Pidgins and Creoles

Ingo Plag

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Note for the editors:

- All book-internal cross-references that still need to be checked and correctly specified are marked by 'REF'.

- The bibliography is not fully consistent yet. This will be fixed together with the other final revisions.

- The spelling is American.

1. Introduction

Pidgins and creoles are languages that have emerged in situations of language contact where speakers of different languages had to communicate without being able to use a language that they had in common. Normally, in such cases of contact one of the languages involved in the contact is chosen as a basis for communication and the interlocutors quite naturally develop a simplified version of that language for their exchanges. These rudimentary languages are called pidgins and are second languages for all their speakers. They are - at least in their initial stages - characterized by a very restricted vocabulary and a very simple and variable syntax. This restrictiveness can be seen as a function of their limited use, for example in trade situations at the market, or for basic communication at the work place.

Below, you find a sample from the pidgin language Tok Pisin (spoken in Papua New Guinea), which I have transcribed and translated from the CD-ROM that accompanies Kortmann et al. (2004). The text is arranged in sets of three lines. On the first line of each triplet the text appears in near-phonemic, i.e. non-English, spelling. In such a spelling system the letter <a> stands for the sound /a/, <e> for an /e/-like sound, and so on. On the second line, I give the English source words in italics, with non-English source words and grammatical information given in parentheses. On the third line the reader can find an idiomatic translation into Standard English.

Tok Pisin (West Sepik dialect)

Mi laik stori long taim mi liklik iet na mi bin statim tok pisin.
me like story long time me little-little yet ? me been start-him talk pidgin
I like the story from a long time ago when I was still young and started to talk pidgin.

Mi bi… - papa bin stap long bus, em bin tich lo bus na mi bin gro lo bus.
me be papa been stop along bush him been teach along bush ? me been grow along bush
My father lived in the bush, he taught in the bush and I grew up in the bush.

Mi bin liklik iet, long eich long abaut faif, na mi bin statim tok pisin.
me bin little-little yet along age along about five ? me been start-him talk pidgin
I was still young, at the age of about five, and I started to talk pidgin.

Papa wantem mama save tok ples, tasol, mipla no sawe, kechim tok ples blo ol,
Papa want-him Mama (saber) talk place that's-all me-fellow no (saber) catch-him talk place belong all
Papa wanted Mama to know the local language, but, we did not know, we had our local language

39	mipla	sat	o.k.	pisin	tasol,	i	kam	i	kam,	mi	bikpla.

40 *me-fellow said o.k. pidgin that's-all he come he come me big-fellow*

41 We said o.k., just pidgin, it came and came until I was a grown-up.

42

43 As is easy to see, the majority of lexical items in this pidgin are of English origin. The words

44 have sometimes undergone striking phonological changes and simplifications, the verbs have

45 mostly lost their inflectional endings, there seem to be no articles, and the vocabulary is also

46 quite restricted (for example, there seems to be only one preposition *long* where English has sev-

47 eral different ones). Since English provides most of the words for Tok Pisin it is called its 'lexi-

48 fier language'. The lexifier is usually the language with the higher social prestige in the contact

49 situation, which is the reason why it is also called the 'superstrate', while the less prestigeous

50 languages are known as the 'substrates'. Many pidgins have their origins in the times of coloni-

51 zation, with the consequence that their lexifiers are the languagues spoken by the colonizers, i.e.

52 Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Pidgins based on non-European languages can,

53 however, also be found (e.g. Fanakalo in southern Africa, which is based on Zulu). In many parts

54 of the world it is common that numerous languagues are spoken in a small area, and in such ar-

55 eas pidgins are often used on a daily basis and have an important function for their speakers.

56 Under special circumstances, pidgins may develop into fully-fledged languages, i.e. lan-

57 guages that are not only used for limited purposes (e.g. trade), but languages that are used for all

58 purposes, including telling stories, raising and educating children, speaking to your lover or writ-

59 ing poetry. These languages are called creoles and the process of their emergence is called creo-

60 lization. Creoles are the native language of a whole speech community, arfe a token of identity

61 for their speakers and possess all ingredients of human languages, with a rich vocabulary, com-

62 plex phonology and syntax, and everything else that native speakers of a language make use of in

63 their daily lives. A typical setting in which creolization took place was the plantation society in

64 the New World with large numbers of slaves speaking many different native languagues, but

65 eventually forming an essentially new society with its own new language, the creole.

66 To get an impression of such languages, have a look the two sample texts presented be-

67 low. One is an interview with a migrant worker taken from Huber's (1999) book on Ghanaian

68 Pidgin English (again there is an accompanying CD-ROM that contains the original sound file

69 that interested readers can listen to). The other is an excerpt from a traditional folktale in Sranan,

70 an English-based creole language spoken in Surinam, on the Caribbean coast of South America

71 (in the transcription by Sebba 1995:149). The two languages show a more elaborate syntax than

72 we saw in the Tok Pisin text from above (e.g. subordinate clauses and articles), but we also find

73 structures that are similar to Tok Pisin, for example the lack of inflection.

74

Ghanaian Pidgin English

Afta de elekshen wì fo giv am - de man we ì de fo top, dat dje dje rolins we ì de fo top –
after the election we for give him the man where he there for top that J J Rawlings where he there for top
'After the election we should give him – the man who is at the top, that J J Rawlings, who is at the top –

wì fo giv am tshans fo anoda fo jies. Mek wì si. Wetin? Biko ì tel às se ì de mek –
we for give him chance for another four years make we see what-thing because he tell us say he there make
'we should give him a chance for another four years. Let us see. What? Because he told us that he made –

ì giv ès development-development-development. Development tru-tru ì dè develop fo de kontri for òs.
he give us development-id.-id. development true-true he there develop for the country for us
'he gives us nothing but development. Truly, he develops the country for us.'

Jù dè hier àm? Bat onli se wan tin bì se ì dè develop de kantri, den de pipu tu, hangri de.
you there hear him but only say wan thing be say he there develop de kantri then the people too hungri there
'Do you understand? But only one thing is, (although) he develops the country, there is still hunger among the people.'

Laik hau à de laik dis. We dakta giv mì pepa se go tu hospitl go bai medisin. Mà parents a puo.
like how I there like this where doktor give me paper say go to hospital go buy medicine my parents are poor
'Just like myself. The doctor gave me a prescription to go to the hospital and buy medicine. My parents are poor.'

Sranan

Wan dansi ben de. Dagu no ben habi krosi fu go dansi.
one dance been there dog no been have clothes for go dance
There was a dance. Dog had no clothes to go to the dance in,

Dan a leni wan bruku na Anansi. Ma di den go dansi,
then (3sg) lend one (broeken) (na) Anansi. (maar) this them go dance,
so he borrowed a pair of pants from Anansi. But when they went to the dance,

a bruku ben pikin fu Dagu. Te Dagu e dansi, a e bradi
(3sg) (broek) been (pequenho) for dog till dog (asp) dance (3sg), (asp) broad
the pants were too small for Dog. When Dog danced, he kicked out

en futu. A fosi tron, Anansi kari en tron na wan sey,
him foot (def) first turn Anansi call him turn (loc) one side
his legs. The first time, Anansi called him to one side,

115

116   a   taki, 'Mati,   luku bun, yu broko mi bruku'.   A libi   en.

117   (3sg) talk (maat?) look (bom) you broke me (broek) (3sg) leave   him

118   he said, 'Friend, look here, you're tearing my pants'. He left him.

119

120   You may have wondered why I included Ghanaian Pidgin text to illustrate how a creole may

121   look like. The reason is that, although there is a terminological distinction between pidgins (as

122   rudimentary second languages) and creoles (as fully-fledged first languages), there is no clear

123   boundary between the two kinds of languages. For example, the pidgin/creole language Tok

124   Pisin, the official language of Papua New Guinea, is spoken (to varying degrees) by most speak-

125   ers as a second language, but also possesses communities of native speakers. It is used in news-

126   papers and in parliament, and its structure and word stock is far from rudimentary. A somewhat

127   similar case is Ghanaian Pidgin, that also shows more elaborate structure and lexicon and is on

128   its way to becoming a creole. For the issues dealt with in this chapter, the distinction between

129   creoles and more advanced pidgins is not crucial and I will therefore mostly use 'pidgins and

130   creoles' or simply 'creoles' to refer to these languages.

131   These terminological problems aside, the really interesting question is how the structures

132   that we find in pidgin and creole languages actually came about. For example, which mecha-

133   nisms are responsible for the transformations that English has undergone on the way to Sranan,

134   Ghanaian Pidgin or Tok Pisin? Why did Sranan lose verbal and nominal inflection on its way,

135   how did it develop pre-verbal tense and aspect markers, and where do the phonological proper-

136   ties of this language come from? And, even more interesting, why is it that many pidgins or cre-

137   oles share quite a number of properties, irrespective of their place of origin or the languagues

138   involved in the contact? Which mechanisms are responsible for the allegedly unmarked nature of

139   many linguistic structures across pidgins and creoles?

140   In the field of creole studies there has been a long debate on these questions, and any ap-

141   proach that considers only one type of mechanism seems misguided. There is, however, a grow-

142   ing consensus that mechanisms of second language acquisition are important for the emergence

143   of many of the properties we find in these languages (e.g. Kouwenberg & Patrick 2003, Lefebvre

144   et al. 2006, Siegel 2008, Plag 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b). Plag (2008a) explicitly advocates

145   what he calls the 'interlanguage hypothesis', which states that creole languages are conventional-

146   ized interlanguages of an early stage.

147   As we will see, important morphological and syntactic characteristics of pidgins and cre-

148   oles can be nicely accounted for as originating in second language processing. In the following

149   section we will apply Processability Theory to different domains in pidgin and creole grammar.

150   First, inflectional morphology and, second, three types of syntactic constructions, i.e. basic word

order, question formation, and clausal negation. It will be shown that pidgins and creoles show clear traits of early interlanguages, which in turn can be taken as evidence that they emerge under the constraints of processability characteristic of early stages of second language acquisition. Insights from Processability Theory may thus help us to understand better the emergence and the typological characteristics of pidgins and creoles. The discussion will be based mainly on Plag (2008a, 2008b) and the interested reader is referred to these articles for more detailed discussion.

2. Inflectional morphology in pidgins and creoles

Until recently, it was widely believed that creoles do not have inflectional morphology, but this view is no longer tenable (see, for example, Plag 2005 for an overview). Although many of these languages may lack a significant amount of inflectional morphology, there are quite a few creoles that have nominal, verbal or adjectival inflection. Note that I adopt the traditional terminology that takes the terms 'inflection' (or 'inflectional morphology') to refer to bound morphemes expressing grammatical categories. Free grammatical morphemes such as the preverbal tense and aspect markers in many creole languages are thus by definition not instances of 'inflectional morphology'.

The overviews in Holm (1988:95ff), Stolz (1989), and Baptista (2003) list numerous cases of inflectional morphology in creole languages. One can find, for example, plural or definiteness suffixes on nouns in Cape Verdian Creole or in Palenquero (Baptista 2003), while some French-based varieties offer long and short verb forms to mark tense or other distinctions (e.g. Veenstra 2003). Berbice Dutch and Fitzroy Valley Kriol (Australia) have aspectual suffixes (Kouwenberg 1994a, Hudson 1983, cited after Siegel 2008), Tok Pisin and other Pacific varieties have a suffixed transitivity marker (-im/-em in Tok Pisin, derived from English third singular and plural pronouns him/'em). A superlative suffix -st can be found in Negerhollands (Stolz 1989), and Luís (2007) shows that in three Indo-Portuguese creoles there are suffixes encoding four tenses and aspects with up to four conjugation classes.

How do these findings relate to second language acquisition and processability? If we want to investigate the kinds of morphosyntactic categories involved in creole inflection, it is very useful to distinguish between two types of inflectional morphology. The first is called 'inherent' inflection, the second 'contextual' inflection (e.g. Booij 1995). Inherent inflection is the kind of inflection that is not strictly required by the syntax, but has some semantic content and syntactic relevance. Examples are plural marking on nouns, comparative and superlative formation with adjectives, or tense and aspect suffixes on verbs. In contrast to this, contextual inflec-

186 tion is triggered by syntactic rules according to which one element in the sentence requires other
187 elements in the sentence to behave in a particulr way. Subject-verb agreement is a case in point
188 because, the subject requires the verb to agree with the subject in number and person features.
189 Another example would be structural case assignment, where one element, for example a verb of
190 a preposition demands a certain case form of the dependent element (cf. *kiss him/*he*, or *to*
191 *her/*she*).

192   Why is this distinction relevant for creoles? Crucially, if creoles have inflection at all, the
193 inventory of the grammatical categories expressed morphologically in these languages shows a
194 very strong preference for inherent inflection. This fact has already been observed by Kihm
195 (2003:335), who writes that "creole languages exhibit little or no contextual inflection in com-
196 parison with the lexifier or substrate languages". The creole facts thus raise the following ques-
197 tions:

198   • Why do creoles show so little inflection (in comparison to their respective lexifier lan-
199   guage)?

200   • Why do creoles lack almost entirely contextual inflection but preserve, if anything, inher-
201   ent inflection?

202 We will see that both questions can be answered if we look at the developmental stages of inter-
203 languages discussed in the previous chapters. We have seen (for example in chapter REF) that
204 plural marking on nouns occurs already at stage 2, while agreement within noun phrases (as in
205 [*these*PLURAL *books*PLURAL]NP) becomes possible only at stage 3, when intra-phrasal exchange of
206 grammatical information has become available. Subject-verb agreement occurs rather late, at
207 stage 5, since inter-phrasal information exchange is not available prior to this stage. Applying the
208 distinction between inherent and contextual inflection to the different stages of interlanguage
209 development, we can see that the complete lack of inflection characterizes stage 1, but may ex-
210 tend into the following stages, depending on which kind of inflection we are looking at. The
211 presence of inherent inflection is found from stage 2 onwards (e.g. with plural marking on bare
212 nouns), while the instantiation of agreement procedures or structural case assignment requires
213 the most advanced processing procedures and occurs therefore only at later stages.

214   Given the above insights into the nature of the processing of grammatical information in
215 speech production, the difference between contextual and inherent inflection can be conceptual-
216 ized as a matter information exchange. Contextual inflection (as in agreement or case assign-
217 ment) involves information exchange either between phrases or within phrases, while inherent
218 inflection does not presuppose information exchange between different constituents. Subject-
219 verb agreement and subject case assignment require, for example, an S-procedure, object case or
220 genitive case assignment requires information exchange across a phrasal boundary between head

221 and complement, and number or gender agreement within an NP requires intra-phrasal informa-
222 tion exchange.

223   Now creoles seem to either lack inflection altogether, which is reminiscent of stage 1, or
224 they display almost exclusively structures for which no information exchange between constitu-
225 ents is necessary. The prevalent kinds of morphosyntactic categories expressed inflectionally in
226 creoles are plural marking on nouns, or tense and aspect marking on verbs, and these are typical
227 cases of inherent inflection. On the assumption that SLA plays an important role in the emer-
228 gence of creole languages, the observed facts can be nicely explained as effects of processability.

229   There are some problematic points, however, that seem to undermine the elegance of the
230 processability explanation for the survival of inherent, but not of contextual inflection. First of
231 all, there seem to be contemporary creole languages that do have certain kinds of contextual in-
232 flection. However, as argued by Plag (2008a), these cases can generally constitute developments
233 that occured long after creolization, i. e. at a stage where second languague acquisition is no
234 longer at issue as a possible source for these innovations.

235   A more serious challenge, however, comes from certain case assignment facts. Even if no
236 creole marks structural case on full noun phrases, we know that at least some creole languages
237 distinguish between object and subject pronouns, and these distinctions are not recent innova-
238 tions. Furthermore, research in early interlanguage pronoun usage has shown that learners distin-
239 guish subject and object pronouns already at very early stages of their interlanguage develop-
240 ment. Both facts seem to seriously undermine the idea that contextual inflection does not occur
241 at early stages of interlanguage or creole development.

242   A closer look at the pertinent interlanguage research shows, however, that this is not the
243 case. The distinction between two different sets of pronouns (that look like subject and object
244 pronouns) occurs at an interlanguage stage where the learners can only produce sentences with
245 canonical word order, i.e. very simple structures that look like subject-verb-object (SVO) or sub-
246 ject-object-verb (SOV). To use the terms 'subject' and 'object' (or 'SVO' and 'SOV') to de-
247 scribe these structures is in fact misleading since canonical word order involves a direct mapping
248 of argument roles (agent, patient, etc.) onto the syntactic structures representing the respective
249 participants ('unmarked alignment' see REF). In other words, at a stage where the notions of
250 subject and object are not yet developed, we find interlanguage structures that look like SVO and
251 SOV (the 'canonical word order' stage), with 'S' and 'O' standing here for thematic roles rather
252 than grammatical functions. It is at this stage that one also already finds what looks like a case
253 distinction on pronouns, but, as discussed in chapter REF, this distinction is a reflection of un-
254 marked alignment and not comparable to structurally assigned case. What happens in creoles is
255 that these patterns have become grammaticalized and now express a structural distinction be-

256 tween subject and object. The fact that this is the only case distinction that is more wide-spread
257 in creoles together with the fact that it goes together with only SVO and SOV word orders in
258 creoles (see below) is a direct reflection of the origin of these structures in the early interlan-
259 guages of the creolizers.

260   Let us summarize our main points so far. Creoles behave like interlanguages of an early
261 stage in two respects. First, they largely lack inflectional morphology altogether, and second, if
262 they do have inflection, they show mostly inherent inflection and largely lack contextual inflec-
263 tion. These otherwise strange facts can be accounted for under the assumption that the creole
264 creators made use of the same mental processes as any second language learner does. In sum, the
265 typology of creole inflection arises as the natural consequence of the operation of universal con-
266 straints on language processing and language acquistion, and exhibits the pertinent stages of in-
267 terlanguage development resulting from the operation of these constraints.

268
269

270 **3. Syntactic structures**

271

272 Having explored the basic insights of Processability Theory with regard to creole inflectional
273 morphology, I will now show how these insights may help us to understand better the cross-
274 linguistic prevalence of certain types of structure in these languages. Furthermore, Processability
275 Theory can shed some light on the issue of transfer, which has been a hot topic in creole studies
276 and SLA alike (see chapter REF). We will see how Processability Theory can be used as a diag-
277 nostic tool to differentiate cases of transfer from cases of non-transfer in the emergence of cer-
278 tain creole structures.

279

280 3.1. Basic word order: SVO, SOV

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282 Cross-linguistically, i.e. irrespective of L1 and L2, after an initial stage of exclusively formulaic
283 or one-word utterances, L2 learners start producing predominantly sentences with what is known
284 as 'canonical word order', i.e. SVO or SOV (cf. e.g. Håkansson et al. 2002:253). Using the ter-
285 minology of Lexical Functional Grammar, Pienemann, Di Biase & Kawaguchi (2005) explain
286 the learners' initial behavior as the consequence of a fixed association between argument struc-
287 ture, functional structure and constitutent structure, termed 'unmarked alignment' (2005:229, see
288 also the discussion in chapter REF). This direct mapping does not require any language-specific
289 processors or memory stores, which in turn allows the learner to produce target-like SOV or
290 SVO sequences, even if their L1 does not have the respective constituent order. We know, how-

291 ever, also of learners that seem to transfer their basic SOV or SVO word order (see, for example,
292 Odlin 1990 for an overview of some cases). This is possible also from a processability point of
293 view since the L2 processor is already at a stage where it can (talking in LFG parlance) unify the
294 pertinent lexical features, analogous to a corresponding process in L1, if available.

295   As shown in section REF, English learners of Japanese, for example, can produce SOV
296 from the time they produce the first sentences, instead of necessarily transferring native SVO (as
297 predicted by the Full Transfer Hypothesis, see section REF). For the problem of transfer vs. uni-
298 versal development this state of affairs means that neither SOV nor SVO word orders produced
299 by SLA learners can be regarded as clear instances of L1 transfer, even if the L1 has the perti-
300 nent structure. Both word orders are processable at a very early stage of L2 acquisition.

301   Let us now look at creole languages and their basic word orders. (1) gives some exam-
302 ples, with the respective structures from the lexifiers and the substrate languages.

303

304 (1)   a. Haitian (e.g. Lefebvre 1998, Lefebvre & Brousseau 2002)
305   Haitian: S AUX VO
306   Gbe :   S AUX VO / OV
307   French: S AUX VO
308   b. Sranan (e.g. Bruyn 2002:175)
309   Sranan: S AUX VO
310   Gbe: S AUX VO / OV
311   English :   S AUX VO, X S AUX V
312   c. Palenquero (e.g. Schwegler 1991, Bentley 1887, Laman 1936)
313   Palenquero: S AUX VO
314   Kikongo: S AUX VO
315   Spanish: S AUX VO
316   d. Negerhollands (e.g. Muysken 2001)
317   Negerhollands: S AUX VO
318   Kwa: S AUX VO
319   Dutch: V2nd, X AUX SOV
320   e. Berbice Dutch (e.g. Kouwenberg 1992, 1994a)
321   Berbice Dutch: S AUX VO
322   Eastern Ijo: SOV
323   Dutch: V2nd, X AUX SOV

324

325 All creoles in our small sample have a word order that corresponds to 'canonical word order' in
326 SLA. Again we see close parallels between early interlanguage structures and creole structures,
327 and again we see that transfer cannot sufficiently explain the emergence of the respective struc-
328 tures. In many cases, lexifier and substrates share the same word order, but this alone is neither a
329 sufficient nor a necessary condition for transfer, as argued above.

330 In cases of differences in word order between lexifier and substrates we find that the cre-
331 ole usually converges on S AUX V O. For example, Berbice Dutch emerges with SVO from a
332 contact situation with verb second and OV word orders in the input languages, and Haitian and
333 Sranan manifest SVO in a situation where the substrate allows also OV in certain constructions.

334 According to the interlanguage hypothesis we would also predict that some creoles have
335 SOV. Even if rare, such creoles exist, as Nagamese shows (Bhattacharjya 2007:240):

336

337 (2)   Kikatemla modu   kha-yas-ile
338   Kikatemla wine   eat-PROG-PAST
339   'Kikatemly was drinking wine'

340

341 Overall, the interlanguage hypothesis and Processability Theory in conjunction can nicely ac-
342 count for the fact that cross-linguistically in creole languages, we find basic word orders reflect-
343 ing unmarked alignment, with no conclusive evidence in favor of transfer in this domain.

344

345

346 3.4. Question formation

347

348 As discussed in sections REF, question formation may involve quite different processing proce-
349 dures, depending on whether there is *wh*-fronting or inversion in the language to be acquired.
350 According to Processability Theory, *wh*-fronting only occurs at stage 3 of the processability hi-
351 erarchy. The fronting (or 'topicalization') of constituents without accompanying inversion does
352 not involve information exchange between different constitutents within the clause, but only ne-
353 cessitates the availability of the phrasal procedure and of the topic position of the clause. At
354 stage 3 this position is available (see again REF), but at this stage the topic position can only be
355 filled by very specific lexical material, e.g. members of the classes '*wh*-word' or 'adverb'. Inver-
356 sion of subject and verb is only possible at higher stages of SLA development because it in-
357 volves more complex processing procedures at the sentence level. As shown in REF above, *wh*-
358 movement accompanied by inversion is a stage 5 process. Cross-linguistically, inversion is rare,
359 while the positioning of *wh*-elements in initial position is quite common.

360   How do creoles form questions? Veenstra (2007) finds that for yes/no-questions the ma-

361 jority of creoles in his sample chooses simply intonation to mark the interrogative status of the

362 sentence, while some creoles, like Haitian Creole, Saramaccan Creole and Lesser Antillean Cre-

363 ole, employ initial or final question particles. With regard to *wh*-questions, the majority of creole

364 languages have clause-initial *wh*-constituents, sometimes accompanied by a focus marker.

365   How does that fit with the interlanguage hypothesis? Simple intonation and *wh*-initial

366 clauses correspond to early stages of SLA development irrespective of L1 and L2, which is in

367 accordance with the interlanguage hypothesis. But how about initial or final question particles?

368 Given that such particles equally do not necessitate information exchange at the sentence level,

369 such particles can be processed already at the phrasal stage, similar to fronted *wh*-constituents.

370 Interestingly, such structures would at the same time be candidates for early transfer under the

371 Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis, as discussed in chapter REF. If we now take a

372 look at those creoles that have such intial or final question particles, we find that the substrate

373 languages involved do indeed have such particles, which may be taken as evidence for transfer.

374   To summarize the discussion of question formation, the pattern found in creoles can be

375 nicely accounted for under the interlanguage hypothesis. Cross-linguistically, we find structures

376 in creoles that correspond to early stages of SLA, with transfer effects in particular languages

377 that are in accordance with the Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypotheses. Crucially,

378 question formation involving inversion, which would correspond to a very advanced SLA stage,

379 seems not attested in creole languages.

380

381

382 3. 5. Negation

383

384 There are many studies available on clausal negation in creole languages, and often the question

385 of substrate transfer is raised. For English-based pidgins and creoles, Schneider (2000:211)

386 claims that a single pre-verbal negator *no* (or some other form of that function, one should add)

387 is "practically universal", and many creoles with non-English lexifiers show an analogous struc-

388 ture. On the one hand, this pattern has been suggested to be of substrate origin (e.g. Todd 1991:

389 21, Holm 1988: 172 for English), on the other hand this type of negation is cross-linguistically

390 very wide-spread and seems to reflect a "natural universal tendency" among the world's lan-

391 guages (Dahl 1979: 95). Preverbal negation with a single element is therefore one of the perti-

392 nent cases of seeming convergence of substrate substrate influence and 'universal tendencies'. In

393 the following, we will see that preverbal negation is also an example of a structure where these

394 'universal tendencies' in creoles can be accounted for as results of limited processing capacities
395 in second language acquistion.

396   As shown in chapters REF, irrespective of their mother tongue, second language learners
397 of English pass through four stages in the acquisition of negation. They start out with clause-
398 external negation, followed by placement of a negator before the verb phrase, followed by the
399 two-step acquisition of the complex interaction between auxiliaries and the negation marker *not*.
400 Similar sequences exist with other L2s, irrespective of L1 and L2 (REF). In terms of Processabil-
401 ity Theory, this acquisition sequence can be explained by, and follows from, the gradual build-up
402 of the necessary processing procedures in the learner's interlanguage. In particular, preverbal
403 negation is located at stage 3 of the processability hierarchy (see REF), which is a relatively
404 early stage.

405   Let us now turn to the creole situation and compare it to negation development in SLA.
406 (3) lists negation patterns from a number of creole languages, with French, Spanish, English and
407 Dutch as lexifiers, and various substrate languages.

408

409 (3)   a. Haitian: preverbal negation with *pa* (Lefebvre 1998, Lefebvre & Brousseau 2002)
410   Haitian: NEG (AUX) V O
411   Gbe: NEG (AUX) V O / V O NEG / NEG V O NEG
412   French: NEG AUX NEG V O
413   NEG V NEG O
414   b. Tayo: preverbal negation, postverbal *pa* with fixed expressions (Corne 1999: 58ff)
415   Tayo: NEG AUX V O
416   V NEG (*se pa, kone pa*)
417   Kanak: variable w.r.t. position and means
418   French: NEG AUX NEG V O
419   NEG V NEG O
420   c. Sranan: preverbal negation with *no*
421   Sranan: NEG (AUX) V O
422   Gbe: NEG (AUX) V O / V O NEG / NEG V O NEG
423   mà   ă   mà   ă
424   English: AUX NEG V O

425

425   d. Negerhollands: preverbal negation with *no* (e.g. Muysken 2001)

426   Negerhollands: NEG (AUX) V O

427   Kwa: variable

428   Dutch: AUX NEG O V

429   AUX O NEG V

430   e. Palenquero: preverb. neg., clause-final neg., and a combination of both, with *nu* (e.g.

431   Schwegler 1991, Bentley 1887, Laman 1936)

432   Pal.:   NEG AUX V O   AUX V O NEG   NEG AUX V O NEG

433   Kikongo: NEG V   V NEG   NEG AUX V O NEG

434   Spanish: NEG AUX V O   NEG AUX V O NEG

435   f. Berbice Dutch: sentence-final negation with *ka(nɛ)* (e.g. Kouwenberg 1992, 1994b)

436   Berbice Dutch: VO NEG

437   Eastern Ijo: OV NEG

438   Dutch: variable

439

440   As we can see from this small survey, preverbal negation is wide-spread among creoles, irre-

441   spective of the input languages involved. The fact that an interlanguage or creole pattern is found

442   also in the substrate language(s) is no *a priori* evidence for transfer, especially in those cases in

443   which the pattern in question manifests a universally attested developmental stage in interlan-

444   guage development, as is the case with preverbal negation. Hence, in none of the cases in (3a)

445   through (3d) do we have find evidence of transfer, even if similar negation patterns may occur in

446   the respective substrate language.

447   It is only with Palenquero and Berbice Dutch that transfer can be assumed, since in these

448   languages we find patterns that go beyond pre-verbal negation, and which at the same time mir-

449   ror structures we find in the substrate languages. Both Palenquero and Bebice Dutch exhibit sen-

450   tence-final negation. The status of sentence-final negation in the processability hierarchy is not

451   quite clear, but it seems reasonable to assume that it should be at the same level as sentence-final

452   question particles, which can be assumed to be located at stage 3 (cf. again REF). Thus both pre-

453   verbal negation and sentence-final negation instantiate a rather early stage of SLA. According to

454   the Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis, these structures can therefore also be

455   transferred already at stage 3, which gives an independent theoretical argument for a transfer

456   analysis. There is additional evidence for transfer at least in Berbice Dutch, since the morphemes

457   expressing negation in Berbice Dutch are either directly of Eastern Ijo origin or a combination of

458   Dutch and Eastern Ijo morphemes (Kouwenberg 1994b:264).

459　　　In sum, the investigation of negation has shown that creoles primarily feature a structure
460　that corresponds to early developmental stages of interlanguage development, i.e. pre-verbal
461　negation. This is in accordance with the interlanguage hypothesis. The cross-creole attestation of
462　preverbal negation (irrespective of the input languages involved in each particular case) can be
463　explained in terms of the limited processing capacities available to the L2 learners at the time of
464　creole emergence. Cases of alleged transfer, such as Palenquero and Berbice Dutch can receive
465　independent psycholinguistic support under the assumptions of the Developmentally Moderated
466　Transfer Hypothesis.
467
468
469　**4. Conclusion**
470
471　In this chapter we have seen that the presence or absence of different types of morphology in
472　interlanguages and creoles is the consequence of the availability of the necessary processing pro-
473　cedures. The scarcity of inherent inflection and the absence of contextual inflection in creoles is
474　therefore readily explained if we assume that creoles are conventionalized interlanguages of an
475　early stage. The investigation of three types of allegedly unmarked syntactic construction across
476　creoles, i. e. basic word order, question formation, and clausal negation, has revealed that these
477　structures are also naturally accounted for under the assumptions of Processability Theory. In
478　addition, we were able to substantiate arguments in favor of transfer by offering independent
479　evidence from processing, along the lines of the Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothe-
480　sis.
481　　　The explanations put forward in the previous two sections raise the question, however, of
482　whether there is independent evidence for the idea that creoles display features of early interlan-
483　guages, which in turn can be explained along the lines of Processability Theory. In other words,
484　what do we know about creole languages that would support the idea that the creole-creators-as-
485　second-language-learners did not advance any further in their interlanguage development?
486　　　Apart from processing, advancement in SLA is dependent on, among other non-linguistic
487　factors, on sufficient input, the social context and motivation (see, e.g., Gass 2003, Siegel 2003,
488　and Dörnyei & Skehan 2003 for overviews). It has been pointed out repeatedly that in many
489　creolization situations there was a rather limited access to the lexifier language, hence even those
490　speakers who would have been very much willing to learn the lexifier often did not have enough
491　exposure to the language to acquire it to a more advanced degree. The second important set of
492　factors that kicks in, and is probably more important than exposure or access to the superstrate,
493　asre of a socio-psychological nature. Given the socio-historical circumstances of most creoliza-

494 tion situations, one can hardly imagine that the creolizers were especially keen on learning the
495 language of their superiors or opressors to perfection. In fact, scholars like Baker (e.g. 1994)
496 have argued repeatedly that the creolizers did not see the lexifier as the language to be learned
497 but only aimed at the creation of a means of inter-ethnic communication (see also Smith 2006).
498 This process must have necessarily involved the acquisition of lexical material and also some
499 structural properties of the superstrate, but not the acquisition of complexities of a more ad-
500 vanced kind, such as case marking or agreement morphology. Thus, the look at the socio-
501 historical situations in which creolization took place would lead us to expect to find manifesta-
502 tions of early SLA stages rather than of more advanced stages.

503   Overall, Processability Theory provides good evidence for the idea that universal traits of
504 SLA processing are chiefly responsible for the emergence of many creole structures in the do-
505 main of inflectional and syntactic structure. Insights from Processability Theory can help us to
506 understand better the cross-linguistic similarity of creole structures, and also the provenance of
507 language-particular structures in these varieties.

508
509

510 **Exercises**

511

512 1. The distinction between inherent and contextual inflection originates in morphological theory,
513 where the distinction can help to better understand the structural properties of inflected words, or
514 their behavior in language change and first language acquisition. Why is the distinction useful
515 also for investigations of SLA? And how can the distinction be used to explain the properties of
516 creole languages? Take the data from the Tok Pisin and Ghanaian Pidgin texts to illustrate your
517 points.

518

519 2. First recapitulate the predictions of Plag's interlanguage hypothesis (based on Processability
520 Theory) for basic word order, question formation and negation in creole languages. Then check
521 whether these predictions are borne out for Tok Pisin and Ghanaian Pidgin, using the above texts
522 as your data base.

523
524
525

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