The development of the nominal domain in creole languages: A comparative-typological approach
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Chapter 2

Contact language formation and creolization

The majority of the creoles known nowadays share a similar social and linguistic history. The creoles discussed in this book are all products of European colonial expansion. European trading posts, settlements and plantation colonies that emerged in coastal areas of West Africa, South America, India, South and Southeast Asia, the Philippines and the islands of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans became meeting grounds for genetically distant and typologically diverse languages. Germanic and Romance languages spoken by the European colonizers were brought into contact with multiple non-European languages, such as Niger-Congo, Khoisan, Austronesian or Indo-Aryan. This contact gave rise to the development of new languages identified as creoles.

While being the product of language contact is an essential characteristic of all creole languages, not all languages that emerge out of language contact situations (including some of the languages in my sample) are classified by scholars as creoles. For instance, hardly anyone would apply the term creole to the varieties spoken by contemporary immigrant worker communities in Europe. Such communities usually develop an L2 variety, which, despite some idiosyncrasies, can be clearly aligned with the local European language. Similarly, not all contact varieties that developed during the European colonial expansion are always referred to as creoles. In addition to creoles, scholars distinguish pidgins, semi-creoles, and colonial dialects. Semi-creoles, together with mesolectal, allegedly decreolized creoles, are opposed to so-called radical or prototypical creoles. While this subcategorization of contact languages relies on a mixture of linguistic and non-linguistic criteria and is often criticized for being intuitive and arbitrary, the fact remains that language contact which took place during European colonial expansion produced structurally diverse varieties with different degrees of grammatical stability and varying proportions of European and non-European content. While all these varieties developed out of comparable linguistic material (contact between two or more typologically different languages), the diversity of demographic and socioeconomic contexts determined the diversity of ways in which this material was selected, transferred and re-combined.

In what follows, I will provide a closer examination of the linguistic and non-linguistic factors underlying the processes of contact language formation and
creolization. In section 2.1, I will identify the linguistic environment out of which the languages under study emerged and discuss some of the problems regarding the establishment of their linguistic sources. In section 2.2, I will turn to non-linguistic, historical, socio-economic, and demographic factors, which lead to the emergence of different types of contact languages.

2.1 Linguistic aspects of contact language formation and creolization

This section is devoted to the discussion of languages that came into contact in the European colonies of West Africa, South America, India, the Philippines and on the islands of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans giving rise to the emergence of the creoles under study. Although the issue of the linguistic origins of creoles is the subject of hot debate (see Chapter 3), most creolists recognize the importance of both the languages of the colonizers and the languages of the colonized populations or of the slaves for creole formation. In creolistics, these two major linguistic sources of creoles are referred to as superstrate languages and substrate languages, respectively.

2.1.1 Superstrate languages

The creole languages discussed in this book have a Germanic (English or Dutch) or a Romance (French, Spanish or Portuguese) superstrate. As already stated in 1.4.1, the sample of fifteen creoles considered here includes three English, three Dutch, three French, three Spanish, and three Portuguese-based creoles.

The establishment of a creole’s superstrate usually does not represent a complex task, as the relationship between the two languages, literally speaking, lies on the surface. Superstrate languages provide the largest proportion of the creoles’ basic vocabulary. Therefore, alongside the term “superstrate” creolists often use the term “lexifier”. Consider the following example from Jamaican Creole:

Jamaican Creole (my data)

(8) In no no weh di gyal dem a taak bout.
   3SG NEG know what DEF girl PL PROG talk about
   ‘He does not know what the girls are talking about.’

Although a layman might not be able to identify the superstrate cognates of all the creole lexical items, for a trained creolist, who is aware of possible phonological changes and creole orthographical conventions, this usually does not pose a problem. In 19th century linguistics, the high superficial similarity between creoles and their respective superstrates even gave rise to the popular assumption that creoles are corrupted, imperfect, or simplified varieties of the European languages (e.g., Vinson 1889)
Although in postcolonial creolistics this linguistically ungrounded characterization of creoles has been refuted, some researchers, especially in the French tradition (e.g., Chaudenson 1977, 1992, 2003; Chaudenson and Mufwene 2001) view creoles as varieties, or dialects, of the metropolitan European languages. Superstratist researchers such as Chaudenson argue that, in addition to providing the bulk of a creole’s vocabulary, the superstrate also determines the structural properties (feature specifications and syntactic distribution) of these items. In this book, we shall see that this claim holds for many creole nominal elements.

Despite the fact that identifying the creoles’ superstrates and establishing lexical as well as structural parallels between them appears to be a rather easy task, a word of caution is due here. In the literature, creoles are often compared with the contemporary standard varieties of their superstrates. Neglecting the discrepancy between contemporary and older states of the superstrate as well as the dialectal variation abundant in Germanic and Romance languages renders such comparisons oversimplified and sometimes even inaccurate (cf. Chaudenson 2003). Historical demographic studies inform us that the European colonial population was linguistically very heterogeneous: Europeans who ended up in a colony came from different geographical areas of the colonizing countries and were thus speakers of various regional dialects. Given that many Europeans in the colonies were poorly educated and of low socio-economic rank, it is very likely that dialects (rather than standard varieties) of the European languages were spoken. The presence of pirates, buccaneers, soldiers and indentured servants (who were usually debtors and convicted felons forcibly shipped to a plantation) contributed to this variation (e.g., Le Page 1960; Alleyne 1980; Chaudenson and Mufwene 2001; Chaudenson 2003).

In some cases of contact language formation, there is strong evidence that the restructuring of the superstrate language might have begun before it came in contact with the languages identified as the substrate. One such case is that of Pacific Pidgin English. Most Englishmen, Irishmen and Americans on board whaling and trading ships in the Pacific Ocean spoke working class and regional dialects of British and American English. The crewmen equally included Indians, Peruvians, Europeans of various nationalities and Malays. This linguistic heterogeneity is likely to have given rise to (presumably, pidginized) L2 varieties of English before Pacific Islanders, whose languages are identified as the substrates of Pacific Pidgin English, came into the picture. Similarly, the development of Diu Portuguese out of contact between Portuguese and Gujarati is likely to have been preceded by the reconstruction of the superstrate. In the initial years of the Portuguese presence in Diu, the Portuguese were confined to the fort. As observed by Cardoso (2009: 70), “[c]onsidering that the majority of the population [of the fort] was not Portuguese-speaking communication must have proceeded through a reconstructed Portuguese register, whether locally formed or the general Asian Portuguese Pidgin identified by Clements (2000)”. Also, the superstrate of Afrikaans was not restricted to L1 Dutch. The European population of the Cape colony included not only Dutchmen, but also Germans from Low and Middle
German dialect areas, as well as a small group of French Huguenots. Due to a policy of cultural and linguistic assimilation pursued by the Dutch colonial government, they were strongly encouraged to acquire and speak Dutch. Thus, in addition to native Dutch dialects, non-native Dutch varieties were also present.

Given that the type of superstrate which participated in the formation of creoles was not the standard variety of a European language but rather a combination of regional and social dialects and (pidginized) L2 varieties, one needs to keep in mind that certain creole constructions, which at first sight might appear non-European, could find parallels in non-standard varieties of European languages.

Although standard varieties of European languages are far more extensively described than their numerous dialects (especially as far as their state at the time of colonization is concerned), I will attempt to include the available dialectal data into the comparison undertaken in the present study.

### 2.1.2 Substrate languages

Throughout the history of European colonial expansion, colonies emerged in previously populated as well as in uninhabited territories. While, in the former case, the servile population consisted of both locals and imported workers, in the latter case, all of the labor force was imported through slave trade or, later, indentured labor recruitment. In creole studies, both the local languages spoken by the native population of a colonized area before the arrival of Europeans and the languages of the immigrant servile populations are referred to as substrates. The distinction can be captured in more specific terms such as endogenous and exogenous substrates (cf. Chaudenson 1977).

The linguistic composition of endogenous and exogenous substrates is usually rather different. When the substrate language(s) of a creole is/are spoken by the native population of a colony, it is usually composed of a single language or a number of genetically related and typologically similar languages. Exogenous substrates are often composed of a number of different languages, as the slaves were typically acquired from more than one area. This will be illustrated in the subsequent sections.

#### 2.1.2.1 Atlantic and Indian Ocean Creoles

The majority of the creoles spoken in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean areas have an exogenous substrate. Languages that constituted the substrates of Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles were brought to the colonies of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as a result of the introduction of slavery. When British, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese colonizers settled on the West African coast, in South America and on the islands of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, they soon realized that the exploration of these areas would require mass employment of labor force (see section 2.2.1.2). The intensity of exploration, the severity of labor conditions together with the hostility of the tropical climate and the danger of new, unknown disease environments dictated the necessity to
employ forced labor, slaves, who would be available in large numbers, cheap and prone to the severe environmental conditions. After some unsuccessful experiments with the local Amerindian population, the choice of the colonizers turned to Africa, which became virtually the sole provider of enslaved laborers for the whole period of European colonialism.

In order to establish which African languages were involved in the creation of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles under study, one needs to establish the ethnolinguistic background of the enslaved populations of the colonies where these creoles came into existence. In this section, I will consider the ethnolinguistic composition of the slave exportation areas for the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and discuss ways of assessing substrate contribution to a creole.

In the colonies of the Atlantic, the overwhelming majority of slaves came from Niger-Congo-speaking Africa. The Afro-European slave trade involved the whole West African coast and parts of Central Africa. European slave traders, with the exception of the Portuguese who cooperated with rulers in the interior of Angola, did not venture inland. Therefore, almost all slaves came from places that were situated not more than 200-300 kilometers from the coastal line (Curtin 1969: 102; Manning 1982: 32; Postma 2005: 119). The area involved in the slave trade was divided by the Europeans into a number of exportation zones, which were often identified by their most important export. Table 2.1 gives an overview of these zones and a corresponding overview of their linguistic composition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slave exportation zones</th>
<th>Their modern correspondences</th>
<th>Language groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UPPER GUINEA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegambia</td>
<td>Senegal-Gambia-Guinea</td>
<td>West Atlantic Mande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Sierra Leone-Liberia (up to Monrovia)</td>
<td>West Atlantic Mande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windward Coast</td>
<td>Liberia-Ivory Coast up to Assini River</td>
<td>Kru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER GUINEA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>Ivory Coast-Ghana</td>
<td>Kwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bight of Benin (Slave Coast)</td>
<td>Togo, Benin, Nigeria (up to Niger Delta)</td>
<td>Kwa Delto-Benuic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bight of Biafra</td>
<td>Nigeria-Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea-north of Gabon</td>
<td>Delto-Benuic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu (Congo-Angola area)</td>
<td>South of Gabon, Congo, Angola</td>
<td>Bantu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1. Slave exportation zones in the Atlantic and their linguistic compositions, based on Curtin (1969), Parkvall (2000), and Postma (2005).

For logistical reasons, slave trade in the Indian Ocean involved areas different from the Atlantic slave trade. Although some slaves were imported from West Africa,
namely, Senegambia and Bight of Benin, many were drawn from Mozambique, Madagascar and even from India. The areas involved in the Indian Ocean slave trade together with the languages that are spoken there are listed in table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slave exportation areas</th>
<th>Language groups and their most important representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>Senegambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Atlantic, Mande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bight of Benin (Slave Coast)</td>
<td>Kwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bantu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malayo-Polynesian (Malagasy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indo-Aryan, Dravidian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The overview of the slave-trading areas in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans suggests that the colonial slave populations were made up of speakers of a large number of (sometimes typologically distant) languages. In view of the linguistic diversity of the slaves, creolists inevitably face the issue of how to establish the substrate contribution in each particular case of creole formation.

Until the end of the 20th century, many scholars neglected this issue. In substrate-oriented research on the Atlantic Creoles, there was an assumption that Niger-Congo languages were typologically similar. Therefore, in order to establish structural parallels between creoles and Niger-Congo, any representative of the family could be used for comparison. In practice, this led to studies which would deliberately pick a Niger-Congo language showing similar structural properties to the ones found in a creole in order to make a case for substrate influence. Given the large number and diversity of languages in the Niger-Congo family, the chance to find such correspondences just by accident was quite high. This methodological flaw is referred to as the Cafeteria Principle.

Nowadays, the methods of substratist research have significantly improved. For instance, Kouwenberg (2007, 2009), in her work on the substrate sources of Jamaican Creole, emphasizes that, despite a certain typological affinity which surely exists between the branches of the Niger-Congo family, they still show a great amount of diversity, and that this needs to be taken into account. Needless to say, this statement also holds for the substrate languages of the rest of the Atlantic creoles as well as Indian Ocean creoles, which include representatives from different language families.

Therefore, contemporary substratist research focuses on the attempts to put together historical-demographic and linguistic evidence in order to identify the relevant substrate(s) for each individual creole. Historical-demographic evidence concerns all the information (e.g., slave shipment records, colonial population censuses, etc.) about which ethnolinguistic groups were well-represented among the slave population at any given moment. Linguistic evidence concerns observed structural (grammatical, lexical and phonetic) similarities between a creole and its potential substrate. Both types of
evidence should be carefully valued against what we know about creole genesis and language change in general.

As for linguistic evidence, particularly significant are those similarities that do not correspond to universally pervasive, unmarked features, which could arise in a creole independently from substrate influence. Therefore, not every feature that a creole and its potential substrate have in common may be interpreted as an indication of substrate influence.

Historical-demographic evidence is equally important in substratist research, as it helps to include only possible candidates for the establishment of linguistic parallels between a creole and an alleged substrate. However, only the correct interpretation of this evidence can give one a hint as to the most likely substrates. While almost all the available exportation areas were represented in the slave population of many colonies, the proportion of different linguistic groups was unequal. Although it has been often suggested that slave owners strove to put together slaves with different ethnolinguistic backgrounds to make it harder for them to conspire and to escape, in practice the policy of ethnolinguistic separation was quite difficult to implement and it remained a nicety rather than an operating principle (cf. Singler 1988). European slave owners were dependent on their relationship with the local slave traders and on what was available on the market. Therefore, at different periods in the history of a colony, slave importations from certain regions would usually prevail.

It has been argued that creolization happened rapidly, within the first few decades after the formation of the plantation slave community. A large number of studies demonstrate that the languages of the ethnic groups which dominated among the colonial slave population at this linguistically critical time exerted the most profound influence on the structure of an emerging creole. Mufwene identified this tendency as the Founder Principle (Mufwene 2001, and other work).

Although historical-demographic evidence for the linguistically crucial early stages of creolization is not equally available for all creoles and is usually quite scarce, when combined with the comparative linguistic data compiled in such large-scale studies as Parkvall (2000) as well as in studies of the linguistic history of individual creoles (e.g., Baker 1972, 1982, 1984; Ferraz 1979; Den Besten 1986; Smith 1987; Smith et al. 1987; Arends 1989; Kouwenberg 1994, 2007; Lefebvre 1998; Lorenzino 1998; Hagemeijer 2005; Schwegler 2006; Cardoso 2009; Grant 2011; Hagemeijer and Ota 2011), it provides a rather accurate indication as to which substrate languages were involved in the creation of each of the Atlantic and Indian Creoles under study. In table 2.3, I have summarized the information on the substrate languages of the Atlantic creoles considered. As the table shows, with the sole exception of Berbice Dutch, for which only one substrate language has been identified (Smith et al. 1987), most Atlantic creoles in our sample are said to have more than one important substrate. Cape Verdan, which has been developed and is spoken in the Upper Guinea area, is the only creole whose substrate languages belong to the languages of Upper Guinea: Atlantic and
Mande. The rest of the creoles have Lower Guinean (Kwa, Delto-Benuic) and Bantu substrates.

As for Mauritian Creole, the only Indian Ocean creole in the sample, its major substrates include Kwa, Bantu and Malagasy. While Kwa (Gbe) prevailed in the early stages of creolization, the influence of Bantu and Malagasy is likely to have been more significant in the later stages (cf. Baker 1984).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creole</th>
<th>Major substrate(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe, Akan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo), Benue-Congo (Edo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Berbice Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Ijo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negerhollands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe, Akan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Haitian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Antillean</td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Santome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benue-Congo (Edo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdean</td>
<td>Atlantic (Bambara, Temne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mande (Mandinka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Papiamentu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kwa (Gbe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palenquero</td>
<td>Bantu (Kikongo)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3. The major substrate languages of the Atlantic creoles studied here.

2.1.2.2 Afrikaans

Some of the creole languages studied here have a mixture of exogenous and endogenous substrates. One of them is Afrikaans. In addition to the dialects of early Modern Dutch (particularly, South-Hollandic) and L2 varieties spoken by non-Dutch European colonial population, the linguistic feature pool that led to the formation of Afrikaans consisted of the languages of the native population of the Cape colony, the Khoekhoens, and of the slaves of African and Asian provenance (cf. Den Besten 1986; Van der Wouden 2012).

The native inhabitants of the Cape colony, the Khoekhoens, all spoke one language with a number of mutually intelligible dialects. This language, known as Khoikhoi, is a Khoisan language. The Khoikhoi dialects, once spoken by the Cape Khoekhoen, (West) Cape Hottentot and East Cape Hottentot, are now extinct, and not much is known about their syntax. However, other dialects of the language, Korana and Nama, which appear to display structural similarity to the dialects of Cape Hottentot, are relatively well described. According to Den Besten (1986), one may consult their descriptions in order to get an idea of what the structure of Cape Hottentot would have looked like.

As for the immigrant slave population of the Cape, it was ethnolinguistically extremely diverse. Two languages were particularly important among the slaves, as they
were used as lingua francas by the multilingual slave population. These languages were Pasar Malay ("market" Malay) and Indo-Portuguese creole, both originally Asian contact languages.

2.1.2.3  Tok Pisin

Tok Pisin developed in the Pacific area as a result of contact between English and the local Oceanic (Austronesian) substrate. The history of Pacific Pidgin English includes a number of different stages from a socio-economic point of view. It started with whaling, which was followed by sandalwood and bêche-de-mer² trade, which was then followed by external and, later on, internal labor recruitment for plantations. These successive contexts brought English, spoken at first by the crewmembers of the whaling ships, then by sandalwood and bêche-de-mer and, later, labor traders, in contact with Central Eastern Oceanic languages spoken by the populations of New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands, the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. (Keesing 1988; Goulden 1990; Baker 1993). Later on, when Pacific Pidgin was transferred to Papua New Guinea, it came in contact with the Western Oceanic language Tolai (Mosel 1980).

Due to the enormous linguistic diversity of the Pacific area and inter-island mobility of the population, it is practically impossible to establish which individual languages provided substrate material for Pacific Pidgin. This concerns in particular the early substrate strata composed of Central-Eastern Oceanic languages.

This problem appears less significant if we take into account Keesing’s (1988) point that “the substrate languages that could have provided models for an emerging Pacific pidgin at successive stages in the 19th century, while spoken over a vast area, are genetically and typologically rather homogenous. The majority of languages spoken in Melanesia fall in the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian, and most of them fall in a subgroup of Oceanic identified as ‘Central/Eastern Oceanic’” (cf. Lynch et al. 2002).

According to Keesing (1988), Eastern Oceanic languages share a lot of core structural properties. If we assume that the structural stabilization and homogenization (leveling out) of the pidgin, which most likely took place during the periods of extractive trades and plantations, involved elimination of individually occurring idiosyncratic L1-based patterns³ we can hypothesize that in the later Pacific Pidgin, as well as in its modern varieties, we are most likely to find features shared by Eastern Oceanic languages.

² bêche-de-mer (lit. ‘sea-spade’) is a marine animal that belongs to the class of sea cucumbers; rumored to be an aphrodisiac.

³ The relevance of typological congruence has been repeatedly pointed out in language contact as well as second language acquisition studies. It has been shown that typologically congruent features from different languages in contact tend to reinforce each other and have therefore better chances to be preserved in the emerging contact variety than idiosyncratic features present in one language, with no parallels in the remainder of the contact environment (cf. Aboh and Ansaldo 2007).
Another problem related to the establishment of the sources of non-European features concerns Tok Pisin specifically. Unlike other modern varieties of Pacific Pidgin, after the abolition of external labor recruitment, Tok Pisin continued its development in an area linguistically different from the area where the development of the earlier Pacific Pidgin took place. The Western Oceanic languages of Bismarck Archipelago, spoken in the part of Papua New Guinea whose population was involved in indentured labor recruitment, show fewer structural resemblances to Eastern Oceanic languages than the latter do amongst each other. In Keesing’s words, “many patterns pervasive in Eastern Oceanic languages [and found in Pacific Pidgin – E.B.] are either absent or attenuated in the Oceanic languages of Bismarck Archipelago” (Keesing 1988: 116). According to Keesing, by the time Tok Pisin was transplanted to an alien linguistic environment, it represented a stabilized and elaborated pidgin, thus many of its well-established Melanesian features survived. However, over time the pidgin underwent some new developments and therefore “bent in the direction of the dominant local substrate” (172) Kanua (Tolai). In other words, some of its Eastern Oceanic structural patterns either disappeared or were modified under the influence of the new substrate.

In view of these multiple layers of temporally stratified substrate influence, one inevitably faces the question of how to establish at which stage of pidgin development one must search for the origin of non-European features attested in modern Tok Pisin. Fortunately, the existence of other modern varieties of Pacific Pidgin that have continued to develop in the Eastern Oceanic linguistic environment offers a solution to this problem. Given the considerable period of shared history, it is reasonable to assume the structural features that are attested both in the earlier pidgin and in all its modern varieties are likely to have been incorporated from the earlier Eastern Oceanic substrate. The structural features specific to Tok Pisin, with no resemblance in other modern varieties or in the earlier pidgin, are likely to be due to the later Tolai influence. Therefore, although the focus of the present work is on Tok Pisin, other modern varieties of Pacific Pidgin as well as data available from earlier stages of its existence have also been considered.

2.1.2.4 Chabacano

Chabacano, or Philippine Creole Spanish, is spoken in several regions of the Philippines. The six regional varieties of the language were subject to influence from different, albeit genetically related and typologically close, Philippine languages. The three earliest varieties of Chabacano, Ternateño (spoken in Ternate), Caviteño (spoken in Cavite City) and Ermitaño (once spoken in the old district of Ermita in Manila), dating back to the 16th and 17th century, are assumed to have Tagalog as their substrate. Zamboangueño (spoken in Zamboanga city and neighboring areas) and its two offshoots Davaueno and Cotabateño are assumed to have been influenced by Cebuano (cf. Grant 2011).
2.1.2.5 Diu Portuguese

Despite the presence of African slaves, emphasized by Cardoso (2009), Diu Portuguese has a predominantly endogenous substrate, the Indo-Aryan language Gujarati.

2.2 Socio-historical aspects

In section 2.1, we established that all the languages under study emerged out of a contact between typologically distinct (groups of) languages, usually a European superstrate and a non-European (Niger-Congo, Khoisan, Austronesian or Indo-Aryan) substrate. However, none of the languages considered here (and none of the known contact languages) represents an even 50/50 mixture of European and non-European features. Most creoles have a predominantly European lexicon, while their structure typically displays both European and non-European features. The extent to which creoles depart from their superstrate language and absorb substrate features in their structure differs from one individual case to another. Based on the relative distance from the superstrate, some researchers distinguish radical creoles, semi-creoles, mesolectal creoles, and colonial dialects. Also, contact languages differ with regard to their structural complexity (i.e. elaboration of morphological means) and stability. These are assumed to be the properties that distinguish creoles from (prototypical) pidgins. The aforementioned differences can be related to the differences in the socio-historical context in which different contact varieties emerge and develop. The impact of the socio-historical settings on the process of creole (and contact language) formation will be the matter of the subsequent sections.

2.2.1 The amount of contact between groups of colonial population

In this section, we shall compare the types of socio-historical settings that give rise to contact varieties sometimes identified in the literature as radical creoles, semi-creoles, mesolectal creoles and colonial dialects. As mentioned above, the main criterion used in this classification is the relative distance between a contact language and its superstrate, or the amount of superstrate-derived as opposed to substrate-derived features and features that may have emerged in a creole as a result of UG-based independent developments. Radical creoles such as Saramaccan, Sranan or Haitian are those with the greatest amount of non-European features, which, depending on the framework, are accounted for either in terms of substrate influence (e.g., Lefebvre 1998) or language universals (e.g., Bickerton 1981). Languages that are classified as semi-creoles (Afrikaans, Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese, African American Vernacular English) contain a much greater amount of superstrate-like properties than radical creoles, allegedly, due to incomplete creolization. The same characterization applies to
mesolectal creoles with the only difference that they are assumed to have departed from
the erstwhile basilect as a result of decreolization, a process whereby “original” creole
features are replaced with features from the superstrate. Colonial dialects are the least
restructured contact varieties and bear close resemblance to the superstrate. Unlike
to creoles, they are often conceived of as offshoots of the European (Germanic or
Romance) genealogical lineage.

Typically, the relative amount of superstrate-derived features in a contact
variety correlates positively with the amount of contact between the non-European
population of the colony and speakers of the superstrate. In what follows, we shall thus
focus on how different socio-historical settings regulate (i.e. promote or restrict)
language contact between colonizers and colonized populations.

As many creolization scenarios consider the break or impairment in the
transmission of the superstrate a crucial condition for creolization (see Chapter 3), this
topic has received much attention in the literature. Some studies demonstrate the impact
of the socio-economic and political context on the outcome of language contact by
opposing different types of colonial settings. Such studies typically emphasize the
difference between the two types of colonial settings: the homestead society (la société
d’habitation) and the plantation society (la société de plantation) (Chaudenson and
Mufwene 2001; Chaudenson 2003). Faraclas et al. (2007) and Faraclas (2011) perform a
detailed comparison of the political, cultural and socio-economic profile of these two
types based on the discussion of the Hispanic as opposed to the British, French and
Dutch colonization systems.

2.2.1.1 Homestead societies

It has repeatedly been pointed out in the literature that the population of many Hispanic
colonies in South America, Cuba or Brazil did not develop a creole (e.g., McWhorter
2000). Instead, both the slaves and their masters ended up speaking a (perhaps, slightly
“africanized”) dialect of the metropolitan European language. As argued in Faraclas et
al. (2007), this is related to the fact that many colonies of the Hispanic nations were of a
homestead type.

In a typical homestead society, economic activities were diversified: they
included smallholdings, mines and ranching. Plantation agriculture, including sugar
planting, was limited and often not very successful. Most of the laborers were
Europeans, and when African slaves were involved, their proportion never significantly
exceeded the 1:1 ratio. There was no strict labor division between slaves and freemen:
African slaves often worked side by side with European peasants (cf. Chaudenson and
Mufwene 2001; Chaudenson 2003). Faraclas et al. (2007) point out a few other factors
that promoted the spread of the Spanish language and culture by the colonized
populations in Hispanic colonies.

As far as social ideology is concerned, in Hispanic colonies, there was also no
strict dichotomization between the Blacks and the Whites. Although considerations of
race played a role in the organization of social relations in the colonial communities and in the conceptualization of slavery, the boundaries between races, as well as between slaves and freemen were not impenetrable. A phenomenon that contributed significantly to the relaxation of racial distinctions was that of frequent intermarriage between European males and African females. These unions were of high linguistic significance. Firstly, they enhanced the spread of the European language among the African population. Secondly, the children born of such marriages were recognized by their fathers and raised in European culture and religion. These children created an intermediate Spanish-speaking group that consolidated the cultural and linguistic space of the colonial community.

For the Spanish, colonization of other peoples was not only part of the economic enterprise. They also considered it culturally and religiously significant and aimed to integrate the colonized peoples into their civilization. Therefore, they were interested in the spread of the Spanish language and culture and encouraged the participation of slaves in practices and institutions mediated by the Spanish language. On the other hand, despite their civilizing mission, the Spanish did not place a ban on African socioeconomic and cultural traditions, which, channeled through the Spanish cultural forms and structures, became an integral part of Spanish Caribbean life. This latter facilitated the integration of the slave population into the Spanish-dominated colonial community.

The socio-economic, political and cultural settings in the Hispanic colonies facilitated and encouraged the acquisition and use of the colonial language by the slave population. Firstly, the interaction between the masters and their slaves was intimate and systematic enough for the latter to gain sufficient access to the native speaker models of the European language. Secondly, the high level of socio-economic and cultural co-integration between the two groups of colonial population made the European language not only an available, but also a useful communication tool in an emerging multiethnic community dominated by the Europeans.

Another example of a homestead colonial community not considered in Faraclas et al. (2007) is the Cape Colony. The topography of the Cape was unsuitable for plantation agriculture (Roberge 1993). Therefore, no large-scale plantations were developed at the Cape. The demographic evolution of the Cape society also corresponded to the homestead type of economic structure (cf. Chaudenson and Mufwene 2001). In the initial stages, the number of Europeans exceeded the number of slaves. Numerical parity was only reached around 1730 (almost eighty years after the establishment of the settlement) and, in 1798, the number of slaves exceeded the number of Europeans only by 29% (Roberge 1993). Thus, the slave population of the Cape never became significantly larger than the European settler population. Also, homestead economy did not create conditions for the concentration of large groups of slaves in one household. Since the farms at the Cape were generally small, the number of slaves working together on a farm was also small. Households existed in relative isolation from one another. This deprived the slaves of an opportunity to interact among each other.
regularly on the community level and prevented the formation and consolidation of a distinct slave cultural and linguistic tradition (unlike in plantation colonies).

The interaction between slaves and their masters within the small households was, on the other hand, frequent and intimate. The slaves as well as the Khoekhoen serfs formed part of the immediate household and were considered “an integral part of the family” (Deumert 2004: 28). Sexual encounters and ethnically mixed marriages between European males and Khoekhoen or slave females were also quite frequent, especially in the first decades of the settlement, when the scarcity of European women in the colony led to mixed unions (Shell 1994).

Dutch was very important in the interaction between slaves, serfs and their masters within one household. And, since this interaction was regular and intimate, it provided the grounds for the consolidation of native and non-native varieties of Dutch, giving both native and non-native speakers motivation and opportunity to closely approximate each other’s linguistic codes. As a result of the process of mutual approximation, European settlers, slaves and Khoekhoen serfs came to share a common language, Afrikaans, which, based on its close affinity with the superstrate, is often classified not as a creole but as a semi-creole or creoloid.

2.2.1.2  Plantation societies

Plantation communities predominantly flourished in the colonies of England, France, and the Netherlands in the 18th century. Having started their colonial expansion with the establishment of smallholder-based homestead settlements with a predominance of European indentured servants and a low proportion of African slaves, the Dutch and, following them, the English and the French, soon reoriented to large-scale sugar production.

The introduction of large-scale sugar plantations in the colonies totally reshaped the demographic composition of the colonial communities. It brought about a dramatic increase in the size of the slave population, changing the ratio of Europeans to Africans from 1:1 or even less to ratios as high as 1:10 or even 1:20, in some colonies, in few decades. For example, the shift from tobacco to sugar in Haiti, which occurred in the early 1690s (just over thirty years after the establishment of the colony), triggered a rapid increase in the proportion of the slave population. From the 34.8% documented for 1681 it rose to 87.8% by 1721 (Singler 1995: 210). In pre-plantation Jamaica, the proportion of slaves to the European population was of about 1:7. Once the plantation system had been established, around 1670-75, the proportion of slaves quickly rose to 10:1 (Dunn 2000: 155; Mufwene 1996: 92). The social structure of colonial communities, the relationships and patterns of interaction between the two groups of the colonial population were also strongly affected by the introduction of plantation economies. Sugar crops resulted not only in the increase of the number of African slaves, but also in the removal of European laborers from the plantations (Singler 1995). Given the intensity of labor, the severe conditions and the danger of tropical diseases,
those who had a choice chose not to work on sugar plantations. As a result, the workforce on sugar plantations soon consisted only of African slaves. The harsh exploitation and mistreatment of the slave population required justification. The “justification” was provided by the ideology of racial segregation based on the assumption of the inferiority of black people. The associated concepts of race and slavery came to underlie the life of colonial communities. In the era of sugar production, colonial societies acquired a rigid dichotomous structure: large masses of politically and economically powerless slaves were totally dominated by small groups of European masters. There were very few social links between the two groups of colonial population. Slaves were excluded from most social and cultural practices mediated by the European language (see, for example, Le Code Noir ‘The Black Code’ from 1685, which regulated the rights of the slaves and their masters in all French colonies). The northern European nations were not interested in spreading their language and culture among the colonized populations and did not encourage learning among the slaves. In some colonies, such as Surinam, slaves were even explicitly forbidden to speak the language of their masters (Smith 2006: 53).

Under these conditions, interaction between the two groups of the colonial population became both quantitatively and qualitatively restricted. This had two related consequences. Firstly, the exposure of the slaves to native speaker models of the European language was much lower than their exposure to L2 models, spoken by other slaves (although in the beginning of the plantation phase there were “old” slaves with a good command of the colonial language, their proportion quickly decreased in course of the rapid importation of newcomers). Secondly, native speaker models lost their pragmatic value. With the segregation of the slave population, slave-to-slave (as opposed to slave-to-master) interaction began to prevail. The motivation to approximate the European language the way it was spoken by the masters (which was supposedly present in the earliest days, when contact between the masters and the slaves was more frequent and intimate) disappeared. The relaxation of the European norm gave way to the process of restructuring and the massive penetration of features from the native languages of the slaves, which resulted in the emergence of an autonomous language, a creole. Some researchers claim that it was not mere lack of motivation, but that plantation slaves deliberately refused to speak the language of their oppressors and created their own language in opposition to the language of the Whites. This new language, with its pervasive non-European element, became the signifier of their distinctive identity, intra-group solidarity, and resistance to oppression (e.g., Baker 1990).

2.2.1.3 Maroon communities

Sugar plantations did not represent the only setting for creole formation. Another phenomenon in the history of colonization that resulted in creole genesis was marronage,
“the mass escape of slaves from the forced labor in the colonies and the subsequent establishment of their own communities” (Arends 1994: 16).

Maroon communities settled in remote, not easily reachable areas, isolating themselves from the European colonial regime. Plantation creoles, already mastered by those runaway slaves who had spent a considerable amount of time working on the plantation, continued to serve as the medium of interethnic communication. However, due to a decrease in the amount of contact with Europeans as well as with plantation slaves, and because of the fact that the maroons were sometimes joined by slaves who fled from plantations shortly after their arrival to the colony and who therefore had a poor knowledge of the plantation creole, maroon communities developed their own language varieties, nowadays referred to as maroon creoles. Despite showing much affinity with the plantation creoles they are historically related to, maroon creoles can be clearly distinguished from their ancestors in terms of grammatical, lexical and phonological properties.

Among the languages that will be discussed in the present work there is one maroon creole, Palenquero. It developed within the Spanish Empire, in the territory of Colombia. It was created in the 17th century by the runaway slaves employed in building the fortifications of Cartagena, the most important entrepôt of Spanish slave trade in the 16th and 17th centuries (Bickerton & Escalante 1970: 255; Curtin 1969: 45). These runaway slaves settled in areas of dense swamps and jungles, where they established a village known as Palenque de San Basilio (hence, the name of the creole).

2.2.1.4 Post-colonial creole society and decreolization

While homestead communities are considered to have led to a less radical restructuring of the superstrate, or unfinished creolization, post-colonial creole societies are considered to have provided conditions for decreolization, or reunification of the creole with its superstrate. While the term “decreolization” (as well as “creolization”) is criticized by some scholars (e.g., DeGraff 2005) as it conveys the idea of a departure from the creole state thus presupposing that a creole is a linguistic entity qualitatively distinct from a non-creole, it has been empirically demonstrated that prolonged contact between a creole and its superstrate, usually combined with pressure from the superstrate as the model of correctness and the language of bigger opportunities, results in the development of more superstrate-like varieties of a creole identified together as the mesolect. The mesolect is considered to form a continuum between the basilect (i.e. the form of a creole maximally different from the superstrate, which often represents a theoretical abstraction in the sense that it is not spoken in real life in its pure form) and the acrolect (i.e. the local standard of the superstrate). This continuum is referred to as the post-creole speech continuum. The term “post-creole” implies that the mesolect is assumed to have developed later than the basilect. The process of decreolization is commonly attributed to the socio-economic restructuring of colonial communities in the post-Emancipation era, which brought about greater social mobility and broader access.
to education for the descendants of slaves (cf. Rickford 1987). Some researchers (e.g., Alleyne 1980), however, believe that basilical and mesolectal varieties develop simultaneously. Under this perspective, the decreolization scenario does not apply and there is no difference between mesolectal creoles and semi-creoles.

2.2.2 Creoles and pidgins

While pidgins are usually opposed to creoles on linguistic grounds as being less stable and less elaborated, structurally and lexically, these differences can be shown to be the product of the socio-economic settings in which these two types of contact languages usually emerge (cf. Mufwene 2001). Pidgins often develop in trade colonies, when groups of speakers of different languages need to communicate and have no existing common means of communication. A pidgin does not become anybody’s native language and does not replace the native languages of the groups in contact. Its existence is context-dependent and its use, typically, remains restricted to certain thematic areas (e.g. trade). Given their limited application, typical pidgins remain lexically and structurally limited.

Although the once popular assumption that every creole is preceded by a pidgin, the so-called pidgin-to-creole life cycle (cf. Hall 1966), is not empirically supported and has severe opponents (e.g. Mufwene 2001; Chaudenson 2003), the history of some contact varieties demonstrates that, provided the right circumstances, a pidgin may develop into a stable contact variety indistinguishable from those that are commonly identified as creoles. One such example is Tok Pisin.

Regular contact between Europeans and Pacific islanders began at the end of the 18th century. European commercial activities in the Pacific began with whaling operations in the South Pacific. Whaling ships usually undertook voyages that lasted for two or three years. Voyages of this length required the renewal of both supplies and lost crewmen. The ships’ crews would come ashore in search of food, water and firewood. Some crewmen deserted the ships and settled among the natives. On the other hand, when crewmembers were lost as a result of such desertions or accidents, Pacific islanders often took their places among the already multilingual crewmen community, whose working language was (restructured) English (cf. Clark 1979-80, 1983) (see section 2.1.1).

The contact of native Pacific Islanders with the crewmen and traders of frequently passing ships, and even more so the participation of the islanders as crew members on these ships, preconditioned the emergence and spread of an early English-based contact variety in the Pacific area. This variety is referred to as South Pacific Jargon (Clark 1983: 13) or South Seas Jargon (Clark 1979-80: 14).

With the decline of whaling activities in the 1860s, the focus of language contact shifted from Polynesia and Micronesia to Melanesia, specifically the Loyalty Islands, Isle des Pins, New Caledonia and the southern New Hebrides, where sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trade took place. The processing of sandalwood and the
extraction of bêche-de-mer were both time-consuming and required the establishment of shore stations and long-term employment of the natives. Europeans involved in sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trade also had to spend a longer time ashore waiting for the cargo to be ready than whalers did. Thus, sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trade provided more continuous and stable contact settings.

Unlike on board whaling ships, in the extractive trade settings, Europeans constituted a minority among the native Melanesians. Among the linguistic diversity of Melanesia, there was no single vernacular they could acquire that would suffice to interact with all the native laborers. Furthermore, the laborers themselves often had no common native language or lingua franca. It is suggested in the literature (Clark 1979, 1983) that, for safety reasons, European traders in the Pacific attempted to implement a strategy already known from the history of the West African slave trade, namely, bringing together the laborers from different areas so that they could not combine against the employer. In the context of the Pacific, it implied employing laborers from different islands, who spoke languages different from the one spoken by the natives of the island that hosted the stations. Thus, the working conditions on sandalwood and bêche-de-mer stations created a need for a lingua franca to be used not only in European-to-non-European contact but also as a means of communication among the Pacific Islanders themselves. The South Seas Jargon spoken by some crewmembers (among which there were many Polynesians) of the trading vessels began to spread among Melanesians and came to fulfill this function.

The use of South Seas Jargon in non-native-to-non-native interaction enhanced the incorporation of non-European grammatical features, leading to further autonomization of the contact variety from English. And the more stable and continuous contact settings provided conditions for the stabilization of its distinct structure.

The exhaustion of sandalwood in Melanesia took place at the same time as sugar and coconut plantations started to develop in Queensland (Australia) and Samoa. As already observed in section 2.2.1.2, the introduction of sugar agriculture always produced a large demand of cheap labor force. As neither the natives of the areas where the plantations were established nor the Europeans were willing to work on plantations, plantation owners turned to the nearest and already familiar source, Melanesia. By that time, slavery had been abolished and plantation owners made use of another way of labor force recruitment, namely indenturing. The first laborers for the plantations of Queensland were recruited from the same islands that were involved in sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trade (the Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia and the New Hebrides). Only later did the recruitment spread northwards to the Solomon Islands and, eventually, New Guinea. Thus, many of those who went to Queensland were by then already speakers of Sandalwood English (the variety of Pidgin English developed at the time of sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trade). In addition, some of the former sandalwood traders engaged in labor recruitment (Clark 1983; Keesing 1988). Such interchange of people involved in the sandalwood and labor trades provided a condition for the continuity of the linguistic tradition. The plantations played a crucial role in the development of the trade pidgin
towards a more stable and extended variety. In plantation settings, linguistically heterogeneous laborers lived together for a period of several years. This intensified the need for a common language and provided a community with greater continuity, in which it could develop (Clark 1983). During the plantation period, the English-based pidgin developed on the islands of southern Melanesia underwent leveling of variation, the establishment of community-wide norms, and further elaboration and extension of functions. Thus, a more stable and complex variety emerged. By the end of the 1870s, a rather homogenous language was in use in Queensland, and it spread to southern Melanesia as laborers returned home from the plantations. This language is referred to as Melanesian Pidgin (Clark 1983: 22). Despite its name, Melanesian Pidgin is a full-fledged language that neither structurally, nor functionally conforms to the pidgin prototype (which is based on such languages as Russennorsk, a trade pidgin created by Russian traders and Norwegian fishermen from northern Norway and the Russian Kola peninsula). Therefore, in the literature it is often characterized as an extended pidgin.

Up till the end of the 1870s, New Guinea, which was then controlled by Germany, did not form part of the pidgin English linguistic space. New Guineans only went to Queensland in 1883-1884, but many more went to Samoa starting in 1879, when the Germans established copra plantations there. By that time, the natives of the New Hebrides or the Solomon Islands were already present in Samoan plantations and they remained numerically dominant up to 1885. Many of them had already worked on Queensland plantations (which were established earlier) and were thus speakers of Melanesian Pidgin. The contact variety spoken by the founder labor community was adopted in Samoa by the new arrivals from New Guinea. After 1885, no more laborers from the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands went to Samoa. This broke the continuity of the linguistic tradition originating in Queensland, and Melanesian Pidgin began to diverge into two different varieties.

When, at the turn of the century, external recruitment was abolished and the laborers returned to their home islands, the extended pidgin they brought with them began to spread among the locals. The linguistic heterogeneity of Melanesia and the lack of a common language created facilitating conditions for the spread of the extended pidgin, which had already proved suitable to function as a lingua franca. In particular, it was adopted as a means of communication by the internal labor force employed at the plantations established on the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, and in New Guinea, which continued to exist after external labor recruitment was abolished. In each country, Melanesian Pidgin continued to undergo independent developments. This led to the emergence of the three different forms related to Melanesian Pidgin: Bislama (from bêche-de-mer) in the New Hebrides (nowadays Vanuatu), Pijin in the Solomon Islands, and Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. Although their names preserve the history of their origins in a pidgin (Pijin and Tok Pisin), they neither structurally nor functionally conform to the pidgin prototype. Similarly to the creole languages spoken in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, they are full-fledged languages, with both L1 and L2 speakers. In the literature on Tok Pisin, L1 and L2 varieties of the language are referred to as creole and
extended pidgin, respectively. However, the two terms are sometimes also used interchangeably to characterize Tok Pisin in its contemporary state.

2.3 Summary and discussion

In this chapter, I considered the linguistic and socio-historical settings of contact language formation. I established that, from the linguistic perspective, all the languages considered here are the same in the sense that they represent the outcome of contact between typologically different languages. In each contact situation, one can identify superstrate and substrate languages. While the languages of the European colonizers (English, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese) are identified as superstrate languages, the languages spoken by the native colonized populations of the immigrant slaves are identified as substrate languages. While the superstrate languages were always imported to a colony from Europe, the substrate could be either imported (i.e. the languages of the immigrant slaves) or local (i.e. the languages of the native population of the colony). While local (or endogenous) substrates are typically composed of one language or several genetically and typologically closely related languages, imported (or endogenous) substrates are typically composed of multiple diverse languages.

Despite the fact that the languages under study all have developed due to language contact, some researchers differentiate between the various outcomes of language contact, distinguishing prototypical creoles from semi-creoles, mesolectal creoles, and colonial dialects, and creoles from pidgins. Some creolists (e.g. Bickerton 1981; McWhorter 2005; Bakker et al. 2011) claim that creoles represent a typologically distinct class, qualitatively distinct from “normal” languages as well as from pidgins. Some advocates of this view assume that there is a specific process of creolization that leads to the formation of prototypical creoles and that this process can be incomplete or reversed. The former has as a consequence the formation of semi-creoles and colonial dialects. The latter is described in the literature as decreolization, the departure from the creole prototype in the direction of the superstrate, instantiated by the formation of decreolized, or mesolectal creole varieties.

As the starting point for this study, I will adhere to the null-hypothesis that there are no absolute linguistic criteria distinguishing creoles from non-creoles, as well as from other contact languages classified as pidgins, semi-creoles or colonial dialects. From a linguistic point of view, the classification of contact languages into creoles, semi-creoles, dialects and pidgins is arbitrary as it relies on relative measures such as the proportion of superstrate-derived as opposed to substrate-derived or universally unmarked features or the degree of structural complexity and stability. In section 2.2, I demonstrate that these linguistic differences are the product of the socio-economic settings in which contact varieties emerge and develop. The relative proportion of superstrate features, which distinguishes prototypical creoles from semi-creoles, mesolectal creoles and colonial dialects, depends on the amount and intensity of contact
and the degree of socio-economic integration between the colonizers (who are also the native speakers of the superstrate) and the colonized population groups. These factors regulate the accessibility of L1 models of the superstrate language and determine its functional and symbolic role in the creole community. The degree of structural complexity and stability, which distinguishes creoles from pidgins, is related to the stability and continuity of the language contact situation.

Whether one wants to maintain the terminological distinction within contact languages is a matter of preference and of the purposes of the research one is conducting. The purpose of the present research is to investigate the interaction of language systems in contact, regardless of whether the outcomes of this contact are classified as (extended) pidgins, creoles or semi-creoles. Therefore, in addition to languages unanimously classified in the literature as creoles, the sample includes a semi-creole (Afrikaans), and an extended pidgin (Tok Pisin). In what follows, I will use “creole” as a cover term to refer to all the languages studied here. The terms “semi-creole” or “pidgin” will be invoked when certain socio-historical and linguistic differences between the languages under study need to be emphasized.