used from the source.

It is important to highlight the relevance of borrowing from the lexifier language as a useful and extremely frequent resource of vocabulary, as we can see in the percentages of borrowing in Mühlhäusler (1986: 198).

Borrowing	Bislama	90% English	5% indigenous	3% French
	Tok Pisin	77% English	16% indigenous	7% German (etc.)
	Solomon Pijin	89% English	6% indigenous	5% other

Table 3. Mühlhäusler's (1986) comparison of borrowing in three pidgins.

The different types of procedures used in the creation and development of pidgins are:

- A calque is defined as words or expressions from one language which are translated word for word into another language. Adapting it to the pidgin and creole situation, the superstrate or lexifier language contains a word that is used with the same form in the substrate language. For example, in Native American Pidgin English there are calques like *warpath*, *paleface* or *firewater*.
- Reduplication is another type that is not only dependent on borrowing, because it is likely to appear with an influence of the substratum language. It happens in order to signal a variation of meanings such as the plural (West African Pidgin English *dók-dók* for “dogs”), repetition (West African Pidgin English *tók-tók* for “constant talk”) or intensification (West African Pidgin English *bík-bík* for “very big”), as appears in Schneider (1967).
- Regular derivational processes are used in stabilized pidgins. For example, as can be seen in Mühlhäusler (1986: 171), English ‘find’ is transformed into Tok Pisin as *pain*, due to the fact that the /f/ phoneme does not exist in this environment. Also, another regular derivation process makes the final consonant cluster be simplified, as occurs with ‘find’ /-nd/ to *pain* /n/.

6.4 Pronunciation

Up to this moment, the different categories have been discussed without making a clear distinction between creole and pidgin features. This has been done on purpose due to the fact that it is very ambiguous to distinguish whether these changes were produced in the pidgin, in the creole or maybe some in one stage and some in another. Therefore, they are presented as general characteristics that are usually applicable to pidgin but that can appear also in the creole stage. But regarding pronunciation, the distinction is clear enough to divide it into two separate stages, with their own characteristics and procedures.

On the one hand, concerning pidgin pronunciation, it is considered as the least stable of all the linguistic levels dealt with. Following the idea of Mühlhäusler (1986), the number of sounds in early pidgin is considered to have a great limitation, and those kinds of sounds which are not usual in the world's languages tend not to be retained, like /x/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, /ð/ and /θ/. Certain structures are preferred rather than others, like the bisyllabic word structure instead of the use of more complex ones. The tempo of the production is slower than the conventional one in Standard English. The simplification of the pronunciation transforms the complex vocalic structure of English into a simpler one, in which a five vowel system is favoured (a, e, i, o, u), and the length differences between vowels (the distinction between long and short vowels) disappear. Whereas the influence of the substrate language is noticeable in the early stages, like the jargon stage, it is reduced when the pidgin stabilizes.

If we take as an example the pronunciation of Tok Pisin, we can observe the lack of a distinction between /s/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/. All of them are realized by /s/, which is likely to lead to ambiguity. Therefore, *ship*, *chief*, *jeep*, *sieve*, and *jib* are all pronounced as /sip/, taking into account that long and short vowels are not distinguished, the final consonant is devoiced and the phoneme /f/ is realized as /p/. As appears in Mühlhäusler, this led to a serious misunderstanding when in the House of Assembly in Port Moresby, a member was reported to have said *les long toktok long sit nating*. The accurate translation would be “tired of talking to empty seats”, but it was misunderstood due to the problems of pronunciation as “tired of talking to a bunch of shits”.

Moreover, in the expansion stage, there is a growth in the number of vowels, normally from the already explained five vowel system to a seven, ten or twelve vowel system. Most of the new changes that are introduced in the language are produced due to the contact with the lexifier language, but they can also come from the substrate language or from an outside language, neither the superstrate nor the substrate languages. Also it is possible that, once the pidgin starts to stabilize, some phonological rules start to appear. This evolution provokes that consonant clusters are allowed, like in Nigerian Pidgin English *spún* for “spoon”, when earlier it was *pún*, or *spik* for “speak”, previously *sipik*; or in Tok Pisin *stret* for “straight”, when it was *tiret* or *sitiret*. It is clear that a stylistic variation is produced in order to imitate a previous pronunciation or the pronunciation of the superstrate but maintaining the features of the pidgin. In this

case, vowel insertion (*sipik* for ‘speak’) no longer takes place to avoid consonant clusters, but a five-vowel system is still present.

On the other hand, concerning creoles pronunciation, both the substrate language and the superstrate language can affect the structural development of the phonological features of a creole. According to the ideas stated by Gramley (2012), “in pidgins and creoles the relationship is often irregular or unpredictable”. It is the degree of influence of the substrate language what provokes the existence of underdifferentiation and convergence in the creole of what in the lexifier are two phonemes; or instead of underdifferentiation, substitution. Syllable structure and intonation are influenced in the same way. As in the explanation of the pidgin pronunciation, the most common sounds in the world languages are maintained, such as /d/ or /m/, whereas the least frequent, such as /ð/ and /θ/, will disappear or be replaced by others. There are particular phonemes that are borrowed by the substrate language. These phonemes are not present in the sphere of the superstrate language pronunciation, as is exemplified in Saramaccan and Krio Creole English in the co-articulated stops /kp, gb/ and the prenasalized stops (/mb-/, /ŋdj-/, /ŋg/).

These changes are provoked mainly by borrowings; therefore this innovation is restricted to these borrowings. As usually happens in the development of languages, there are cases of hypercorrection and rule generalization. As Mühlhäusler (1986: 238-240) points out, restoration (*poin* becomes *pointim*) leads to hypercorrection (*kisim* becomes *kistim*, when the pronunciation of the /t/ sound is not necessary in the superstrate language).

These changes often produced a countermovement. The influence that Tok Pisin received from Australian English provoked that /e/ became /ai/, as can be seen in the pronunciation of “name”, from /nem/ to /naim/. Then, this mutation provoked the movement of /ai/ to /e/, as appears in the change from /laik/ to /lek/, or /kaikai/ to /keke/.

7. English-based pidgins and creoles

This section will deal with some pidgins and creoles with an English influence, the main reasons of the expansion and great number we find, and some examples of English pidgins or creoles.

Due to the fact that these languages have a mixed character, they have traditionally occupied a low position in the status of languages. This prejudice against them provoked that the list of the numerous pidgins and creoles around the world is of recent creation. The result of this is that new varieties are frequently added to the list, therefore not having a fixed structure.

According to Muysken and Smith (1994: 6-7), the most noticeable differentiation in their classification is their origins. On the one hand, the most documented groups of pidgins and creoles are those which appear to have a European influence (even though some of these pidgin and creoles remain undocumented). As for languages with a non-European background, there is sometimes not a great deal of knowledge of the languages they come from, therefore it is difficult to analyse them.

Pidgins and creoles which are based on English can be geographically divided into two groups: the Pacific and the Atlantic, according to the division proposed by Vicente (2007: 12-13).

Regarding Africa, a differentiation can be made between the East and the West parts. In East Africa there were a great number of countries which were colonies of the British Empire, such as Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi, among others. Then the status of English was extremely important in the sense that it was the language for the different governments, the educational system and the law. Today, these countries are independent from England, but the English language is still official. On the contrary, the situation of English in West Africa is different. The use of this language is the result of slave trade (mostly to America). The presence of English slave traders in West Africa dates from the end of the fifteenth century, but it was especially powerful in the seventeenth century. In this latter century, thousands of slaves were transported from West Africa to the coast of America and the Caribbean in order to be exchanged or sold. In order to facilitate the communication between slaves and traders, firstly English was adopted as a lingua franca, then it became a pidgin and sometimes it developed into a creole.

The second large group refers to those English-based pidgins from the Indian Ocean coast, mainly in South Asia. The main medium of expansion of English in this area was the East India Company, in countries like India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka or Pakistan. In India, the English influence was so strong that they even adopted the educational system, having English as the official language for education since 1835. In the South Pacific and the South East of Asia, English-based pidgins and creoles are found in Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia or the Philippines. In Papua New Guinea it is found a well-known and frequently studied example, Tok Pisin.

7.1 Jamaican Creole or Patois

Jamaica is considered to be the largest Creole-speaking country. It is one of the most important and influential English-speaking countries in the Western Caribbean, for 90% of the population speak Jamaican Creole or Patois. From 1655 onwards it belonged to the British Empire, formerly it had belonged to the Spanish Empire. It was populated by slaves, merely because of the growth of sugar cultivation.

The Maroons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are also important. They were groups of slaves, run-away people who stayed in Jamaica; therefore it became a cultural mixed country.

An example taken from Hall (1966: 154) is:

Nóu, a úol táim anánsi-in stúori, we gwaíng at nóu. Nóu want der wáz a úol wic liedi lív, had wán sòn, níem av wiljem.

“Now, an old-time Anancying story we going at now. Now once there was a old witch-lady live, had one son, name of William.”

Following the ideas proposed by Harry (2006: 126), regarding consonantal changes, there are a few distinctions that make Jamaican Pidgin different from others. The /h/ sound is phonemic in the Western part of Jamaica; speakers of that part of Jamaica make lexical contrasts with /h/. This contrast is not made in the Eastern part of Jamaica, where they usually tend to delete the /h/:

Western /hiit/ [hi:t] vs. Eastern /iit/ [hi:t] or [i:t] ‘hit’

The contrast between velar and alveolar stops is neutralised before a syllabic lateral, such as in ‘tackle’ [takl] or in ‘idle’ [aigl]. Stop sounds are palatalized before non-low front vowels and back-vowels, as can be seen in the example of /giaad/ → [gjia:d] → [gja:d] ‘guard’. Tri-vocalic sequences are avoided, and stops are labialized

when they appear in a sequence of a back vowel + a non-back vowel, like in /puail/ → [pwuail] → [pwail] ‘spoil’.

Regarding vowels, Harry (2006: 127) proposes a variety of twelve phonemic vowels: five short (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/), three long (/ii/, /aa/ and /uu/) and four diphthongs (/ia/, /ai/, /ua/ and /au/). The long vowels and the diphthongs occur as a result of peripheral vowel harmony and back harmony. Peripheral harmony means that sequences of mid vowels are not likely to appear within a syllable, only peripheral vowels /a/, /u/ and /i/. On the contrary, back harmony denotes that high vowels /i/ and /u/ which have opposite characteristics cannot appear within a syllable, therefore existing /uu/ and /ii/ but not /iu/ or /ui/.

Intonation and word prosody are also highly important in the development of Jamaican Creole, due to the fact that they provoke lexical differences within the words, as can be seen in Harry (2006: 129):

/mada/ [máda] ‘mother’ vs. /mada/ [madá] ‘spiritualist’
/faada/ [fá:da] ‘father’ vs. /faada/ [fa:dá] ‘priest’
/iati/ [ièti] ‘eighty’ vs. /waata/ [wa:tá] ‘water’

7.2 Papua-New Guinea (PNG)

Located in the South West Pacific region, New Guinea is the second largest island in the world. It is divided into two parts, the western Irian Jaya and the eastern Papua-New Guinea. Regarding languages, it is one of the most numerous places on earth, with around a thousand languages. The colonial period of Europe in the nineteenth century produced two different developments: the rise of the economic opportunities available and the isolation of language communities, which started to drop.

Tok Pisin is one of the most important languages spoken in the region, together with Bislama in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands Pidgin. But it is Tok Pisin which is starting to be felt as a national language, being used in commerce, government administration, industry, works... It is the primary language of thousands of people, and a process of creolization is beginning.

This section will be developed in accordance with the ideas expressed by Siegel (1981). Because of the fact that English is its lexifier, a lot of vocabulary of Tok Pisin comes from the English language, like *spak* (from ‘spark’) meaning ‘drunk’, o *backsait* (from ‘backside’), referring to their back exclusively.

Regarding the consonants, the system is far less reduced than the lexifier one, for it is a simplification of it. For example the /ʃ/ is substituted by the /s/; therefore words like ‘shell’ or ‘fish’ are pronounced /sel/ or /pis/. Another peculiarity is the deletion of the /r/ sound following a vowel, so the pronunciation of ‘work’ has become [wok]. At the end of syllables, voiced plosives become voiceless plosives, so the pronunciation of the final consonant of ‘pig’ would be /k/, and the pronunciation of the final consonant of ‘road’ is /t/.

Regarding vowels, the system is reduced in the way in which the vowels are pronounced nearly in the same way as pure vowels are pronounced in Spanish. So the cases of homonymy are frequent, such as in the word *hat* in Tok Pisin, which can mean ‘hat’, ‘hot’, ‘heart’ and ‘hard’.

The grammar of Tok Pisin can be interpreted as a mere simplification of the English rules, but sometimes it has its own rules.

For example, to indicate plural it is not necessary to add the ‘-s’ suffix, because the nuance of plurality is expressed in the numeral: *tripela kiau* for ‘three eggs’. Also, in order to indicate time it is not necessary to add the suffixes ‘-ing’ or ‘-ed’ because the adverbials express the tense of the action: *Mi wok nau / mi wok asde* mean ‘I am working now’ and ‘I worked yesterday’, respectively. The pronoun *em* can refer to the English pronouns ‘she’, ‘he’ or ‘it’, depending on the context. As said before, Tok Pisin has its own grammatical rules. For instance, in sentences in which the subject is the above mentioned *em* or a noun, the predicative marker *i* should appear: *Em i worked* ‘He/she worked’. Sometimes, the plural can be expressed by means of the particle before the noun, instead of the use of ‘-s’: *Mi lukin old ok* ‘I saw the dogs’. Moreover, although the pronoun system seems to be easier than the English one, Tok Pisin distinguishes among aspects that English ignores, such as the counterpart of the English pronoun ‘you’, which in Tok Pisin is divided into: *yu* (singular ‘you’), *yutupela* (‘you two’), *yutripela* (‘you three’) and *yupela* (‘you all’). Another aspect that Tok Pisin distinguishes is the inclusion or not of the subject. In English, the pronoun ‘us’ can be inclusive or exclusive, whereas Tok Pisin distinguishes between the inclusive *yumi* and the exclusive *mipela*. Finally, another peculiarity of Tok Pisin is the fact that whenever a verb is followed by a complement, the suffix *-im* is added to it. Therefore, when the verb lacks a complement it would be *Bai mi rait*, ‘I will write’, whereas when it is followed by the complement, it is *Bai mi raitim pas*, ‘I will write a letter’.

8. Final remarks

As a final remark, I can say that the main purpose of this project has been fulfilled. For me, it was learning in some depth what pidgins and creoles are, and why they exist.

Pidgins are the artificially created and simplified languages that appear in a situation in which a group of people needs to accommodate and change their language to adapt it to a foreign one. They are contact, marginal, non-native, mixed and reduced languages. They appear typically in the colonization context in the areas in which a major power appears to the detriment of another group. A creole is a step further of a pidgin. It has the property of having native speakers. The children of a particular community learn that pidgin as their mother tongue, therefore supplying certain features that the pidgin, as a simplification, lacks. They are divided into plantation creoles, fort creoles and maroon creoles. And creoles can appear in a basilectal form, a mesolectal one and with the acrolectal standard.

On the other hand, the multiple theories that are found in the ground of the genesis of pidgins are relevant. Many theories have been proposed, such as the monogenesis theory, the polygenesis theory or parallel development, the mixed language theory, the Universalist theory (directly connected to the bioprogram hypothesis) and the foreign talk and baby talk theories. All these theories have been explained, and none of them has been proved as the only valid theory. Therefore, from the knowledge I have obtained, I can conclude that the most valid theory would be a mixture of a few of them, since they explain the genesis from different perspectives.

Also, some linguistic changes have been explained and exemplified. From them I can conclude that pidgins and creoles are not merely the result of simplification, but a creation on the basis of different languages; somehow a mixture but with the addition of new features.

The exemplification of a pidgin and a creole, Tok Pisin and Jamaican Creole, led me to think about the importance of these languages to a great number of people. These languages have been ignored for many years, but I think that language is the reflection of human beings' minds, therefore denying the existence of a given language would mean the rejection of the identity of a whole community.

To conclude, I need to highlight the importance that this work has given to my academic formation. First, I have been working in an area that interests me, so my involvement and motivation was even higher. In the same way, the search for

information and the new knowledge have opened my mind into areas that I never thought of, so I am very grateful for that.

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