Vernacular Universals
and Language Contacts
Evidence from
Varieties of English and Beyond

Edited by Markku Filppula,
Juhani Klemola & Heli Paulasto
12 Some Offspring of Colonial English Are Creole

Salikoko S. Mufwene

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguists have cherished the following myth in discussions of the evolution of English and its speciation into several varieties, viz., those spoken by descendants of Europeans, wherever they evolved, are English dialects, whereas most of the nonstandard vernaculars that have evolved among populations of non-European descent are creoles and separate languages altogether. Holm (1988, 2004) and some other creolists have attempted to accommodate the 'cline' in the evolution of colonial English (Schneider 1990) and other European colonial languages by positing an intermediate category of semi-creoles, which include varieties such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), but not Old Amish English. Although AAVE and the like have diverged extensively enough to be considered separate languages by some (as is evident from the literature on 'Ebonics', like on Afrikaans), they have not developed enough of those features (so far controversial) that would make them 'creole'.

However, as is evident from Mühlhäusler (1985) and Mufwene (1988), the sentiments of the (native) speakers of these varieties, which, according to the received doctrine, are what should matter the most, have generally been ignored. Like speakers of AAVE, those of both Gullah and Kanaka English claim they speak English. Linguists have disfranchised them by simply stipulating that these varieties are not mutually intelligible with other English vernaculars (Mufwene 2001). The documented fact that there are so many dialects of the same language which are not mutually intelligible has simply been ignored, as much as the fact that the ecologies of the development of creoles and other ex-colonial varieties of English have not been identical (Schneider 2007).

4) With the exception of indigenized Englishes, the development of new non-creole varieties of English outside Europe reflects internal language evolution, i.e. involving only negligible contact with other languages, consistent with the way that the role of Old Norse and Norman French can apparently be ignored in the development of pre-colonial English in England (see e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988).

Why we have favored a model of historical linguistics that downplays the role of social history is intriguing. I question different aspects of the prior myth and assumptions briefly in this chapter. I argue that there is nothing wrong with treating creoles as dialects of their lexifiers, consistent with the sentiments of several of their speakers, despite the traditional overemphasis on the role of contact in their development at the expense of natural
Native Americans were centuries later by the European colonists (Mufwene 1998, 2001, 2005a). In the process, I also question common accounts of the origins of dialect differences such as the following: 1) North American English varieties are different from British varieties because their speakers are separated by the Atlantic Ocean; or 2) speakers of two dialects separated by a mountain or a river have different structural features because the mountain or river prevents them from communicating with each other on a regular basis. Such observations do not explain why such diverging dialects have usually also preserved several of the features they shared before the geographical split, nor how they stopped sharing some of those that now distinguish them from each other. These questions underscore why it is useful to invoke ecology (both internal and external), which in theories of evolution is said to roll the dice, determining the fate of any species. Ultimately, we must address the question of whether such speciation processes traditionally claimed to be internally motivated are different from those which produced creoles and are said to be externally motivated. Comparisons of Mufwene's (1996a, 2001, 2002, 2005a) competition-and-selection approach to the development of creoles with Trudgill's (1986, 2004) account of the development of new English dialects in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the Falkland Islands suggest that the restructuring processes are of the same kind and subject to the same constraints (Mufwene 2006). One could also argue that their speakers are justified in claiming that they speak dialects of their lexifiers (Mufwene 2005a). A related question here is whether contact was not involved in the development of colonial dialects. The data in Trudgill (1986, 2004) support Mufwene's position that it was, subject to varying ecological factors invoked later. However, it will be informative to start with the evolution of precolonial English.

2. HOW DID ENGLISH EVOLVE?

Bailey and Maroldt's (1977) position that Middle English evolved by 'creolization' has justly been rejected, notably by Thomason and Kaufman (1988—but see also Mufwene 2005a for a complementary discussion). Unfortunately, the question of the origins of English itself, which could be as just as informative about whether the emergence of creoles is peculiar, has generally also been dodged. How did English develop out of the languages brought over by the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons to England? How did Modern English evolve to be different typologically from modern Dutch and modern German, for instance, regarding the postponing of auxiliary verbs in clause-final position in subordinate clauses? Assuming that the contribution of Celtic languages to the structures of Old English is negligible—because the Celts were as marginalized from the invaders as the Native Americans were centuries later by the European colonists (Mufwene 2001)—what led to the emergence of Old English and the concurrent disappearance of the languages that the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons had brought with them to England? May we simply assume that in the first place these West Germanic languages were probably not structurally identical, perhaps not mutually intelligible, and that contacts among them alone would have led to the development of Old English? May the emergence of Old English as a process have been a precursor of that of the koinéization that produced nonindigenized and non-creole colonial English varieties, especially those such as on the Falkland Islands which evolved almost exclusively from the contact of metropolitan English vernaculars?

Other interesting questions arise, of course. For instance, was there competition among the Germanic languages brought over to England? Which one prevailed, albeit in a modified form influenced by the others? How were its features selected? From a language evolution perspective, is there a genetic connection between the language of the Angles (who had settled in Mercia and Northumbria) and Old English, which may account for the etymological connection between the names Angle, English, England? As explained in Mufwene (2000), names for languages and people have traditionally been derived from the same base morphemes. This is true all over the world.

As a non-Anglicist, I am not aware that these questions have often been addressed in the literature. Although I have no direct linguistic evidence, history suggests a developmental scenario of Old English that may not be so different from that of the colonial English varieties spoken by descendants of Europeans, out of the contact of significantly diverse metropolitan dialects of English. In both cases, we need not assume a priori that the varieties that came in contact with each other were (fully) intelligible. Note that, because of parochialism among the different European nations until the nineteenth century, the history of North America suggests that American English started essentially from the koinéization of metropolitan dialects and the resulting American koiné would be influenced by continental European languages only after the Anglo economic system prevailed and the other Europeans started functioning in it and shifting to English as their vernacular. These shifts were of course also concomitants of the gradual ethnic integration of populations of European descent, along with redefinitions of the White race (Mufwene, to appear). Increased immigrations from continental Europe, which would give White demographic majority to continental Europeans all the way into the twentieth century, also increased the possibility of adstrate influence from continental European languages. Only the critical mass achieved by the Anglo populations early during the colonial period and the fact that the overall population increased incrementally prevented a drastic divergence of post-Revolution American Englishes from colonial American Englishes. The fact that a large proportion of locally born and immigrant children could acquire the target language natively, favoring the Anglos' features over those of the non-Anglos was also a significant ecological factor perhaps more important than the incremental immigration
of the adult populations. The children generally avoided the stigmatizing xenolectal features produced by adult non-native speakers, thereby selecting most, although not all, of these out of the targeted American English, as is happening today with immigrants (Mufwene 2005a).

In the same vein, we must also factor in the fact that Old English was not homogeneous. We must then ask whether its different varieties were mutually intelligible and, more importantly, to what extent they were typologically similar. These questions are difficult to answer, but the literature on the subject matter indicates that there was lexical and structural variation in Old English (Crystal 1995; Hogg 1992). However, the same literature also reports that speakers of these different varieties formed alliances to defend themselves against common enemies. Therefore, populations moved around and the varieties that they spoke came in contact with each other, which led to restructuring. This change has been associated with the beginning of the simplification of Old English morphosyntax, although one may wonder whether this subsystem was equally complex in all varieties—for instance, whether all varieties were completely fusional or whether at least some of them contained a substantial share of periphrastic strategies that contributed to the development of predominantly analytical morphosyntax in today's English.

These considerations don't of course entail that we can ignore the presence of Latin and Norman French in medieval England and the impact that they must have exerted indirectly on English varieties of the upper class, perhaps primarily in favoring grammatical strategies that were consistent with these foreign systems. A good example of this evolution by congruence is the pied-piping of the preposition with the WH-constituent in relative clauses, as in This is the question with which I am concerned. Lüdtke (1995) helps us put in perspective Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) mistaken position that contact with Norman French is not the reason that Old English changed into Middle English. How can we ignore the socioeconomic significance of 'Norman English' spoken by the Norman aristocracy after Norman French lost its prestige to Parisian French in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the Norman aristocrats decided to anglicize? Don't the seeds of modern Standard English lie partly in these social dynamics? Doesn't the fact that preposition stranding is rather the norm in colloquial and nonstandard English suggest that Latin and French, which were also used by the intellectual elite, would have favored the native pied-piping option only in the then emergent Standard English?

Lack of a native prestigious English model in a polity where foreign languages, Latin and Norman French, had served the upper class favored the acceptance of the French-influenced variety of English as a prestigious one. From that time onwards, there have been a few areas of divergence between, on the one hand, the proletarian, nonstandard vernaculars and, on the other hand, the standard, prestigious varieties of English. For instance, it is doubtful that the nonstandard vernaculars have been as much affected by the

Great Vowel Shift as the standard variety. WH-relatives are not common in nonstandard varieties, which also entail the absence of pied-piping in them. In short, contact has played an important role in the bifurcated evolution of English in England and thus of its speciation into diverse social and regional dialects.

The role of contact has of course been too obvious to be denied in the development of Irish and Scottish English. The growing literature on Irish English (including Hickey 2005; Kallen 1997) speaks for itself. In this case, the lower, rather than the upper, class is the one that has been the most associated with substrate influence from Gaelic. This appears to be plausible since because English did not spread in Ireland until the introduction of the potato farms and the investment of the Irish migrant workers in this colonial language, although it had been introduced centuries earlier. The migrant workers succeeded in making English utilitarian where the school system had failed (Odlin 2003). The presence of the Irish in the extra-European colonies has often also been invoked to account partially for differences between the relevant colonial varieties and British English. However, does the relevant literature tell the full story?

3. CONTACT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH AMERICAN VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

The positions I question in this section have been more suggested than explicitly stated in the literature. Nonetheless, it helps to discuss them in the interest of understanding language evolution and speciation.

As noted by Mufwene and Pargman (2003), the literature suggests that only the development of African-American English varieties was influenced by language contact; those spoken by North American Whites would presumably be outcomes of (primarily) internal-language evolution. Little attention has been paid to differences in the ecologies of their developments—for instance, the contact patterns of various metropolitan dialects in the colonies and when significant contact with continental European languages took place, most likely after rather than before the American Revolution. Such a historical perspective accounts not only for the koinéization that produced new varieties even in colonies where the settlers were almost exclusively from England (at least before the twentieth century), but also for the fact that North American White varieties of English are less divergent from the metropolitan varieties than the African-American varieties. The reason for the greater divergence of African-American varieties lies not only in the nature of substrate influence, but also in the fact that continental Europeans shifted quite late to English as their vernacular and pressures for conformity to a colonial English that had already emerged without their agency must have worked on them in the same ways as on later immigrants. Accordingly, continental European children, both immigrants and American-born,
acquired the local English natively while their parents typically died with their xenolectal features, affecting the target language only minimally or marginally (Mufwene 2003a).

In any case, if the role of contact is not factored into accounts of the evolution of English in colonial populations, one cannot explain why no single North American English variety matches one single British dialect. Even Appalachian and Ozark varieties of English, which have been associated with strong Gaelic or Irish English influence, do not exactly match Irish English! Nor is New England's English, which is considered the American variety the closest to British English, a faithful reproduction of East Anglian English. One must also wonder whether it is true that, as the literature often claims, North American varieties of English are apparently more conservative because they did not participate in changes that have affected the British Isles since the eighteenth century. If they are, how and to what extent do they reflect (pre-)eighteenth-century British English? Didn't later emigrations from the United Kingdom to North America bear on linguistic developments in the latter territory? Or is dialect contact, combined with the founder effect, the primary reason that North American Englishes appear to be conservative?

I express all these concerns because the socioeconomic history of the Western world suggests that the restructuring of European languages into new colonial varieties was conditioned by similar ecological factors earlier in Europe and that the trigger role of contact cannot be dismissed casually from accounts of their putatively internally motivated evolution (Mufwene 2007). The same history also suggests that some of the same restructuring processes attested outside Europe started in Europe in cities such as London, Bristol, and Liverpool as contact settings from which British subjects emigrated, as proposed by Chaudenson (1992, 2001 for colonial French) and Buccini (1995) for colonial Dutch. Differences in the outcomes of these developments follow more from variation in the individual ecologies (internal and external) of language evolution than in the nature of the restructuring processes involved (Mufwene 2001, 2005a). English in England underwent changes during the same time it was colonizing North America and other parts of the world. The routes of population movements and language contact which produced changes in British English were concurrent with the population movements that brought several English and Irish, largely destitutes from the low class and speakers of nonstandard varieties of English, to North American colonies and elsewhere. According to Bailyn (1986), the emigrations to North American colonies were largely spillovers from the population movements in England. Although the specifics of the various contact settings were not identical, basically similar populations relocated and came in contact both within and outside the British Isles, notwithstanding the fact that they came in contact with other populations in most colonies.

Although the early colonial European population in New England was relatively homogeneous in its origin from primarily East Anglia, that of the Chesapeake area (Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania) and of the Southeastern colonies (especially South Carolina and Georgia) was more heterogeneous. Aside from a significant proportion of Irish indentured servants, it contained exiles and indentured laborers from Germany, France, and other places in Europe. In some cases, the English took over colonies that had belonged to other European nations, such as the New Netherland (New York and New Jersey) from the Dutch and Nova Scotia and Maine from the French. Although, as allegedly in England several centuries earlier, the invaders did not apparently mingle much with the Natives, they came in contact with other varieties of their own languages, as well as with other languages. By normal processes of accommodation, which entails selection of subsets of features out of larger pools where they competed with each other, new varieties arose (Mufwene 1996a, 1996b; Trudgill 1986, 2004). It is especially informative that although studies such as Tagliamonte (1996), Smith and Tagliamonte (1998), and Shackleton (2005) continue to show continuities of nonstandard British English features in North America, none of the American varieties in which the features are attested matches exactly any particular metropolitan dialect.

The previous studies and others, especially Clarke (1997) and Trudgill (1986, 2004), which focus on varieties unlikely to have been influenced by African languages, cast doubt on the position that the vernaculars spoken by descendants of Africans outside Europe developed by different restructuring processes from those spoken by descendants of Europeans. The ecologies in which vernaculars spoken by descendants of Africans developed differed from those of the others by the additional presence of African substrate features in the pool of competing grammatical strategies. The influence that these languages exerted in determining which features of the lexifier would be selected into the emergent vernaculars must have become more obvious since the eighteenth century, when the plantation industry started to thrive, when the African slave labor became dominant in the New World and continued to grow rapidly thanks more to population replacement than to birth, and when on the large rice and sugar cane plantations the European and African populations were typically segregated (Mufwene 1996a). However, on the small farm holdings and plantations, social relations between the African slaves and the European indentured servants seem to have remained relatively close. Consequently, both groups developed similar varieties of English, as is obvious from AAVE and American White southern English varieties, both of which are related to small farms and to tobacco and cotton plantations up to the nineteenth century.

As much as the Black-nanny myth has been cherished to explain why American White Southerners speak like African Americans, one must remember that the vast majority of those Whites could not afford a nanny in the first place. The explanation for similarities in their speech ways lies more in similarities of their colonial social status (indentured laborers and slaves) and of (European) linguistic inputs (nonstandard English varieties),
as well as in the relatively intimate relations which obtained between (descendants of) Europeans and (descendants of) Africans up to the institutionalization of segregation with the Jim Crow laws in the late nineteenth century.

These considerations make the role of contact in the development of new varieties of English as significant as some other ecological factors which I discuss briefly later—more extensively in Mufwene (1996a, 2001, 2005a, 2007)—as responsible for cross-group and/or cross-setting similarities and differences. Such factors include the following: 1) the nature of the varieties brought in contact (standard vs. nonstandard), 2) the proportion of speakers of the different varieties (White majority vs. non-White majority), 3) the nature and frequency of interactions among speakers of different socioeconomic and/or ethnic backgrounds (depending on whether the societies were integrated or segregated), and 4) the Founder Principle/Effect and patterns of population growth. The varieties whose inputs were mostly nonstandard, including creole varieties, share a lot of nonstandard features. For instance, creoles and White nonstandard vernaculars are alike in not having pied-piping and favoring preposition stranding (e.g. the pen with which the President signed the bill vs. the pen [that] the President signed the bill with). Likewise, both kinds of vernaculars form the nominal plural with them (at least as an alternative), as in them folks—although the constraints are not exactly the same—for instance, the fact that, in creoles, dem in such a function does not have a (strong) distal force and can be used in associative plural constructions, as in Felicia (an) dem ‘Felicia and her associates’. Such divergence need not shock us; after all, the substrate languages had a role to play in the restructuring process. Sometimes it drove evolution in a more divergent path from the metropolitan varieties, favoring innovative constructions that seem to have no models in the lexifier.9 Nor need we be shocked by the fact that AAVE is not as different from White nonstandard varieties of English as the creoles are. As explained above, where AAVE developed, segregation was institutionalized much later—in the late nineteenth century—than in the settings where creoles developed, where it was institutionalized in the early eighteenth century.10 AAVE also developed where the proportion of Africans was hardly higher, if at all, than that of Europeans, which made a lot of allowance for children of the African-born slaves to acquire English directly not only from Black Creoles (the locally born), but also from White ones (Mufwene 1999).

As a matter of fact, the nature of interaction across class and/or ethnic boundaries appears to be a more significant factor than the demographic disproportion, on which genetic creolistics has capitalized to date. Although one may claim that it differs from American Southern English mostly in the statistical distribution of structural features, AAVE has developed in settings where (descendants of) Africans have been minorities. Indirect evidence for my hypothesis comes from varieties such as Old Amish, Ozark, and Appalachian Englishes (e.g. Keiser 2003; Wolfram, Christian, and Dube 1988), whose speakers are descendants of settlers who were not native English speakers either during the colonial period or during immigration waves or migrations westward (from the original 13 United States) in the nineteenth century. Having evolved in social and/or geographic isolation from the majority populations’ varieties, they are significantly different from what is considered mainstream American middle-class English, in fact not at all closer to it than AAVE is. The other part of the evidence comes from the divergence hypothesis as formulated especially by Bailey and Maynor (1987) and Bailey and Thomas (1998). Segregation has increased the divergence of White and African-American vernaculars in the United States (see also Labov and Harris 1986), and these are becoming obvious even in the American South. This is evident even in the Northern and Southern cities vowel shifts (Labov 2001), which show that White and African-American populations socialize primarily within their ethnic boundaries (Mufwene 2005b).

Note also that, although the late nineteenth century marks the passage of the Jim Crow laws and the very beginnings of the Great Migration of Southern Blacks to segregated North American cities, it is also the beginning of the integration of White Americans. It started the gradual end of parochialism among European immigrants along national lines. The integration fostered the gradual disappearance in the twentieth century of varieties thitherly identified as Italian and German Englishes, for instance. The ethnic dialectal distinctions that still survive in the United States today do not reflect different kinds of language restructuring processes; they reflect the varying impact of divergent social ecologies on language evolution (Mufwene 2001, 2005a).

The way ethnic dialect differences have almost vanished among Euro-Americans since the twentieth century is similar to what happened much earlier among the slaves in all the colonies. Assuming that the slaves were able to tell, based on the structural properties of a person’s speech (especially their prosodic features), the part of Africa their bozal cohort was from, those differences were obliterated by the focusing which produced among the locally born slaves the sociolects now identified as AAVE and Gullah. Some regional differences have emerged within these sociolects, but they reflect variation in the ecologies in which they have evolved. Unlike the descendants of Asian contract laborers in Hawaii, African Americans and other descendants of slaves in the New World have lost the ethnic distinctions that their ancestors had brought from Africa.

There is also a sense in which African Americans are more American than just descendants of African slaves. This observation is made more evident by a superficial comparison of dialect complexes in the United States and the Caribbean. Despite differences that are obvious to the locals, White and Black Caribbeans sound more like each other than like European and African Americans, respectively. Likewise, European and African Americans sound more like each other than like White and Black Caribbeans,
Exodus of 1879 and the Great Migration at the turn of the century brought earlier, African Americans participated in these migrations too. The Black colonists, and these entailed relatively more restructuring, however minor differences between North American varieties and British dialects. As noted this may have been compared with the earlier restructuring that produced the century. The migrations westward entailed contacts even among the earliest from the original 13 colonies that became independent in the late eighteenth and into the South and Southwest, one cannot ignore the more general fact with, Fargo. Gradual integration within the extant Anglo populations have of course eroded such ethnic sociolects, although these have left their marks on Scandinavian immigrants produced the variety stereotyped in the movie produced new divergent vernaculars too, such as in the Midwest, where the Scandinavian immigrants produced the variety stereotyped in the movie Fargo. Gradual integration within the extant Anglo populations have of course eroded such ethnic sociolects, although these have left their marks on present-day varieties, such as the often invoked construction *come/bring NP with*, which reflects the Germanic construction *kommen/bringen NP mit*.

Although Bailey (1997) is correct in noting migrations of Americans within and into the South and Southwest, one cannot ignore the more general fact that most of today's United States developed out of migrations westward from the original 13 colonies that became independent in the late eighteenth century. The migrations westward entailed contacts even among the earliest colonists, and these entailed relatively more restructuring, however minor this may have been compared with the earlier restructuring that produced differences between North American varieties and British dialects. As noted earlier, African Americans participated in these migrations too. The Black Exodus of 1879 and the Great Migration at the turn of the century brought several of them to Northern, Midwestern, and Western cities. However, most of them have lived segregated in ghettos, where they have socialized primarily among themselves and less with the White residents of the same cities, participating marginally, if at all, in the restructuring of White American vernaculars. They have continued to speak AAVE varieties that differ little grammatically from the varieties that the migrants brought from Southern states, where 90 percent of the African-American population had lived up to the end of the nineteenth century. That is, today's African Americans have restructured their ethnic variety minimally, which lends some support to the typical assumption among its students that it is relatively homogeneous across the United States.

Overall, contact and variation in the sociohistorical ecologies of language evolution continue to be the explanation for the speciation of English into several new varieties in North America and the Caribbean. Here I argue that the same kind of evolution took place elsewhere, differing only in the specific ways in which internal and external ecologies determined the outcomes. From a structural point of view, there is nothing which justifies assuming that, because they arose from language contact and mixing, English creoles and AAVE are not dialects of English, or that they descend less legitimately from it than any other new variety. The other varieties also appear to have developed under contact conditions. In the case of English varieties spoken by Euro-Americans, suffice it to note that fewer than half of Euro-Americans today descend from immigrants from the United Kingdom; English was therefore in contact with other European languages, whose structural features are different from its own in some respects today and then. Therefore, those continental European languages must have influenced the evolution of English among Euro-Americans, although apparently less extensively. As explained earlier (see also Mufwene 2005a, 2006), this has to do with how late (i.e. in the nineteenth century, rather than earlier) the continental European immigrants shifted to English as their vernacular after the essence of today's White American English(es) had already developed. The impact of the late shifters can be compared to that of recent immigrants in the twentieth century, who also joined the extant population incrementally, with their children acquiring the extant varieties natively and the parents eventually dying with their xenolectal accents. That is, with the populations relatively integrated, children were the primary agents of selection, favoring native over non-native features and minimizing the impact of xenolectal grammatical features on the extant varieties.

4. **INDIGENIZED ENGLISHES AND THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH**

The starting question here is: does the same approach apply to places where indigenized varieties of English have developed? As in Mufwene (2001,
First, we must note the need to distinguish between, on the one hand, communities where English has been appropriated as a vernacular (such as among African Americans and among Indians and some colored people in South Africa) and, on the other hand, those where English has been appropriated primarily as a lingua franca and is used as an umpteenth language variety (such as among the Bantu populations and Afrikaners in South Africa, among Black Africans in former British colonies, and among Indians in India). Where English functions as a lingua franca, it is associated primarily with the school system and the elite, notwithstanding the less educated who have produced a more restructured variety of their own (Kachru 1983, 2005), often showing more influence from the substrate languages.

Where English functions as a vernacular, the history is more complex. The less prestigious segments of the populations typically speak varieties that originated in some nonstandard native varieties, and an adequate assessment of the extent of divergence of their systems requires comparison with native nonstandard varieties, not the standard one, contrary to the common tradition in studies of AAVE and English creoles. However, assessing the extent of divergence of the indigenized lingua-franca varieties requires comparison with the scholastic models from which they developed. These facts underscore the assumption that variation in the characteristics of the new English vernaculars or lingua francas is partly correlated with variation in the varieties targeted by those who produced them. Another part of the explanation lies in the languages previously spoken by (descendants of the) new speakers, what is known as substrate influence in creolistics.

How many kinds of Englishes evolve in a particular polity has generally been determined by its contact history. Places like Nigeria are an interesting case where English was actually introduced twice, at different periods and in different ways. Nigerian Pidgin English evolved from the contact of nonstandard English with African languages when the English developed and maintained trade colonies in the region and had sporadic interactions with those who traded with them in the region. The trade language was then nonstandard English, which was approximated through naturalistic learning and was significantly modified by its new speakers. Nigerian English, the indigenized variety, evolved from scholastic English, introduced in the nineteenth century, during the exploitation colonization of the territory. The British administrators needed colonial auxiliaries (especially bureaucrats and teachers) who would interface between the colonizers and the indigenous populations and they taught them English. The actual interactions in English with the colonial auxiliaries were limited to the work place because, as a rule, the colonizers did not socialize with the colonized. However, English also evolved to function as a lingua franca within the elite, especially when they did not share an indigenous vernacular. It has also come to function as a socioeconomic class marker. This particular pattern of xenolectal usage of the colonial language fostered some divergence, structural and pragmatic, that is characterized as the indigenization of English.

On more or less the model of creole speech continua, indigenized English communities are also internally variable (see also Schneider 2007). The extent to which a particular speaker’s idiolect diverges from the metropolitan native educated norm depends on his or her level of education (Kachru 1983, 1996, 2005), the kinds of teachers he or she has had (Bambgose 1992), his or her first vernacular (Bambgose 1998), and whether he or she has interacted significantly with native speakers, notwithstanding his or her language learning skills. Needless to say, the settings in which indigenized Englishes have emerged are in some ways reminiscent of those in which creoles have emerged and diverged from their lexifiers. One of the reasons for the divergence lies in the segregation that led the new speakers to use their colonial vernacular for communication more among themselves than with European native speakers. Segregation fosters divergence regardless of the nature of the input, which is obviously different between English creoles and indigenized varieties.

Differences among indigenized varieties are of course also largely due to variation in the structural characteristics of the substrate languages. This factor accounts for differences between creoles too. For instance, the substrate languages were not the same in the Caribbean and Hawaii, although one must also factor in the fact that the English taken to Hawaii was mostly late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American middle-class English and not seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British nonstandard English. However, even in the Caribbean, the demographic strengths of the different African languages were not identical from one colony to another, especially at different times during the growth of the colonies; therefore, the dynamics of competition and selection in the feature pools were not identical either.

Aside from differences in the natures of their inputs, indigenized Englishes differ from creoles in that the latter function as vernaculars because they have typically evolved in settlement colonies in which their creators did not have the option of continuing to speak their ancestral languages as their vernaculars. In this respect, South Africa is especially interesting because it represents both types of worlds: a settlement colony for non-Blacks and an exploitation colony of some sort for the Blacks. With the exception of Afrikaners, it is vernacular English varieties that have developed among the immigrants, including South African Indians, whereas indigenized varieties have developed among the Blacks. The Afrikaners have developed indigenized, second-language varieties for reasons that are obvious from their...
social history since the nineteenth century: their determination to foster their own non-European and Afrikaner/African identity and their resistance to the adoption of English as a vernacular. (They have promoted education in Afrikaans for themselves.) These ecological subsystems are of course in contact with each other, and little is known to date on how the emergent English varieties have influenced each other.

In any case, these observations underscore once more the role which language contact and the nature of social interaction have played in the evolution of English within ever-changing ethnographic ecologies. They highlight the significance of the kind of language variety (standard vs. non-standard) to which a population has been exposed and the primary mode of acquisition: interactive oral mode for vernacular varieties versus the school (through primarily the written medium) for the indigenized, lingua franca varieties. In both cases, language varieties previously acquired tend to influence the structure of the emergent variety. There are in fact some parallelisms between, on the one hand, the polities where English has evolved into indigenized varieties and, on the other hand, those where it has restructured into both basilectal-creole and the acrolectal varieties. Although creoles have been lexified by nonstandard varieties and developed through strictly oral modes of language transmission, the true acrolects are school-based, just like the prestigious varieties of indigenized Englishes. On the other hand, indigenized Englishes owe the features that make them the most peculiar to oral transmission in the daily interactions where less competent learners introduce features from their native languages. Some of these spread to become communal peculiarities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Going back to the title of this chapter, English creoles are outcomes of the same restructuring processes that have affected the evolution of English everywhere and its speciation into different varieties under the influence of language and/or dialect contact. Creoles’ structural features have been partly determined by the settings of their emergence, viz., plantation settlement colonies in which those who developed them needed a new vernacular for communication even among themselves in the colonial communities. The structural distance between these vernaculars and the standard varieties of their lexifiers, with which they have typically been compared—misguidedly—is determined in part by the structural features of their nonstandard lexifiers and by those of the substrate languages with which the latter came in contact. Research and the debate on how the features were selected into the new vernaculars continue, and more and more interesting questions arise which we must answer (see Mufwene 1996a, 2002). Basically, the same restructuring equation has applied everywhere, only the values of the variables in this algebraic equation have varied and thus produced the spectrum of varieties of English we now know (Mufwene 1996b, 2005a). Some of the members of this spectrum have been disfranchised as indigenized varieties and some others are creoles. The reasons are not evidently linguistic (DeGraff 2003, 2005a; Mufwene 2001, 2005a, to appear).

The traditional way in which indigenized Englishes have been opposed to native Englishes is not particularly informative about differential language evolution. The fact that the native varieties are spoken mostly by native speakers does not change the fact that they too are outcomes of contact among dialects of English and with other languages of the Western European stock in conditions of relative absorption of the then non-English-speaking populations by the native-speaking populations. This particular sociolinguistic evolution is a function of how the socioeconomic structures of settlement colonies have evolved, imposing one economic model in which everybody must operate to earn their living and only one language to compete, within the system, for job opportunities and for social acceptance.

The way the term native has been used to distinguish language varieties rather than idiolects is misleading. It suggests that non-native speakers have contributed more in kind to the restructuring of indigenized Englishes than to that of native Englishes. It overlooks the fact that English creoles, which are also native vernaculars, can very well be considered as nonstandard English varieties in plantation settlement colonies, just like Old Amish English, for example. To the extent that non-native speakers played an important role in the divergence of creoles from other nonstandard vernaculars that evolved concurrently in the colonies, the distinction between native and non-native Englishes seems to be related to whether the non-European appropriators of the colonial language constituted the overwhelming majority during the critical stage of its transformation. Sociologically, indigenized Englishes are thus at the stage where the emergent creoles were before they were spoken predominantly by native speakers. However, this particular demographic consideration highlights only an ecological factor that bears differentially on language evolution. It does not lead to the conclusion that the actual mechanisms of language restructuring were different from one kind of setting to another.

I also observed earlier that the reason that most North American White English varieties are believed not to be as divergent from metropolitan varieties as AAVE and Gullah are has to do with how late continental European immigrants shifted to English. To maintain the traditional opposition between, on the one hand, native Englishes and, on the other hand, indigenized and creole Englishes, one may want to argue that the proportion of native speakers should maintain a substantial critical mass during the formative stages of a new variety. That is, the indigenized and creole varieties that emerged in exploitation and plantation settlement colonies are not considered (fully) English because they evolved in settings where the native speakers failed to maintain this critical mass. However, what has this ecological factor got to do with the way in which a language changes, as
opposed to the extent to which it has diverged from the model targeted by its appropriators?

The traditional practice is not without precedents in the scholarship on the history of Indo-European languages. On the one hand, the evolution of Latin into the Romance languages during its appropriation by the Celts, who adopted it as their vernacular after the Romans had abandoned their Western European colonies, produced new languages considered mutations opposed to the extent to which it has diverged from the model targeted by Latin into the Romance languages during its appropriation by the Celts, had left and could hardly control its fate among them. Thus, the identification of English creoles as new languages seems to be analogous to that of the Romance languages. What seems strange, however, is that English creoles have been claimed not to be genetically related to English.

The argument appears to be the same for indigenized Englishes, as they have evolved in contact settings in which the appropriators of the colonial language were not integrated with the European colonists. They have consolidated mostly after the independence of the different nations and the adoption of English as the official language and the lingua franca of the elite. Kachru and Nelson (2006) may be right in discussing AAVE in their book since the latter too has diverged from American White Southern English mostly over the past century because of the passage of the Jim Crow laws. As an ecological factor, segregation also accounts for the emergence of varieties, such as Italian and German Englishes, which would disappear gradually only after the Euro-Americans became relatively more integrated economically first and then socially. European populations such as the Old Amish, who remain economically and socially isolated, maintain their distinctly divergent varieties to date.

Interestingly, the factor also accounts for why Gullah, on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, emerged earlier, as a divergent variety, than AAVE. European and African-American populations in coastal South Carolina were segregated much earlier, in 1720 (Wood 1974), when the overall African population in South Carolina was double that of the European populations and the disproportion was much higher on the coastal plantations (9 to 1, according to Turner 1949). Although the race of speakers is a factor favoring the current distinction between creole and non-creole vernaculars, there is nothing in the whole scenario that suggests that English underwent different processes in restructuring into Gullah than into AAVE.

only differences in the ecologies of language contact account for variation in the outcomes of the changes. There is nothing in all this that would make it a mistake to conclude that Gullah and other English creoles are also new natural offspring of English. We can certainly conclude this chapter with the wording of its title: “Some offspring of colonial English are creole”.

Approaching the evolution of English as I have so far in this chapter, we can learn more about the variable ways in which the ecologies of social interactions affected the outcomes of the evolution of English in different colonies. However, we will not learn much by assuming a priori that creoles developed in their own unique, nonordinary ways and are not dialects nor some other kinds of offspring of English. Nor can we continue to assume that only creoles and indigenized Englishes were affected by contact. We should focus more on contact as a trigger of change, perhaps as a factor that could prompt us to reexamine the traditional distinction between internally and externally motivated change which underlies arguments for the genetic distinction between native English, indigenized Englishes, and English creoles (Mufwene 2001, 2005a; Pargman 2002).

I have said almost nothing about (expanded) pidgins, but it is easy to extend the above discussion to them. Like creoles, they have been determined by an oral mode of ‘transmission’ and they have been lexified by nonstandard varieties. An important difference is that, like the indigenized Englishes, they have functioned more as lingua francas than as vernaculars. It is especially in dense urban communities in which the new speakers have interacted regularly across traditional ethnolinguistic lines that the new varieties have acquired vernacular functions. These particular ecologies account for the expansion of their systems from the original pidgins, for more focusing (in the sense of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), and thus for the emergence of their own separate norms (Chaudenson 1992, 2001). They have become indistinguishable from creoles with respect to the complexity of their structures, and, like creoles and indigenized Englishes, they show influence from the substrate languages.

Whatever typology we may need to understand the evolution of English and its speciation into diverse varieties—some of which are not mutually intelligible—must involve more dimensions than what Thomason and Kaufman (1988) cover in their discussion of outcomes of language contact, certainly many more than the traditional approach to the history of English has suggested. They all seem to have to do with variation in the ecologies of language contact, including the variety to which the new appropriators of the language were exposed, the modes of transmission, patterns of social interaction with the original population of native speakers, and the settings in which they continue to be spoken.

NOTES

1. Kachru and Nelson (2006: 9) describe this as the perception by linguists that English has spread into basically “two diasporas”, with the first including
"Great Britain, Australia, North America, and New Zealand", whereas the second applies to former British exploitation colonies in Africa and Asia, where it is spoken by minorities of national populations.

2. In this respect, indigenized Englishes have fallen between the cracks because they are not (entirely) nonstandard and do not typically function as vernaculars. What makes them curious to Westerners is that they have structural features that mark them off from the native varieties.

3. The indigenization process seems to have been conceived of in the same spirit as the putative process of creolization, except that it has received less attention among students of the history of English who do not work on indigenized varieties.

4. This position happens to be a myth, which is being forcefully debunked by the growing literature on Celtic Englishes (e.g. Filppula, Klemola, and Pirkkänen 2002; Tristram 2006). This shows that the Celtic languages have made a more significant contribution to the history of English, since its early stages, than has traditionally been recognized. Mufwene's (2001) conjecture that the Germanic colonists in England drove the Celts westwards in the same way the European colonists in North America drove Native Americans westwards and into reservations should be interpreted just as an interesting research lead.

5. Preposition stranding is incidentally the only option selected into creoles, which were of course lexified by nonstandard English vernaculars.

6. According to Bailyn (1986) and Fischer (1989), the founder population of the New England colony originated predominantly in East Anglia, a peculiarity that may have subjected their dialect to less restructuring, especially if one agrees that continental Europeans shifted to English too late to impact its evolution in a way that would be consistent with the fact that they are now more numerous in North America than the descendants of the English.

7. This is not to say that the African and European laborers were considered legally equal. Discrimination based on race, which is different from segregation, existed. It was the basis for the enslavement of Black Africans after a brief colonial period (nearly half a century) during which they were treated as indentured servants, at least in Virginia (Late 1965). With the exception of coastal South Carolina, where the Africans quickly became the overwhelming majority (by 1720; see Wood 1974), racial segregation took much longer before being institutionalized in the American South, with the Jim Crow laws first passed in 1877. (See also Schneider 1995 for similar considerations on the impact of late segregation on language evolution in the American South.)

8. Bailey and Thomas (1998) and Wolfram and Thomas (2002), who also doubt the creole origins of AAVE, think that AAVE and American White Southern English varieties started diverging in the late nineteenth century. Since 1988, Poplack and Tagliamonte (1991, 1994) have jointly highlighted several structural similarities between White nonstandard vernaculars in North America and African-Diaspora nonstandard, non-creole vernaculars, suggesting that they all developed in similar ways, selecting similar features and similar constraints, although minor differences obtain naturally here and there. Such findings have typically been characterized in the literature as quantitative rather than qualitative. Bailey (1989) argues that some of the changes (although perhaps not many of them) which have happened since the late nineteenth century reveal systemic, not just quantitative, differences. See also Kautzsch (2002).

9. As explained in Mufwene (1996a, 2001, 2005a, 2005b), substrate influence may be interpreted as the role played by the substrate languages in determining what particular structural options would be selected from among the competing variants in the lexifier. As in the case of the associative plural, it could have regularized a construction that had been statistically marginal in the lexifier.

10. Post-emancipation population structures have in fact evolved in opposite directions in the Caribbean and North America. Being a minority in the economically stratified Caribbean and governed from the United Kingdom, Caribbean poor Whites allied themselves with the Black majority, although the emergent upper socioeconomic class would consist predominantly of Whites. Now politically and economically independent from the United Kingdom, Whites in the United States were also the general majority, and the more affluent of them imposed upon the current world order. Having emerged to promote the interests of the poor Whites, especially in the South, the white supremacist movement helped pass the Jim Crow laws in the late nineteenth century, promoting the segregation of races and discrimination against non-Whites, particularly against descendants of Africans. This fostered the divergence of AAVE from the Southern White nonstandard vernacular, with which it shares origins. (See also Schneider 1995 on the subject matter.)

11. Studies such as by Poplack and Tagliamonte suggest that much of present-day AAVE must have stabilized already by the nineteenth century, although, as pointed out by Bailey and Maynor (1989) and Bailey and Thomas (1998), AAVE exhibits features (phonological and grammatical) that have changed since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, consistent with their version of the divergence hypothesis of AAVE and White American nonstandard vernaculars.

12. Labov (1972) states this view and Labov (1998) reiterates it, invoking support from Baugh (1983). There is definitely no significant regional variation in structures, especially from one city to another. After all, during the Great Migration, African Americans, who had been predominantly rural by the end of the nineteenth century, moved largely to cities. Coming from typically the same southern regions, they relocated according to the same urban plan, marked by residential segregation. Their vernaculars would be restructured similarly by some sort of koineization. Nonetheless, native speakers report of differences not only between urban and rural varieties, but also between regional ones. African Americans in Chicago can usually tell when they are speaking with an African American from New York or from the South. Charles DeBose (p.c., January 1995) agreed with me that African Americans in New Orleans sound different from those in the Midwest. Regardless of whether these differences are only or primarily prosodic deserves investigation, which Troike (1973) wished had been undertaken already in the 1970s.

13. This is still new territory to me. I base my considerations here tentatively on some of the contributions to de Klerk (1996).

14. Here again one must remember that some, if not most, of the teachers are non-native speakers using norms that often differ from those of British and North American Englishes, as we are reminded by, for instance, Kachru (1983) and Gupta (1991).

15. Things have been changing in interesting ways since the change of political regimes in 1994. More and more affluent South Africans of all races have been raising their children as native English speakers, although the overall population is still far from integrated.

REFERENCES


Smith, J., and S. Tagliamonte. 1998. We were all together… . I think we was all together: Was regularization in Buckie English. World Englishes 17: 105-26.


