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## Introduction: Sociolinguistics and/of Pidgins and Creoles

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There are multiple connections between Pidgins and Creoles (P/Cs) and sociolinguistics. They reflect the very nature of their inception as well as the fact pointed out by Rickford (1988), that many of the early and current researchers who have worked on P/Cs are also sociolinguists and have applied sociolinguistic methods and approaches to the study of P/Cs.<sup>1</sup> Quantitative sociolinguistics research on Creoles and work on implicational scales, for instance, were instrumental in identifying the nature of creole grammars and their relationship to their main lexical input or lexifier, e.g. English. They were also crucial in critically assessing the notion of social class and its applicability to different contexts (Rickford 1986a), the notion of variable rules (Devonish 1989; Winford 1990) and the nature of non-phonological variables (Winford 1984). Research on variation in P/Cs also gave rise to sociolinguistic models such as Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) 'Acts of Identity' model and DeCamp's (1971) Post-Creole Continuum model. Sociolinguists working on other languages, in turn, have often drawn on evidence and concepts from research on P/Cs to explain sociolinguistic and sociohistorical processes, models and assumptions, and to explain the makeup of linguistic contexts (e.g. Cheshire et al. 2011 for a recent example). However, according to Winford (1997b: 304) since the 1990s sociolinguists and Creolists have paid less close attention to each other's work, so that outdated assumptions about P/Cs and variation (as discussed in some early publications on Caribbean English-lexified Creoles) are at times being uncritically rehashed in the sociolinguistics literature, and newer developments in sociolinguistics are not always applied to research on P/Cs .

The Post-Creole Continuum notion had an important impact on early understandings of particularly English-official communities in the Caribbean where English-lexified Creoles function as important community languages coexisting with the official language, English. Coined by DeCamp (1971) based on research on Jamaica and popularized by Bickerton (1975) who relied on data from Guyana, the Post-Creole Continuum model posits that the variation between a Creole and localized varieties of Standard English is part of one system as no boundaries can be established between them (cf. Bailey 1971). Bickerton argued that this situation emerged after Emancipation because Creole speakers were gradually adapting the 'deep' Creole, also called basilect, in the direction of Standard English, also referred to as the acrolect. The adaptation process, referred to as decreolization (Bickerton 1980), was demonstrated to have produced intermediate lects or mesolects. Most researchers take issue with the view that Creole varieties cannot be differentiated and argue that they constitute sociolinguistic continua (see below). Quantitative sociolinguistic research has challenged the view that variation between the different lects posited by the Post-Creole Continuum is

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<sup>1</sup>For reasons of space, our discussion does not treat the literature on African American (Vernacular) English. The discussion on African American (Vernacular) English has also, in part, proceeded separately.

continuous. Also, despite the fact that both sociohistorical and sociolinguistic research have called into question Bickerton's historical scenario of the emergence of Post-Creole Continua and the notion of decreolization (see Winford (1997b) for a summary overview discussion), both the concept of the Post-Creole continuum and the notion of decreolization still persist. Quantitative sociolinguistic research (e.g. Winford 1972; Young 1973; Escure 1982; Edwards 1983; Rickford 1987, 1991; Migge 1994), for instance, has been instrumental in showing that variation is socially conditioned as in all bilingual and multilingual settings. In P/C communities two or more socially and linguistically distinct language systems co-exist (Devonish 1992), namely varieties of a Creole and varieties of a European language. Each is traditionally associated with a particular type of context - the Creole with informal and the European language with formal contexts; and with particular social groupings - the Creole with rural populations and the European language with urban and professional populations, for instance. But Creole communities do not conform to Ferguson's (1959) notion of diglossia (Winford 1985) because most contexts are not uniquely associated with just one language. Community members code-switch between varieties to negotiate social relationships and social identities (Fenigsen 2005; Migge 2005, 2007; Youssef 1996) as in all linguistically diverse settings and some children also access the European language prior to attending school. In some communities such as Belize (Young 1973; Escure 1982) and Suriname (Migge 2007), code-switching practices are largely responsible for the variation found in such settings. In other contexts (e.g. Guyana, Jamaica), intermediate varieties or mesolects exist as focused systems in their own right (Rickford 1974; Patrick 1999) which are often linked to urbanized working class populations and code-switching takes place among them, the 'deep' Creole and Standard English.

Research has also critically examined the process of decreolization as it is a central component of Bickerton's conceptualization of the Post-Creole Continuum (Bickerton 1980; Day 1972). Bailey & Maynor (1987), Sato (1991), Mufwene (1994), Aceto (1999) and Schwegler (2001) among others show that this process cannot fully explain the variation found in P/C communities because contact with the European language in the context is only one among several factors responsible for the variation and changes that occur in these communities. Additionally, Mufwene (2001) cautions against conflating decreolization with debasilectalization.<sup>2</sup> Since the Post-Creole Continuum notion cannot fully explain the contexts for which it was originally devised and is certainly ill-suited for generalization to other contexts, different ways of conceptualizing language and language use in P/C communities have been proposed (cf. Robertson 1982; Carrington 1993; Mufwene 2015).

Research on P/Cs still mostly focuses only on variation between the standard language, often English, and *the* P/C, and this bias in research on variation in P/Cs is also found in other contexts such as the emerging research on varieties of Pidgin Arabic (e.g. Almoaily 2014). Consequently, we still know comparatively little about other dimensions of variation in the sociolinguistic structure of P/C communities, locally used naming practices and their social significance (Léglise & Migge 2006; Migge & Léglise 2013), social and regional varieties, registers, styles, their linguistic nature and how they are deployed (but see

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<sup>2</sup> For Mufwene, debasilectalization involves attrition of basilectal features; a process that is not necessarily synonymous with decreolization, and which is akin to the loss of certain linguistic features across generations also present in non-contact situations.

Reisman 1970; Abrahams 1972; Edwards 1979, 1983; Pollard 1980; Rickford 1986b; Patrick 1993, 1997; Migge 2004). Also, we still know comparatively little about the social and linguistic processes involved in the emergence of these dialects/registers/styles and their change (Garrett 2000; Romaine 1994; Migge 2011), because research mostly focuses on morphosyntactic and phonological features, disregarding lexical and other stylistic features that play an important role in differentiating ways of speaking. In the meantime, approaches such as the Post-Creole Continuum, built on the idea that language practices can be described using three continuous lects, are used to discuss varieties of English such as those in Malaysia (Baskaran 2004) and unfortunately the editors of the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures* (APiCs; Michaelis et al. 2013a, b) database insisted on this terminology for the sociolinguistic profiles.

More recent sociolinguistic research continues to explore patterns of variation, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. However, there is now a greater interest in identifying the social meanings and functions of linguistic variants. For instance, Sidnell (1999) examines the semantics and pragmatics of personal pronouns, their interaction with gender norms and how they impact on the distribution of Creole and English personal pronouns among men and women in Guyana. Sidnell (2003) and Farquharson (2005) explore male gendered language use. The papers in Mühleisen and Migge (2005) explore the nature of linguistic politeness practices in Caribbean communities and Meyerhoff and Walker (2007) investigate the role of mobility patterns on language variation. The category of social group or class and its linkages with language in P/C communities was examined by several studies such as Edwards (1983), Rickford (1991), Blake (1996) and Jourdan (2008). However, given the rising importance and diversification of research in second and third wave sociolinguistics (cf. Eckert 2012), it is fair to say that we still know comparatively little about the intricate linkages that exist between social categories and language variation and change in communities where P/Cs are spoken. Although Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's Acts of Identity framework and the concept of *focusing* in particular are widely recognized as having made an important contribution to our understanding of language use in Creole communities and more widely, it has to date not been used a great deal to explore language use in Creole communities outside of the authors' own work (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985; Edwards 1983). Rickford (2011) provides an overview of the contribution of the Acts of Identity model and discusses several reasons why it has not been widely applied to date (pp. 264-267): non-Caribbean scholars, who have carried out the bulk of the sociolinguistic studies on the Caribbean in recent years, generally do not know the model while Caribbean scholars generally do not promote quantitative approaches to language through their teaching. Finally, both sets of scholars generally focus too closely only on linguistic matters and lack training in anthropology and social psychology.

Given that P/Cs are often cast as low status languages due to their association with forced labour, language mixing and popular culture, there is research on language ideologies. Early studies were often descriptive (e.g. Craig 1980) or quantitative in nature and contrasted the attitudes of important gatekeepers such as teachers to P/Cs and English. They showed that English has overt prestige, being considered 'good', 'proper' and 'correct' while P/Cs are seen as the opposite, but fare well in terms of interpersonal solidarity (Rickford 1985). Discussing Winford's (1976) and Mühleisen's (1993) follow-up research, Mühleisen (2001),

for instance, found that teachers' views about Trinidadian English Creole had improved significantly over a 20-year period. In 1993, due to greater linguistic self-confidence, teachers no longer saw it as "bad or incorrect English", but accepted it as a language in its own right. While questionnaire-based studies allow correlations between interviewees' social characteristics, aspirations, and their language attitudes, as well as exploring the important impact of macro-social language attitudes on people's own assessments, they cannot capture intra-personal variation or the interactionally based, context-bound nature of views about language. Only an ethnographic and discourse-based approach that takes into account a range of data types can uncover the different kinds of competing perspectives on language that co-exist and shape each other in a given context and the processes that are in operation (cf. Irvine and Gal 2000). There are a few studies that follow a discourse-based approach to analyzing language ideologies such as Fenigsen (2003) for Barbados, Jourdan and Angeli (2014) for the Solomon Islands, Mühleisen (2002) for Caribbean English-based Creoles, including diaspora varieties, and Migge & Léglise (2013) for French Guiana.

Traditionally, research on P/Cs has predominantly focused on the language practices in the traditional or original communities in the Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific. But P/Cs are no longer - and probably never were - confined to these locations. With their speakers' migration within these different regions and to Europe and North America, P/Cs have become an integral part of societies outside of their traditional homelands where they have attracted the attention of educators and linguists. Early work by Sebba (1993) and Sutcliffe (1982) on what was then called Black British English in the United Kingdom mostly focused on the practices of young, usually British-born children of Caribbean descent (see also Dray & Sebba 2011). They showed that although many were not fully-fledged speakers of Jamaican Creole, they employed it to negotiate distinctive social identities (cf. also Mair 2003). Rampton's (1995) work on what he calls *crossing*, built on the work of Hewitt (1986), which highlighted the fact that these practices were not simply used by youngsters of Caribbean or Jamaican descent but also by those from other ethnic groupings, including Anglo-British youngsters, to perform assertive identities. More recent work on Haitians (Zéphir 1996; Hebblethwaite 2000) and Jamaicans (e.g. Hinrichs 2011, 2014a, b; 2015) focuses on North American urban centers such as Toronto and examines the linguistic nature of practices, their semiotics and the processes of change that they undergo in diaspora communities. It explores the speech of different generational groups and in face-to-face communication and mediated practices (Mair; Mair & Lacoste Moll ), as well as issues of authenticity (Akande 2012a, b; 2014; Heyd & Mair 2014; Mair & Lacoste 2012; Moll 2014; Omoniyi 2009). To date, there is very little research on language and recent intra-regional migration, such as the language practices of Haitians in the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Suriname and in the French overseas territories (but see Migge & Léglise 2013; Migge & Léglise 2015 and Léglise & Migge 2015 for some research on language and migration in relation to French Guiana and Suriname).

Until quite recently, spoken vernacular language use in informal face-to-face interactions was the main focus of research on P/Cs. However, in recent years, mediated language practices have received greater attention in research on P/Cs. There is a relatively long tradition of research on representations of P/Cs in literature (Lalla 2005, 2014; Lang 2005; Pollard 2014; Winer & Buzelin 2008). Researchers were traditionally interested in

topics such as the orthographic representations of P/Cs in texts otherwise written in European languages, their overall distribution, uses and functions in literary texts such as novels and short stories but also poems and how such representations have changed over time. Mühleisen (2002) shows that such diachronic changes are indicative of the changing status and ideologies surrounding P/Cs. Schneider and Wagner (2006), in contrast, explore the authenticity of patterns of variation in a Jamaican novel and Pollard (2014) explores the encoding of voice.<sup>3</sup> More recent research also explores the role of P/Cs in broadcast media such as on radio and TV. Garrett (2000, 2007), for instance, shows that there are two varieties of St Lucia Creole that are used in radio broadcasts: a highly stylized prestige variety that was crafted by local intellectuals and everyday speech. The latter is widely understood but is mainly used for comic effect and information summaries. The former, in contrast, is used for information-based programs but has low levels of intelligibility among the wider population. Migge (2011) discusses how indigenous formal language practices are undergoing change as a result of being used on the air. Shields-Brodber (1992) discusses emerging code-switching patterns on Jamaican call-in radio shows. And finally, Managan (2011) examines the use of Kréyòl in Guadeloupean television broadcasts. In recent years, popular music has also come to function as a source of data for sociolinguistic research on P/Cs. There is research on the linguistic nature of language use in songs, such as the realization of certain vowels (Devonish 2006), identity performance (Herzfeld 2004), and codeswitching (Sarkar & Winer 2006). Additionally, there are works that have examined the meanings and wider social functions of language practices in songs (Devonish 1996; Bremner 2015). Music and mediated data figure centrally in research on diaspora practices (Hinrichs 2015). Finally, in step with research on other bilingual and multilingual contexts, there is also a growing number of studies that explores the use of P/Cs in different electronic media such as emails (Hinrichs 2006), blogs, and internet forums (Moll 2015).

Sociolinguistics is clearly an important area of research on P/Cs which has expanded significantly since the beginning of modern P/C Studies. However, given that most of it has focused on the Caribbean region and on variation between the Creole and their lexifiers, we still lack a comprehensive understanding of ways in which language interacts with social phenomena in P/C communities.

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<sup>3</sup> For more research on authenticity in language use, see Lacoste & Mair (2012) and papers in Lacoste et al (2014).

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