ENGLISH-BASED PIDGINS AND CREOLES:

FROM SOCIAL TO COGNITIVE HYPOTHESES OF ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT: This paper will join readings holding that external social factors have huge influence in language development and that there is some innate capability common to all human beings related to language acquisition and development. A particular case which shows the relationship between these two aspects is the study of *pidgins* and *creoles.* This subject is part of Language Contact studies, which is one of the branches of the Sociolinguistics field, and provides a bridge between studies in Anthropology and Psychology.
KEYWORDS: sociolinguistics; contact language; pidgins and creoles; language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

A *pidgin* is an emergency language, created to facilitate communication between groups of different languages and cultures when they get in contact and establish some relationship. It is commonly related to situations of trade and/or colonization. When children are born within a *pidgin-speaker* community and have this language as a mother tongue, then we have a *creole* language conception.

Studies on *pidgin* and *creole* languages date from before the nineteenth century; however, as an academic discipline it was not established until the 1950s and early 1960s. The late establishment of *pidgins* and *creoles* as a legitimate field of study is due to the fact that many linguists used to consider it as an auxiliary language, used only in situations of emergency (Holm, 1988: 3) and they did not take this subject seriously.

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Several theories have been developed about the origin of *pidgin* and *creole* languages. One of them is the monogenetic hypothesis, which stands for a derivation from a common ancestor language (see section 4.4). This is a family tree model and it is rejected by many linguists today because *pidgins* and *creoles* are typically formed through a convergence of linguistic structures from more than one genetic stock (Romaine, 2000:178). Another idea, called the polygenetic hypothesis, stands for independent development of languages, coming from different sources and interacting with different cultures, but in a parallel manner. This is the most accepted theory.

There are evidences that *creole* languages were invented in isolated places; however, there are similarities between them. It shows that there are some elements of human capability responsible for linguistic similarities. In this way, the linguist Derek Bickerton proposed the Language Bioprogramm Hipothesis[2] (LBH) (1974), which, according to him, is common to all members of our species (see section 5.2). Based on his hypothesis, we intend to demonstrate how studies of *pidgins* and *creoles* influenced in language acquisition studies, offering arguments for certain theories.

In the first section of this work we will deal with the Sociolinguistics perspective of Language Contact, pointing out some essential factors that contribute to the crystallization of new languages.

In the second section we will see more specific contact situations, which result in languages called *pidgins* and *creoles*. We will deal with the definition, discuss the precursors of studies in this area and after that, explain how English-based *pidgins* and *creoles* were formed.

In the third section we will discuss several study branches in this area, bringing different hypotheses for the *pidgins/creoles* formation.

Then, in the fourth section, we will bring recent points of view by linguists about *pidgins/creoles,* showing Bickerton's theory for a Language Bioprogram Hypothesis related to language acquisition.

A conclusion will be found at the end of this work, reflecting on the content we will have seen.

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[2] This idea was firstly formulated by Bickerton in an essay entitled "Creolization, linguistic universals, natural semantax and the brain" (1974).

1. SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Sociolinguistics is one of Linguistics' subfields. Considering that Linguistics is the scientific study of human language, Sociolinguistics is concerned with the study of the social uses of language (Chambers, 2004:3); it means the study of relationships between language and society with the goal of understanding the structure of language (Chambers, 1995:11).

In the preface of her book *Language in society*, Suzanne Romaine (2000:IX) points out that the term 'sociolinguistics' emerged in the 1950s bringing the idea of linking the perspectives of linguists and sociologists about the language place in society, in particular the social context of linguistic diversity. The most productive studies in Sociolinguistics have been in order to determine the social evaluation of linguistic variants.

According to Chambers (1995:5-6), studies of regional variation date from 1876, focused in traditional dialectology. However, variationist sociolinguistics dates from 1963, when William Labov presented the first sociolinguistic research report at the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America and published *The social motivation of a sound change* (Labov, 1963). The relationship between traditional dialectology and sociolinguistics differs in terms of the social role. Regional language variation provides a definition for people's localization in the English-speaking world, whereas the social language variation provides information about 'who you are' in the eyes of the English-speaking world (Crystal, 2005:364).

Chambers (1995:7) says that while speaking we are not only showing some personal qualities but also a whole configuration of characteristics from the place in the society we are inserted in. This is an unconscious process, and it occurs in the same way we dress and act. He considers our speech as much emblematic as our daily appearance. Certain aspects of social variation, such as age, sex, education and socio-economic class, bring some particular linguistic consequence (Crystal, 1995:364).

Sociolinguistics is considered to be divided in two sub-areas: macro and micro-sociolinguistics. The former starts from the society and deals with the language as a central factor in the organization of communities, whereas the latter begins with the language and considers the influence of social factors in the structure of languages. This linguist sub-field is closely connected with the social sciences, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Social Psychology, and Education. And it enlarges, among other

questions, studies of multilingualism, social dialects, conversational interaction, attitudes to language, language variation, and language contact. The latter will be discussed in the next section.

For better understanding the ways in which social groups organize their linguistic repertories, it is useful   to distinguish concepts as "speech community" and "communicative competence". Speech community is understood as a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share rules for the use of language. Communicative competence stands for the individual speaker's knowledge of the grammar rules and the suitable use of it within society (Romaine, 1994:23-25).

Tarallo & Alkmin (1987:9) consider the speech community space as being the key for a Sociolinguistic model of variation. It means that within a speech community - or between them - the contact occurs, and the individuals´ coexistence produces mixture and variation. In this way, we have the *intra-community* as a variation within a common speech community, where only one language is spoken; and the *inter-community* variation as coexisting languages and culture within the same community, producing mixture. Studies on *pidgins* and *creoles* languages fit into the *inter-community* variation, as they are a result of different languages that get in contact. In the following subsection we will analyze some situations where social identity is suppressed for domination, in situations of language and culture contact.

1.1 LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CULTURE CONTACT

Contact is an important concept in sociolinguistics. Actually, languages do not get in contact; it is always the speakers of different languages who get in contact. And it is their attitude toward each other that will affect the way they speak. Language contact occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages gradually accumulate internal differences, resulting in language change.

Uriel Weinreich (1926-67) is one of the most important linguists of the XX century for being concerned with linguistic change field. He is noted for his contributions   in sociolinguistics, dialectology and for the increased acceptance of semantics as a branch of linguistics. In his book *Languages in contact* he says: "Language contact is considered by some anthropologists as but one aspect of culture contact, and language interference as a face of cultural diffusion and acculturation." (Weinreich, 1953: 5). According to him, despite the increasing interest of

anthropologists in contact problems, studies of language contact and culture contact have not walked together and the relation between the two fields has not been properly defined. He points out that anthropologists investigating acculturation should include linguistic evidences as indices of the total acculturative process. Linguists, in their turn, need the help of anthropologists to describe and analyze linguistic interference that is composed by structure of language and culture. Both linguists and anthropologists, however, must turn to psychologists for their contribution to the understanding of language contact and culture contact, considering the individual as the locus of contact.

Weinreich also considers the interference of two languages in contact determined by structural linguistic factors and by nonlinguistic factors. Structural linguistic factors are evident when comparing both languages, considering that speakers can integrate grammatical elements of a secondary language (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes) into their primary language. Nonlinguistic interference refers to extra linguistic factors, which are:

a) The role of sociocultural setting: factors that make one language the dominant one;

b) Language functions in bilingual groups: the language favored in an educational system determines the conservatory effect on speech behavior;

c) Congruence of linguistic and sociocultural divisions: in each contact situation, the separation of mother-language groups coincides (or is congruent) with divisions of extralinguistic nature, such as geographical separation, indigenous, immigrant language, cultural and ethnic groups, religion, race, sex, age, social status, occupation, rural and urban population;

d) Standardized language as a symbol of language loyalty: a high sociopolitical value is given to the nationalized language in order to protect it from other languages, impeding language shift;

e) Duration of contact between languages: The time determines linguistic change, and can be analyzed by association of interference within certain group interacting or by measuring the time taking in individual interference phenomena.

f) Crystallization of new languages: some factors can contribute to the emergence of new language, as we will see in the next section;

g) Language shift: depends upon the social value and the prestige of the languages involved.

Weinreich's reflections on the analysis of language contact are prerequisites for sociolinguistic investigations of the correlation of linguistic characteristics with extra linguistic factors which lead to linguistic interference. Some forms of interference of one language in another considered by Sociolinguistics are *borrowing of vocabulary, borrowing of other language features, language shift, substrate influence and crystallization of new languages (such as pidgins and creoles).* The following subsection will deal with some important factors for crystallization of new languages.

1.2 CRYSTALLIZATION OF NEW LANGUAGES FROM CONTACT

According to Weinreich (1953: 105-6), the nature of linguistic interference is the same even if the interfered language does crystallize into a new language or not; and the factors that contribute to the development of a new language are:

(1) *Degree of difference*: the contact between two different languages crystallizes into a new language sufficiently different from each other;

(2) *Stability of form*: many of the new languages which have achieved some stability of form arose far from the centers of social control; almost all closely connected with the great migrations of European peoples during the past four hundred years, in conditions of "anti-prestige" or lack of sufficient prestige;

(3) *Breadth of function:* the functions of a new language can be broadened by administrative degree or other conscious efforts to include education, religion, etc. In some cases, the new languages have been used in written form in the press and in literature.

(4) *Speaker's own rating:* The manner in which loyalty to a hybridized form of speech develops depends on various socio-cultural factors, such as the isolation of the group in contact from its unilingual hinterland, separatist tendencies of an ethnic or political content, and so forth.

Taking into consideration the contact between groups ethnically and linguistically different from each other, with an urgency of communication, we can face a situation where a new "emergency language" arises. Some situations of language contact have resulted in a new language, while others have not. In this way, trade languages as *pidgins/creoles* (see section 2) are undoubtedly new languages.

2. PIDGINS AND CREOLES

2.1. CONCEPT

Pidgins are special cases of languages in contact. According to Holm (1988: 13), although most of the *pidgin* and *creole* languages arose after European expansion, there are evidences that more existed in earlier times; however, languages have not been recorded in writing until the last millennia.

He considers language contact to be nearly as old as language itself. To support this idea he points out that in the ancient Egypt there was a trade language developed among several Hamito-Semitic languages in contact in the Nile valley, which can be considered a *pidgin* (Holm, 1988: 13). There is also the case of ancient China's empire, expanded along with their military, commercial, and cultural influence, probably resulting in *pidgin* language for communication, although there is no known record of speeches. In classical Greek drama, foreigners were represented as speaking broken Greek (Holm, 1988:14). Holm says that it is probable that contact varieties (stable *pidgins*) have accompanied the colonial expansion of Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans. He also states that "the earliest known record of any *pidgin* is a brief text of restructured Arabic apparently used along a trade route in central Mauritania during the eleventh century" (Holm, 1988: 14). [3]

A *pidgin* is a reduced language, simplified to serve specific needs, in most of the cases for trade and colonization. Social reasons - such as lack of trust or of close contact - impede certain groups from learning the native language of any other group. There is such an emergency in this situation due to the short period of contact and extreme necessity of communication. And there is also the dominator's interest in simplifying the communication, in order to prevail over the dominated. In this case we can consider the *substrate* as the language for those with less power and the *superstrate* for those with more power in the interrelationship[4]. Usually, speakers of the *substrate* use words from the *superstrate* including changes in meaning, form and use of these words, influenced by their own language. The *superstrate* speakers adopt many of these changes to facilitate the communication. When the usage of these *pidgins* becomes

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[3] There are several evidences of *pidgin* language usage before European expansion; we will not cite all of them here for considering that our focus is on *pidgin's* definition.
[4] Further explanations about Substrate and Superstrate hypothesis can be found in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this paper.

systematic within a multicultural community, and their children begin to use it as a mother tongue, then we have *creole* languages.

The term *creole* was originally a definition for European white man born and raised in a tropical or semitropical colony. Later, this concept was enlarged to include indigenous natives and others of non-European origin. Certain languages spoken by *creoles* in (and around) the Caribbean and in West Africa were included in this definition, as much as other languages of similar types. Most *pidgins* and *creoles* are European based, although there are some of non-European basis.

However, to be considered *pidgin* it must be stable and have norms of meaning, grammar and pronunciation. Some of its characteristics are: limited vocabulary; elimination of many grammatical devices - such as number and gender; lack of inflectional and derivational morphemes; lack of verbal inflection; loss of prepositions and indicators of time, aspect and mood; lack of locative prepositions and plural indicator; movement rules among others. It results in drastic reduction, also called simplification. Some examples of Hawaiian *Pidgin* English are shown below (Bickerton, 1981: 9-12):

(1) mista karsan-*no tokoro* tu eika sel *shite*(Japanese speaker)

   Mr. Carson-POSS place two acre sell do (English gloss)

   'I sold two acres to Mr.Carson's place.' (Translation)

(2) tumach mani mi tink kechi do (Japanese speaker)

   Plenty money I think catch though (English gloss)

   'I think he earns a lot of money, though' (translation)

(3) josafin brada hi laik *hapai* mi (Filipino speaker)

   Josephine's brother wants to take me (with him)-(translation)

In these examples, Japanese and Filipino lexical are italicized. For (1) Bickerton observes that the structure (with both direct and indirect objects preceding the verb and the auxiliary following the main verb) represents direct transference from Japanese syntax. He also says that even for speakers whose vocabulary is drawn predominantly from English, syntactic features characteristics of their native languages will still be present. In (2) the final verb is a characteristic of Japanese language whereas in (3) the

pronoun inserted between the full-noun subject and the verb is a Filipino's characteristic.

When the usage of these *pidgins* becomes systematic within a multicultural community, and their children begin to use it as a mother tongue, then we have *creole* languages.

Patrick (2004) says that *pidgin* does not mean contact between two languages – or it would result in bilingualism and borrowing – but the contact between three or more languages linguistically different from each other, in a situation of extreme necessity of communication between the speakers, resulting in a rapid language change.

Following the premises of *pidgin* formations in terms of necessity of linguistic communication, Naro (1973: 97) had already brought a different point of view from that proposed by Patrick ([2004]), in terms of the number of languages involved in *pidgin* formation. In his view, the contact between two different languages is already a premise to *pidgin* formation. According to him, around the beginning of the last century there were Russian traders who used to travel to the Norwegian coast with the purpose of fish negotiation. For obvious reasons, they had to find a way of communication, which resulted in a linguistic communication system containing both Russian and Norwegian elements: the Russenork. It can be perfectly included in a *pidgin* definition as a linguistic communication vehicle; however, the Russenork did not extend so long to become a language basis within a community, which is a premise to *creole* formation. It served as a vehicle while the negotiation was going on and disappeared when it finished.

Pidgins and *creoles* are important not only for a common historical origin, but for shared circumstances of socio-historical development and use. In addition, they present many challenges to the model of variation. Coming from different processes and influences at the moment of language contact, speakers of different languages have to find a way of communication by "creating" a new language. This language variation is a result of different sources such as mixing, first and second language acquisition, and universals (see section 4). This fact has inspired and divided linguists´ opinion.

In the following subsection, the precursors in *pidgin/creole* studies will be presented, in order to demonstrate some different points of view about this topic.

2.2. PRECURSORS

According to Holm (1988: 24), Addison Van Name's *Contributions to Creole Grammar* (1869-70) represents the beginning of the scientific study of *creole* languages. It is considered the first comparative study of *creoles* from all four lexical bases found in the Caribbean (French, Spanish, Dutch, and English). Van Name is the first to remark on a number of syntactic features common to many Caribbean *creoles*. He understands that creolization comes from pidginization and represents language change. Van Name is probably the first linguist to quantify variable features, reporting studies on French variation.

Holm (1988: 27) points out that *creole* studies blossomed in the 1880s following the studies of individual varieties: American Black English by Harrison (1884); West African Pidgin English by Grade (1889) and Portuguese-based creoles by Coelho (1880-86). In this period, there was an increasing interest in theoretical problems connected with the origin of *pidgin/creole* languages, leading to the emergence of two theories: Universalist Theory and Substratist Theory (see section 3).

Adolpho Coelho (1880-86) is remembered as the first to articulate a theoretical position on the origin of *creoles*, called Universalist Theory. He attributes to the *creoles* certain universal tendencies in second-language learning by adults rather than to the influence of substrate languages.

On the other hand, the French philologist Lucien Adam (1883) is the first to compare and put in parallels the Atlantic *creole* and various African languages, in a substratist position. He concluded that "…the Guinea Negroes, transported to those [Caribbean] colonies, took words from French but retained as far as possible the phonology and grammar of their mother tongues…"(Adam, 1883: 4). His position is strongly opposed to Coelho's, in terms of the substrate role in language acquisition from contact.

The opposing ideas of Coelho and Adam can be found throughout the work of the German linguist Hugo Schuchardt. Widely acknowledged as the father of *creole* studies, Schuchardt was the one who gave the initial impulse for the emergence of Sociolinguistics. He published some forty articles and reviews on *pidgins* and *creoles* between 1880 and 1914. He studied under August Schleicher, who was one of the leading linguists of the mid nineteenth century for his *Stammbaum* theory (1871) - a genealogical tree model for the interrelationship of Indo-European languages, where

different language were supposed to be completely separated, as tree branches. However, along with Johannes Smith, Schuchardt developed the *Wellentheorie* (1872), or theory of waves of linguistic innovation, according to which the Indo-European languages came from a common ancestor language and suffered changes when spread over given areas in a wave movement. For this reason, differences grew according to the distance of a given area from the original. He particularly stressed the role of individuals in the social process leading to language variation, what was an impulse to Sociolinguistic theories. The reason of Schuchardt's interest in *creole* languages was his opposition to the Neogrammarians' law of the absolute regularity of sound change.

The neogrammarians were a group of Indo-European linguists working at the University of Leipzig (Leipzig School) during the last decades of the nineteenth century, who were credited with claiming about the nature of language change. They considered certain universal aspects of language itself to rule the language development, and attributed to the phonetic evolution some psychological and physiologic mechanic action, which is out of human control (Camara Jr., 1975: 75). The neogrammarians claimed that, in the phonological level, language change is ruled by the principle of *regularity of sound change*, for what they state that the direction in which a sound changes is the same for all members of the speech community. It means, according to them that "sound change is conditioned only by phonetic environments and not by grammatical or semantic factors" (Labov, 1981: 268). Schuchardt, however, considered that all linguistic change is constantly related to the speaker's individual thought, and it cannot be reduced to some external rule. For him, any phonetic change is a result of analogical processes created in the speaker's mind.

The Dutch linguist Dirk Christiaan Hesseling published on *creoles* between 1897 and 1934 and is considered the precursor of the monogeneticist's hypothesis (see section 3.4). This hypothesis stands for the existence of a common ancestor language which originated all *pidgins* and *creoles*. He also considered the speech of non-native speakers of the lexical source language to be more influential in the *pidginization/creolization* process than that of the native speakers.

During the 20th century Derek Bickerton is seen as the best-known contemporary linguist for his innovation in linking *pidgin/creole* studies with language acquisition processes. Bickerton's work can be found in section 3.5; and a more detailed explanation of his work can be found in section 4.2.

Romaine (2000: 169) states that what the linguists have studied about *pidgins* and *creoles* is based particularly in Spanish, Portuguese, French, English and Dutch languages; however, *pidgins* based on English language are more numerous. The reason for that is that British Empire lasted more than three centuries and it was the most extensive empire in the world history. It began with the global maritime explorations in the late 15th century, inaugurating the era of European global empires. Due to this fact, varieties of Standard English and English-based *pidgins* and *creoles* were spread around the world more than any other language. In the following subsection we will be briefly discussing some of them.

2.3 ENGLISH-BASED PIDGINS AND CREOLES

Geographically classifying English-based *pidgins* and *creoles*, we can divide them in two subgroups: Pacific and Atlantic (Todd, 1974:15).

The first subgroup, Pacific *pidgins* and *creoles*, occurred in different situations in West and East Africa. English in the West Africa is a result of the slave trade. Since the 15th century, British traders traveled to different places in the West Africa; and, especially during the 17th century, slaves were transported from West Africa to the American coast and the Caribbean coast to be exchanged for sugar and rum. To facilitate the communication between indigenous population with hundreds of different languages and the communication between these people and the British traders, territories like Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon adopted English as a *língua franca*[5]. They had no British settlement in the area, but English language gained official status. These pidgins and creoles are used by large numbers of people until today. In East Africa, however, there were huge settlements of British colonists. Countries like Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe became colonies of Britain. English was important for government, education and law. Nowadays, these countries are independent again but English is still the official language.

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[5] There are evidences that a contact language, named *lingua franca,* has emerged by the time of the Crusades between Muslim and Christian people. The use of this language should have expanded to the Mediterranean coast, and particularly to North Africa. Nowadays, the expression *lingua franca* refers to a language contact used for intercommunication in bilingual or plurilingual situations (Tarallo & Alkmin, 1987).

The second subgroup, Atlantic *pidgins* and *creoles*, occurred in South Asia. Countries as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan had English introduced through the East India Company establishment. East India Company had trade privileges in India determined by Queen Elisabeth I. The settlements and the English influence were so intense that an English educational system was proposed and adopted. Since 1835, English is the Indian educational official language.

South-East Asia and the South Pacific were influenced by the seafaring expeditions of James Cook (British explorer, navigator and cartographer) and others. Territories as Singapore, Malaysia, Honk Kong and the Philippines, such as Papua New Guinea, provided examples of English-based *pidgins* and *Creoles.* The well known is Tok Pisin[6], from Papua New Guinea.

Pidgin and *creole* languages were developed and formed when different societies came together and devised their own system of language. Initially *pidgins*, these languages later became more mature and developed some sense of rules and native speakers - *creoles*. After discussing the concept of *pidgins* and *creole* languages, the precursors of studies in this area and the historical context of English-based *pidgins* and *creoles,* the next section will deal with different hypotheses elaborated by linguists concerned with the formations of such languages.

3. GENESIS HYPOTHESES

3.1. SUPERSTRATE / SUBSTRATE HYPOTHESIS

The term *superstrate* was proposed by Walter von Wartburg in 1933 (Couto, 1996: 144) to design the residual language left by conquerors (dominators) in the conquered (dominated) languages, after having adopted their language in order to communicate. For *superstrate hypothesis* we can understand the attempts to explain the *creoles* origin almost exclusively throughout the *superstrate language*. According to this hypothesis the language of the colonized people, who were socioeconomic inferiors, had a marginal role in the *creoles* formation. The linguistic target was the dominator's language and the colonized people (or slaves) intended to imitate them,

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[6] Holm (1988:6) relates the name Tok Pisin to a variation from English expression "talk pidgin".

trying to speak their language. Although they were only able to speak a deformed version of that, they thought to be talking the target language.

This is a colonialist ideology, inserted in the context of European expansion, as we can see in Bickerton words:

> Creole languages arose as a direct result of European colonial expansion (…) 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 *pidgin*), and that this language, suitably expanded, eventually became the native (or *creole*) language of the community which exists today. These creoles were in most of cases different enough from any of the languages of the original contact situation to be considered "new" languages. Superficially, their closest resemblance was to their European parent, but this was mainly because of the bulk of vocabulary items that were drawn from that source, and even here, there were extensive phonological and semantic shifts. In the area of syntax, features were much less easily traceable."(Bicketon, 1981: p.2)

Most of the first creolists defended this hypothesis; they used to refer to this language as "broken English", "bastard Portuguese", "nigger French", etc. For them, *pidgins and creoles* were simplified versions from European structures with some *substrate* characteristics added in. Holm (1988: 1) says that there was a feeling that *pidgins* and *creoles* were corruptions of "higher", usually European languages. The speakers of such languages were often perceived as semi-savages whose partial acquisition of civilized habits was somehow an affront. Besides that, speakers of *creole* languages who had access to education noticed that their speech was different from the superstrate language and tried to make it more similar to the standard.

In the turn from 1950 to 1960 there was a change of perspective about the language. It changed from the colonizer point of view to that of the colonized. If before *creoles* were considered as deformed languages, in the 1960 decade the role of language of the dominated people started to be emphasized in *pidgins* and *creoles* formation (Couto, 1996: 147). The *substrate* languages became important, which was unacceptable for the first creolists.

For *substrate* we understand that submerged language, substituted by another as a consequence of any situation of invasion or dominance. This submerged language does not disappear without leaving traces in the dominator language – such as some words, phonetic habits, intonation, grammar, etc.(Couto 1996: 147).

The supporters of substrate hypothesis say that the *creoles* specificities are due to the influx of substrate languages (understood as language of dominated people).

Different theories/hypotheses attribute to the substrate a fundamental role in the *creole* formation.

In the examples below we can note that although the vocabulary of the pidgin comes from English, its syntax may vary depending on the individual original native language (Bickerton, 1981: 11):

(4) da pua pipl awl poteito it (Japanese speaker)

   The poor people only potatos eat (English gloss)

   'The poor people ate only potatoes' (translation)

(5) wok had dis pipl (Filipino speaker)

   work hard these people (English gloss)

   'These people work hard' (translation)

In example (4) the verb (*it* 'eat') comes in the end of the sentence, just as in the Japanese language, whereas in example (5) the verb (*wok* 'work') comes first in the sentence, just as in Philippine languages.

3.2 MIXED LANGUAGE THEORY

Opposing to the *family-tree* model of language adopted by neo-grammarians, Schuchardt (1890) could find evidences that some *creoles* have changed their affiliation (e.g. from Portuguese to Dutch), and others are so mixed as to defy classification. For this reason, he is considered as a leader of the opposition to the Leipzig school of neo-grammarians. Schuchardt associated the language mixture (*mischsprache*) to *pidgin-creoles*; however it was misunderstood as a rough mixture with no real structure of its own. Actually, what he and other linguists who followed him (e.g.Weinreich) tried to say is that every language we know is impure (Couto, 1996: 153). We cannot only think about language mixture as a European superstrate vocabulary combined with an African substrate grammar. We can consider that there are three possibilities for language mixture. Firstly, there is the possibility for a language to have as much grammar as vocabulary influenced by more than one language. In the English language, for example, there is a huge amount of French vocabulary and a grammar that is different from Germanic languages. Secondly, it is possible for a language to show only its

grammar as influenced by another language. One example is the *lingua geral* used in Brazilian coast in the colonial period; its vocabulary was basically *Tupi,* although its grammar was nearly Portuguese. And finally, it can happen that only the vocabulary is influenced by another language, as in *Chamorro*. This language results almost totally from a Malayan-Polynesian relexification by Spanish. This language is spoken in the East Philippines islands, which were discovered by Spanish in 1521. As we can see, there are evidences that all languages are mixed, although there are some that are less mixed than others.

3.3 MONOGENESIS / POLYGENESIS

Still trying to explain the *creole* genesis, specialists started to consider that *creoles* could come from a unique source or more than one, resembling the family-tree model of neogrammarians (Couto, 1996: 155), which leads to the monogenetic and polygenetic hypothesis. Polygenetic hypothesis puts the similarities that many creoles share down to parallel development of proto-languages of differing origins, considering superstrates of the same language family responsible for such similarities. This theory is best represented by the Universalist hypothesis that we will discuss in the next topic.

Monogenetic hypothesis emerged after some *creole* comparative studies, when plenty of similarities were noticed among them, more significant than the similarities between each one and its superstrate. This hypothesis is also known as *luso-genesis*. It is due to the fact that the Portuguese navigators were the first ones to colonize the African Coast and maintain small groups of slaves there. It was assumed that there was a Portuguese-based contact language in this region since the beginning of the 16th century (Couto, 1996: 56). In this way, the Portuguese were the pioneers in slave transportation to other European countries, which contributed to the spread of this Portuguese-based lingua franca.

As this hypothesis was not enough to explain the English/French/Spanish-based *creoles*, a suggestion called *relexification* emerged among monogeneticist studies. According to this, these languages were a result from a Portuguese *proto-creoles relexification*. That means they maintained the *proto-creoles* grammatical basis and substituted the vocabulary for the new ones imposed by dominators. Muysken (1981:61) considers a definition for *relexification* when certain language adopts lexical meanings from another one, without changing its grammatical basis. Although there are

linguist objections to this hypothesis, the fact is that some Portuguese vocabulary is present in several creoles around the world.

3.4 UNIVERSALIST HYPOTHESIS

The Universalist hypothesis is supported by Derek Bikerton and it is based on *generative grammar*, which was proposed by Noam Chomsky (1965). The focus of *generative grammar* is on language acquisition. This theory states that a child language acquisition is not a mere interaction with adults, as defended by the empiricists and behaviorists. On the contrary, a child is genetically provided with a *language faculty (faculté du language)*. This *language faculty* is equivalent to the initial point (E°) which actually is the *Universal Grammar* (UG) or, as Chomsky had previously named it, the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Chomsky, 1981:34). He defends that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for organizing language called *principles and parameters*. The *principles* are common to all languages and the *parameters* determine syntactic variability among languages. As Todd (1974: 44) says, when acquiring a language, children produce patterns that are regular for them but irregular when measured against the norms of adult society. So children cannot be said to be imitating adults, but they are giving their own contribution to the language acquisition.

Following Chomsky's theory, Bickerton gave a huge contribution to linguistics by proposing the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis, which will be explained in the next section. According to Romaine (2000:180), the Bioprogram Hypothesis "links the emergence of *creoles* with first language acquisition as well as with the evolution of language in the human species more generally".

3.5 CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT OTHER HYPOTHESES

At the end of this chapter it is important to say that the hypotheses presented above are the ones that were better developed. Moreover, there are several hypotheses trying to explain the genesis of *pidgins* and *creoles,* sometimes interlaced with the previous ones. In this section we will have a brief description of some of them, which are the *baby-talk* and *foreign-talk theory*, *common denominator theory, acculturation theory, reconnaissance language, independent parallel development theory, nautical jargon theory*, and *creativist theory.*

The *baby-talk theory* was proposed by Bloomfield (1933) and consists of a simplified language used by adults in order to communicate with the children. A parallel case is the *foreign-talk*. Supported by Ferguson (1971), it consists of the language used by a native speaker of some language who intends to communicate with a foreign person who does not understand his language (Couto, 1996: 177). Todd (1974: 29) points out Bloomfield statement about European masters imitation of incorrect speech, during the colonization period, in order to facilitate the communication with the speakers of a lower language.

The *common denominator theory* was first proposed by Robert Hall Jr (1966) and relates the grammar reduction of *pidgins* to common traces presented in all *pidgin* languages leading to a kind of common denominator. The *acculturation theory* tries to explain how the *creole* societies were formed, including music, religion, folklore and family relationship besides the language. The *reconnaissance language* was proposed by Anthony Naro (1978) to explain the formation of Portuguese *pidgin* behind of all Portuguese-based *creoles*. It consists of the idea that the first Portuguese colonizers captured people from Africa and took them to Portugal to teach a kind of *Portuguese foreign-talk* before returning to Africa taking these slaves as translators (Couto, 1996: 192).

The *independent parallel development theory* was first recognized by Robert A. Hall (1966) and consists of the similarities apparent in the world's pidgins and creoles. Many of them arose independently and developed along parallel lines (Todd, 1974: 31). The *nautical jargon theory*, as suggested by John Reinecke (1938), emerged from the necessity of communication between the crew, consisting of different dialects that were present in the ships traveling during the colonization period. And finally, the *creativist theory* escapes the target language concept and suggests that there is a creation of communication means between people in contact situations.

We have seen *pidgins* formation from different perspectives, which, far from being opposite to each other, seem to be interconnected. There are no doubts that all of them contributed for the increase of studies in the area, and still contribute for new study fields. Linguists say that the study of contact vernaculars can illuminate other theories of language competence, which can include child language acquisition, second language acquisition, bilingualism, etc. In the next section we will narrow our research in one of these veils, which is the language acquisition.

4. PIDGINIZATION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

4.1 COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN PIDGINIZATION

"Language learning" includes two distinct concepts. One involves receiving information about the language, transforming it into knowledge through intellectual effort and storing it through memorization. The other involves developing the skill of interacting with foreigners to understand them and speak their language. The first concept is called "language learning," while the other is referred to as "language acquisition." The distinction between acquisition and learning is one of the hypotheses established by the American linguist Stephen Krashen (2000).

According to Krashen´s concept, language acquisition refers to the process of natural assimilation, involving intuition and subconscious learning, which is the product of real interactions between people where the learner is an active participant. It is similar to the way children learn their native tongue, a process that produces functional skills in the spoken language without theoretical knowledge. But how is it related to the Pidginization process?

As we have seen in the previous section, Noam Chomsky argued that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for organizing language. In this way, there is an assumption that all languages have a common structural basis, a set of rules known as universal grammar.

Schumann (1978) dedicates one chapter of his work *The pidginization process* to present some points of view about the cognitive process in pidginization. He considers that if the communicative functions fulfilled by contact vernaculars are minimal, this language may reveal the universal cognitive structure that underlies all human language ability and use (Schumann, 1978: 110).

He also states that the early speech of children is largely unmarked and in the process of socialization the child learns to mark his language with those features, which characterize his speech community. However, *pidgin* languages spoken by adults are unmarked. Both the child in early native language acquisition and the *pidgin* adult speaker reduce and simplify the language to which they are exposed to into a set of primitive categories that are undoubtedly innate. He suggests that "simple codes"

spoken by children and *pidgin*-speakers represent a basic language that is expanded and complicated in the process of learning.

As Schumann's work is focused in second language acquisition by adults, his interest in the pidginization process as a model for second language acquisition bring us some agreement about the innate characteristics of human beings related to reduction and simplification. He states that:

> in terms of cognitive strategies, the relatively unmarked, simple code resembling a *pidgin* that characterizes the early stages of second language acquisition is viewed as a product of cognitive constraints caused by lack of knowledge of the target language. This code may result from a regression to a set of universal primitive linguistic categories that were realized in early first language acquisition. (Schumann, 1978: 115).

Derek Bickerton, in his book *Roots of language* (1981, ch.3) proposes that the human language must have been invented. He defends, in this way, that once human language begun it could not have begun through acquisition strategies, or inductive processes, or hypothesis formation, or mother's language lessons. This is probably his first step to his acknowledged theory "Language Bioprogram Hypothesis", which will be explained in the next section.

4.2 LANGUAGE BIOPROGRAM HYPOTHESIS

One of the more fascinating hypotheses that emerged within the field of linguistics in the last couple of decades is the creolist Derek Bickerton's *Language Bioprogram Hypothesis* (LBH). The basic idea behind LBH is that by observing how *creole* languages are created and similarities among different *creoles* in particular, making comparisons with child language acquisition, we can conclude how the human race developed language originally.

Bickerton (1981) compares the Hawaiian *creole* to the English-pidgin which originated it. The author isolated specific characteristics of the *creole* that were not present in any of the languages of the first contact (English, Japanese and Filipino languages), and cannot be explained through them. He is convinced that the new characteristics resulted from cognitive strategies used by the *creole* speakers. Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) differs from Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE) mainly in the following areas: movement rules, articles, verbal auxiliaries, *for-to* complementization, and relativization and pronoun-copying. Some examples are shown below:

Movement rules*: In HPE there are no movement rules and there are several possible sentence orders (SVO, SOV, VS). Although HCE is homogeneous, the basic unmarked word order is SVO, and all speakers have rules for changing objects – e.g. (6) and (7) – or predicates – e.g. (8) and (9) - to the beginning of the sentence (Bickerton, 1981: 17-19).

(6) *eni kain lanwij* ai no kaen spik gud
   'I can't speak any kind of language well'

(7) o, *daet wan* ai si
   'Oh, I saw that one'

(8) *es wan ting baed* dakain go futbawl
   'That football stuff is a bad thing'

(9) *daes leitli* dis pain chri
   'These pine trees are recent'

Articles: They appear sporadically and unpredictably in HPE - only three indefinite articles (out of 32 in the English language) and seven definite articles (out of 40 in the English language). In HCE, however, the definite article *da* is used for all that can be assumed known to the listener – e.g. (10), as well as the indefinite article *wan* is used for all that can be assumed unknown to the listener – e.g. (11). (Bickerton, 1981: 23):

(10) aefta da boi, da wan wen jink daet milk, awl da maut soa
   'Afterwards, the mouth of the boy who had drunk that milk was all sore'

(11) hi get wan bleak buk, daet buk no du eni gud
   'He has a black book. That book doesn't do any good'

Verbal auxiliaries*: HCE has an auxiliary to mark tense (*bin*); an auxiliary that marks modality (*go/gon);* and an auxiliary that marks aspect (*stei). Bin* and *go* occur

sporadically in HPE, but *stei* does not occur- at least not as auxiliary (Bickerton, 1981: 26-27):

(12) ai no kea hu stei hant insai dea, ai gon hunt

   'I don't care who's hunting in there, I'm going to hunt' (present continuous)

       In the following step Bickerton compares Hawaiian *creole* to other *creole* languages by eleven parameters, which are: *movement rules, aspect, TMA (tense-modality-aspect) system, realized and unrealized complements, relativisation and subject-copying, negation, possessive, copula, adjectives as verbs, questions and question words*. Having thus looked at these parameters, he concludes that in most of the cases there are great similarities among HCE and other *creole* languages, such as in the examples below (Bickerton, 1981:57):

       Articles: All *creoles* seem to have a system identical to that of HCE – a definite article for presupposed-specific NP; and indefinite article for asserted-specific NP; and zero for non-specific NP.

       In Guyanese Creole:

(13) Jan bai di buk

       'John bought the book (that you already know about)'

(14) Jan bai wan buk

       'John bought a (particular) book'

(15) Jan bai buk

       'John bought a book or books'

(16) buk dia fi tru

       'Books are really expensive!'

In Papiamentu:

(17) mi tin e buki

       'I have the book'

(18) mi tin e bukinan

　　　'I have the books'

(19) mi tin um buki

　　　'I have a book'

(21) buki ta caru

　　　'Books are expensive'

Based on these similarities, Bickerton defends the existence of a genetic program common to all members of the species, as he points out:

> In the mid-sixties, the field, which had previously been atheoretical and somewhat underdeveloped, came to be dominated by a type of innatist theory. This theory, derived largely from generative grammar, and in particular from works such as Chomsky (1962), held that the child acquired language through simple exposure to linguistic data, much of which was "degenerate" – i.e., consisted of sentence fragments, mid-sentence reformulations, and many types of performance error which would render natural speech a very unreliable mirror to mature native-speaker competence…some kind of inbuilt Language Acquisition Device (LAD). (Bickerton, 1981:136).

The basic idea is officially presented by Bickerton in his book *Roots of Language* (1981), although it has already been suggested in an essay entitled *Creolization, linguistic universals, natural semantax and the brain* (1974).

Bickerton presents three questions in the Introduction (Bickerton, XII)

1) How did *creole* languages originate?

2) How do children acquire language?

3) How did human language originate?

He states that these questions have been treated as unrelated and proposes a unified treatment. Bickerton is convinced that the three questions above are really one question and that a right answer for any of the questions must be suitable to all of them. He realizes the originality of the idea and the probable necessity of revision or replacement of some details (Bickerton, 1981: XII).

He starts discussing the origin of *pidgins* and *creoles* (question 1). Bickerton's conception for *pidgins* and *creoles* is that during the first contact in colonized regions,

the first non-European group learns the European language from the dominant group. Once the *pidgin* situation established, this first non-European group spread the learned language, by informal ways, to other non-European groups within the society. This group increases and the non-Europeans become the majority. Consequently, the first version of the European language is gradually diluted. The pidginization results from a second language acquisition under low *input* from the target language; and, the creolization results from a native language acquisition under a weakened *input*, acquired by children, through the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which was previously proposed by Noam Chomsky (1975).

In section 3.4 it was said that, according to Chomsky, children are born with a hard-wired language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains (Chomsky, 1965). It means they are born with the major principles of language in place, but with many parameters to set in. When the young child is exposed to a language, the LAD makes it possible for them to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles, because the principles are innate. For Chomsky, children have innate language-specific abilities that facilitate language learning, which is called Universal Grammar.

Bickerton follows the Chomsky's hypothesis for Universal Grammar and states that a child born of *pidgin*-speaking parents does not have any other option than to learn that rudimentary language. One of Bickerton's points here is that children growing up in such a community face a very different situation from that of the normal child. In his words "Every existing theory of acquisition is based on the presupposition that there is always and everywhere an adequate language to be acquired" (1981: 5).

According to him, in certain slave communities, there was no completely developed language for the child to be exposed to; instead of it, there were rather primitive *pidgins.* Thus, the child was not exposed to a language the way most children are, and therefore had to "create" its language itself. As he points out, in a conventional wisdom, children are supposed to derive rules by processing input that leads them to a rule system similar to or identical with that of their elders. If it were true, children born in those slave communities would simply learn the *pidgin* language with no significant gap between the generations – the differences found between certain *creole* and the *pidgin*, which originated it. However, Bickerton (1981: 6) claims that there is at least one such *creole:* Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) that arose out of Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE) in a very short time and produced rules for which there was no evidence in the previous generation's speech. He and colleagues studied and made comparisons

between immigrant speakers of HPE (Hawaiian Pidgin English) and HCE (Hawaiian Creole English), which led them to conclusions of the creativeness of the human language apparatus.

For Bickerton a child can produce a rule for which he has no evidence. In this sense, he proposes that:

> the 'inventions' of HCE speakers… were not peculiar to them, but followed a regular pattern of 'invention' which emerged wherever human beings had to manufacture an adequate language in short order from inadequate material. Now, if all children can indeed do this…they can only do so as the result of the factor which is responsible for all species-specific behavior: genetic transmission of the bioprogram for the species. (1981: 133)

Bickerton points out that no one disagrees that there is a bioprogram for the *physical* development of human beings, although there is still massive resistance for the existence of a *mental* bioprogram. The idea *that there is an innate bioprogram that determines the form of human language* is still vigorously resisted. Actually, the language bioprogram occurs in the same way as the physical bioprogram: the language grows just as the body grows, presenting the appropriate, pre-programmed sequences. Bickerton states that sometimes features in the bioprogram will be very similar to the features in the target language, in which case we will find extremely rapid learning. Sometimes the target language will have evolved away from the bioprogram and then we expect to find common systematic "errors" easily attributed to "incorrect hypothesis" formed by the child. Bickerton believes that these "errors" are simply the results of the child's ignorance of the data presented by speakers of the target language and following out instead the instructions of his bioprogram. This theory has enlightened language acquisition studies, proposing interaction of the bioprogram and the target language (Bickerton, 1981: 134-135).

Actually, Bickerton's innovation in his studies of *pidgins* and *creoles* stands for analyzing a linguistic subfield from a different paradigm of investigation. As a paradigm we understand a set of assumptions, evidences and studies which support some point of view, determining theories about certain object.

Esther Figueroa, in her book Sociolinguistic Metatheory (1994: 19), states that beliefs can be changed, maintained or looked from a different perspective. She claims that it is useful to look to the philosophical and cultural frameworks in order to better understand Linguistics in terms of general developments. She cites the Markova's Cartesian and Hegelian Frameworks (Markova, 1982: 6) which intend to demonstrate

how given a different set of presuppositions, a different emphasis or explanation can be reached. The Cartesian framework separates mind (consciousness) from the body (unconsciousness), defending that the inner world prevails over the outer world; whereas the Hegelian framework rejects the body-mind duality and defends that it is through interaction with the world that consciousness develops.

FINAL REMARKS

As we have seen, Sociolinguistics is one of Linguistics subfields concerned with the study of the social uses of language. Sociolinguistics includes studies of multilingualism, social dialects, conversational interaction, attitudes to language, language variation, and language contact.

Language contact occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages gradually accumulate internal differences, resulting in language change. Some situations of language contact have resulted in a new language, while others have not. In the contact between groups that are ethnically and linguistically different from each other, with an urgency of communication, we can face a situation where a new *emergency language* arises. In this context we have the *pidgin* language formation. When the usage of these *pidgins* becomes systematic within a multicultural community, and their children begin to use it as a mother tongue, then we have *creole* languages.

Studies on pidgins and creoles have increased in the last decades, reinforced by the emergence of the Sociolinguistic field. This is not only due to the Sociolinguistic concern about social factors that influence language, but also for the particular aspects of variation found in the referred languages.

Linguists have developed distinct theories about the origin and development of *pidgins* and *creoles*. Although they have different views, when studying these theories, we can notice they can be interconnected. Such interconnection is due to the fact that each theory seems to be the impulse for another one, looking for a single-cause explanation. Theories based in a single-cause put aside the possibility of the existence of multiple-causes influencing in some phenomenon. Actually, some of these theories seem to be meaningful metaphors. After discussing all of them, we can notice that Superstrate hypothesis had huge influence in all concepts of *pidgins* and *creoles* formation, which is the reason they are called lexical-based (English-based, Portuguese-

based among others); and the substrate influence in *pidgins/creoles* formations can clearly be found in its grammar. The acceptance of the Superstrate and Substrate theories lead us to the Mixed Language Theory. The Independent Parallel Development Theory is similar to the Universalist Hypothesis which, in its turn, resembles the Superstratist Hypothesis. And the Acculturation Theory is basically substratist.

As we can see, although *pidgins* and *creoles* are considered part of Sociolinguistic studies, because they have always been treated as an exclusive result from interaction between language and society, the formation of such languages is also analyzed from a Cartesian paradigm of investigation. Derek Bickerton, in this sense, following the premises of the generative grammar, analyses this phenomenon from a generative perspective, proposing the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis.

If before his contribution, *pidgins* and *creoles* were seen only as external factors of language and culture contact; after that the creolization process became an important contribution to language acquisition field, because of his claim of the human innate ability for language acquisition, common to all human beings – the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis.

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ABSTRACT: This paper will join readings holding that external social factors have huge influence in language development and that there is some innate capability common to all human beings related to language acquisition and development. A particular case which shows the relationship between these two aspects is the study of *pidgins* and *creoles.* This subject is part of Language Contact studies, which is one of the branches of the Sociolinguistics field, and provides a bridge between studies in Anthropology and Psychology.
KEYWORDS: sociolinguistics; contact language; pidgins and creoles; language acquisition.

RESUMO: Este artigo reúne leituras argumentando que fatores sociais têm grande influência no desenvolvimento da linguagem, e que existe certa capacidade inata - comum a todos os seres humanos - relacionada à aquisição e desenvolvimento da mesma. Um caso particular que demonstra a relação entre estes dois aspectos é o estudo dos *pidgins* e *creoles. Pidgin* é uma língua de emergência, criada para facilitar a comunicação entre grupos de línguas e culturas

diferentes que entram em contato e estabelecem algum relacionamento. Este assunto faz parte dos estudos de Línguas de Contato - que é um dos ramos do campo da Sociolingüística - e propõe uma ligação entre os estudos em Antropologia e Psicologia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: sociolingüística; línguas de contato; *pidgins* e *creoles*; aquisição da linguagem.

RESUMEN: Este artículo reune lecturas que defienden la gran influencia de los factores sociales en el desarrollo del lenguaje, así como la existencia de una cierta capacidad innata – común a todos los seres humanos – relacionada con la adquisición y desarrollo del mismo. Un caso particular que demuestra la relación entre estos dos aspectos es el estudio de los *pidgins* y *creoles* [criollos]. *Pidgin* es una lengua de emergencia, creada para facilitar la comunicación entre grupos de lenguas y culturas diferentes que entran en contacto y establecen alguna relación. Este asunto es parte de los estudios en Lenguas de Contacto –uno de los ramos del campo de la Sociolingüística – y propone un vínculo entre los estudios en Antropología y Psicología

PALABRAS CLAVE: Sociolingüística; lenguas de contacto; pidgins y criollos; adquisición del lenguaje.