

English as Pidgin or Creole: one guise of English in the world

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Abstract

This paper considers English creolization in England and other world English language communities, including Japan. Issues and problems inherent with this guise of English are considered. Creole variety development evidences the primacy of communication functions over language form as a factor in language evolution – people mix language where and when they have to, intentionally and unintentionally. This is how new varieties of a language are formed, as a basilect normally departing from a standard variety. Further, people as individuals are also apt to mix languages as they negotiate their ways through different language communities and cultures. Finally the paper discusses creolization and English regarding language pedagogy.

ピジン／クレオールとしての英語——世界で使用される英語の一変種

本稿ではイギリスおよび日本を含む英語圏における英語のクレオール化について。考察し、さまざまな地域で使用される英語に一貫して見られる諸問題について検討する。また、クレオール化と英語について、言語教育の観点から議論する。

The age of mass language instruction is a fairly modern phenomenon, even for people having to learn their first or native language. Second or foreign language education on a mass scale is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon. A nationally institutionalized English test in England appears only from 1913 as the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (Cambridge Assessment, 2010). Even though English has been taught from at least the tenth century in schools of any sort, students in such learning contexts needed teachers and they needed to be able to read and write, even just on slate tablets. However mass literacy, even in England begins from just two to four hundred years ago depending on what measure of literacy is used. Rather, for more than a millennium most people neither read nor wrote. But they spoke. Nor did they learn to speak their English from teachers or textbooks in schools. Indeed most people's range of English needed in their lives was surely narrower than in the current age when so many media intrude into so many aspects of life as never before. But how did they learn the language in any

case? A view of English as creole can provide some answers, for, over a thousand years ago, that is just what English was.

This paper attempts to present a view of English based on a more realistic ecological view of the language. In this ecology there seems to be so much variety in English – or so many varieties – as to make the language appear in the state of flux. Flux is an extreme description, but variety in English seen as a product of creolization processes is a relevant perspective from which to view development of English (or Englishes) on the one hand, and how people acquire and use the language on the other. Relevant, in as far as this view could assist language planners' work to become more relevant to the language cultures and communities they govern. Certainly also language pedagogy could become more relevant and responsive to where, when, how and with whom people need English, not to mention which English they need.

Language Communities and Language Cultures

Before English as a pidgin and as creole is discussed, key concepts used in this paper, *language community* and *language culture*, need introduction. These are different aspects of the same thing, namely a site or domain for language knowledge, its use and other behaviour and cultural baggage going with it. Language Community refers to the group of people who have in common a given language; a Language Culture is the culture of the community including pragmatic assumptions, necessary literacy or other communication skills and behaviours and to an extent its texts and literatures. These concepts are variations on the narrower, 'speech community' concept (Romaine 1994, see also Patrick 2002 for historiographic discussion of the 'speech community' concepts). Language communities are fluid rather than static, and they are not exclusive. Further, an individual can be a member of multiple language communities at any given time. This is convenient for viewing English or a creole variety incorporating some variety of English as lingua franca. Also, 'discourse community' - Gee's (1989) theories of primary and secondary discourse community, and Swales' (1990) notion of communities whose common discourse is mediated thorough written genres and texts – and 'communities of practice' (Wenger 2006), are salient here. For instance, as Wardhaugh (2006, quoted by Jenkins 2009 p 11) simplistically puts it, a pidgin is used as a "contact language" used between two cultures of different first languages. Such cultures do not even need to be nation-state or ethnically based though those kinds are the most readily identified. Language communities ideally should be constant, especially to give space for language forms and necessary communication functions to consolidate; they can be large or microcosmic. They are characterised by members, language and by communication functions or purposes of the communication. They may work in this way: if two cultures come into contact with some mixing of language a pidginized language variety develops. The members of each community interacting with the other then form a new pidgin language community.

The paper proceeds with a gloss over how English developed in England from a combination of historical processes over about eight hundred years, in order to build a case that English is a product of creolization. On the basis of that historical context, the dynamics of pidginization and creolization are discussed, with reference to some contexts where different varieties of English exist, sometimes in competition, sometimes competing with other languages. Further, the place of the individual in all of this is discussed. The applicability of a view of English as creole is then discussed and limitations assessed, with reference to Japan and Japanese English as well as implications for English pedagogy.

An Historical Picture of Old English to Middle English

Pidgin and Creole varieties of any language often (though not always) signify language development at a lower level of maturity. In Britain, before English started developing in the fifth century, there were Brythonic (Celtic) languages spoken by most people (in what is now England, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall in the far south west), Latin and Pictish (in northern Scotland). English is supposed to have started when Germanic-speaking peoples arrive from about 449 when according to the story recorded by McIntyre (2009 p 4), a Briton chieftain, Vortigern, asked for northern German aid to in repelling raids by Picts and Scots from the north. Saxons arrived, but Old English was never switched on just like that.

Contrary to popular belief there was no outright invasion. Genetic and archaeological research (Wade 2003, McWhorter 2008 discusses this point) suggest that this was a demographic movement of smaller groups than armies taking place over about 250 years: there was some movement back and forth between Britain and northern Germany, but the Germanic people who arrived were predominantly male. Then, given approximations of numbers, the total number of actual first or second generation Anglo-Saxons themselves may have been just a couple of hundred thousand in a Britain which had perhaps a million people more or less all through the period. From this point, anthropological investigation and speculation takes off and quite a different linguistic and social picture of the Britain of Old English emerges (Tristram 2004, McWhorter 2008 2009, Lutz 2009).

In any case, Old Englishes began to appear. Originally these were just other Germanic language varieties sharing similar phonemic basis and much the same grammar characteristics as other Germanic varieties, such as:

- Nominative, accusative, genitive and dative cases
- Case declension of nouns signified by suffix-based morphology
- Grammar-fixed gender (like modern French, German) also frequently denoted morphologically

- Fixed word order
- Verb conjugations with many different morphological forms.

There were also numerous varieties in different parts of England.

Within 800 years, Middle English was firmly in evidence, showing

- Regularised verb conjugation and noun-case morphology
- Ideational basis for gender
- Far less fixed word order
- Certain grammar forms not found in other Germanic languages (eg. use of *do*, *going to* and *-ing* present continuous with verbs).

By Middle English in the later fourteenth century, the language was being written more extensively across a range of genres and a standard regional variety was becoming evident in the administrative and commercial centre, London. Also, with greater consciousness of ‘England’ as an idea and an entity among political and cultural elites, the language in its varieties was identifiably English (MacColl 2008). This was especially so as English was beginning to be used as the language of government, and certainly as a language mode for trade and commerce.

Pidgins and Creoles

The shift towards less complex and more regularised language forms in the first several centuries of *English English* (ie. English language in what is now England – to describe it generically as ‘British English’, even nowadays, is an anathema) correlates with some key characteristic of pidgin and also creole language development. Culpeper (2005) observes that a pidgin “serves [just] a limited set of functions” (p 100) such as trading or business negotiations. McIntyre (2009) describes this characteristic of pidgin more simply, as “reduction” (p 74) of a fuller language. Basically pidgin languages are simple and people use them for just a small range of communication purposes. In fact, the etymology of the word ‘pidgin’ is traced to Cantonese, *bei chin* – or ‘pay’ or ‘give *money*’ (Comrie et al. 1996 p 146 – cited by Mufwene 2009 p 314). Other generic features of pidgin languages include:

- No native speakers
- Simplification of language forms
- Mixing languages together (vocabulary, expressions, structural forms including of course grammar and a reduction of communicative functions)

Romaine (1994) describes a situation in a community in Lae in Papua New Guinea in which different Christian congregations have different proportions of English, *Tok Pisin* (the local pidgin) and local indigenous languages. She observed higher economic social strata (commonly referred to as *superstrate* in creolization literature) are members of English-language and urban Tok Pisin congregations and lower strata (or *substrate*) attend rural Tok Pisin or local vernacular

congregations (Romaine 1994 pp 92-93). This rural pidgin variety with less English content is also distinct from urban pidgin. This illustrates how lower socio-economic status of pidgin users could also be a pidgin characteristic. This is referred to as *basilectalization*, an integral phenomenon of creolization which is discussed later.

In the literature, more commonly discussed cases of pidgins are found in Australia, Melanesia, and the west coast of Africa, but more often are glossed over on a generic regional basis. In contrast, a point observed by Mufwene (2009) is that both a source of cases of creoles and the etymology of the word creole, centre on North America and the Caribbean region. Creoles are also supposed to be identifiably different and more complex than pidgins. They can be used for a much wider range of communication functions and become the medium for literary expression of a given social or ethnic community (McIntyre 2009). This would imply that creoles can exist as text (but pidgins cannot), and exist as a common local vernacular – or *lingua franca*. This is a gross oversimplification. In Melanesian locations Tok Pisin is a written language medium for public communication (eg signs, public announcements (Trask 2004 pp 172-74 details this). Even so, with a pidgin language, a limitation for its use can be lack of literacy skills among the community. Therefore it is arguable that Tok Pisin has moved ahead to become a creole.

Creoles are also characterised by deeper and more extensive mixing of two or more languages. As lots of cases are located in former colonial regions with histories of slave labour, in which imperialism models fit, and in which English, Spanish and French languages mix in different proportions. These European languages are usually identified as superior, or *acrolects*. For creole development, superstrate languages supposedly provide the majority of lexis (ie vocabulary, idiom, etc) while local vernaculars provide structural form – syntax (McIntyre 2009. This hypothesis originally from Keesing 1988 cited by Mufwene 2009 p 319). Though this may work for pidgins, creoles in some locations have been more complex – the Caribbean region was influenced by indigenous populations, Spanish, later French, English/British, Dutch plus Africans brought as slaves for over 300 years (mid 16th to late 19th century). Added to this ethno-cultural complex would be movement of people within the region, conquest and annexation by competing colonial powers, not to mention Africans bringing different African coastal pidgins plus their own native languages from Africa, and indigenous American and Caribbean peoples as well.

In fact this historical picture resembles the complex changing historical situation of Old English in Britain. Further common ground is, except for foreign colonial empowered local elites, literacy was not widespread. This meant that local language varieties would rarely have existed as text until the post colonial era. This pattern exists in a qualified sense in modern times: in recent years after almost a generation of traumatic civil war and ethnic conflict, some West African

communities, in Sierra Leone and Liberia, were uprooted and lacked basics of life let alone education. Though these communities used English and local pidgins locally, local political and social instability kept young people out of education, and spoken language would have become more prominent. Written text would become less prominent and more likely to be used just by people who needed it: people with complex communication and information needs and (or including) people with power.

In contrast, the situation in a place like Jamaica is socially, economically and politically stable. It has a complex language culture seeing persistence of English plus a sturdy Jamaican/Caribbean English culture develop. This situation is well noted in the literature: the education system persists with an identifiably British standard English while the bulk of the population speaks what they call Jamaican creole (McCrum et al 1986, Romaine 1994, Baron 2000, Culpepper 2005, Jenkins 2009, Mufwene 2009). Aceto (2009), refers to it as “basilectal” Jamaican creole English” (p 207) and mentions other distinct creole varieties in urban, coastal and central mountainous areas of Jamaica – Maroon creoles (p 209). In a paper on Jamaican written English, Mair (2002) refers to it as an emerging standard. For Jamaica and the Caribbean region however there are a couple of exceptional circumstances which complicate this picture, and make it quite arguable that Jamaican English and others are varieties of English in their own right:

- Jamaica’s literary and popular culture through the medium of their own variety of English (eg. reggae)
- Though not Jamaica specifically, in the last two decades the Caribbean region has produced two Nobel Prize for Literature winners, VS Naipaul and Derek Walcott
- According to Crystal’s (2003 p 63) statistics, Jamaica has a higher proportion of so-called native English speakers than almost any other country: 2,600,000 out of 2,665,000 population

Whether Jamaican English is a creole or not is subject to definition. To present a more radical case for rejecting this idea, positing Jamaican English as a creole may have more to do with subconscious prejudices of people outside of Jamaican culture being either ignorant of it or quite simply denying that within world Englishes new varieties can rise in their own right.

The simple contrast presented just now should show that the picture of pidgin or creole use in a language community may sometimes be easier to see or alternatively be more complex, but would rarely ever match a theoretical model of pidginization or creolization exactly. Further, the extent to which Old Englishes show pidgin and creole characteristics, can help to map how English developed in England, as Englishes have developed in India, Africa and other places more recently. First some key characteristics of pidgin and creole development need explication. This is taken up in the case of Old English in the next section.

Pidginization and Creolization in Old and Middle Englishes

Obviously the English-as-pidgin-or-creole perspective is fraught with complication, just as imposing any sociological model on an authentic case tends to be. Hopefully discussion of these two perspectives produces some insights. Previously, mention of the situation in England in the period up to Middle English (a grey period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries) was made. Yet the contrasting factor regarding every other place where English has occurred is that *English was never brought to England as it was to every other place the language occurs* – in some senses English grew from nothing in its own English garden.

Creole varieties are sometimes seen as part of a larger process. Mufwene (2009) critically examines hypotheses regarding this point. One process he leans towards is basilectalization away from the base language: ie. by developing a *basilect* – the variety the most different from an acrolect, the variety of the upper class or elite. In colonial contexts such as Singapore (with local Singlish characterised for instance by a Cantonese-sounding ‘Lah!’ at the end of spoken turns) or Jamaica (evident in reggae music, Jamaican hip-hop and everyday *patois*) this is tenable.

However basilectalization is historically less tenable in the British home ground of English. In the period up to English achieving lingua franca status through the whole social hierarchy– most likely in the mid or late fourteenth century as Middle English - hundreds of years of mixing languages has seemed very evident. Basilectalization suggests a diglossia scenario developing: people speak one way in some situations but in a quite different way in other situations - though the term does infer different languages. The situation in Jamaica would resemble this. Diglossia was probably the case with medieval English elite minorities (ie. Christian clergy with Latin and other European languages plus local Englishes; princes, warlords, military leaders and their attendants with more central Germanic vernaculars or Norse plus regional and local Englishes). Diglossia probably was less significant lower down socially in communities which were less geographically mobile or interactive, more rural, local, village or family-oriented and illiterate. But these situations are harder to gauge. But it is a safe guess that almost all their language behaviour was spoken. In the absence of appropriate textual evidence, no one these days can ever really know.

Evidence from written texts has been widely used to draw out Anglo-Saxon or later Norse, French and earlier Norman French and Latin (and even Latin drawn into Celtic and then passed into Old English) which evidence lexical roots of English. Rightly or wrongly, Old English text-based research tends to view Old English as a unitary entity, which would argue against basilectalization. Another minority research school focuses on structural features (particularly

syntax and morphology) from Celtic languages - loosely referred to as the *Celtic Hypothesis* (Tristram 2004, McWhorter 2008 2009, Klemola 2009, Lutz 2009, Schrijver 2009). Even if this view gains wider acceptance, contribution to English of a limited range of grammatical and structural patterns from Celtic language structures remains insufficient evidence of low class Britons speaking a Celtic-hybrid language and it eventually becoming the English used by the general population. However this does correlate with a pattern in pidginization mentioned earlier – that lexis develops from an acrolect (superstrate language) and syntax from a basilect (substrate) source.

Mufwene (2009 p 317) identifies *prevailing* (ie. a dominant language form taking hold, or just one form taking hold more than others) and *convergence* (ie. more equivocal mixing) as language mixing processes. They are a more reasonable explanation of what was happening in the complex linguistic map of Old English England. An attempt to define Old English as pidgin and as creole is presented in Figure 1. As can be seen, it is not an easy fit either way.

| | Characteristics of a PIDGIN | Old Englishes | Characteristics of CREOLES |
|----|---|---|--|
| a. | No native speakers | Native speakers | Native speakers possible |
| b. | Reduced range of communication functions | Expanding range of communication functions | Expanding range of communication functions |
| c. | Regularization and simplification of language forms | Language structure being regularised and simplified | Regularization/simplification of language forms |
| d. | Convergence-type language mixing | Mixing of languages (Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) prevailing on Brythonic; later Norse mixing with Old Englishes) | Prevalence and convergence of languages |
| e. | Basilectalizing (social stratification hierarchy – substrate vernacular/superstrate vernacular) | Basilectalizing over longer term; but from various source language communities; Old English varieties eventually merging approaching lingua franca status | Basilectalizing but more widely spread than for pidgin varieties, sometimes appearing as lingua franca |
| f. | Simpler grammar, frequently from prestige or acrolect (superstrate) variety | Shift from more complicated Germanic grammar, eventually resembling some Brythonic (Celtic) patterns, especially in West-Saxon varieties of English | Developing, gradual regularizing of grammar |
| g. | Lexis (expressions, vocabulary) simple limited range, from usually from non-indigenous language | Lexis largely introduced from Anglo-Saxon (plus minimal Latin) | Lexis from non-indigenous language sources, or introduced plus some mixing or transformation of words from different languages |
| h. | No institutionalized standard variety | No standard (shifted with changing political and cultural hegemony across the different regions) | Developing institutionalized standard varieties, especially towards post-creole stage development |

| | | | |
|----|---|---|--|
| i. | Not prestige variety (but may hold more prestige than basilect vernacular of substrate) | Prestige varieties apparent (earlier period more localised, later West Saxon variety as most developed written mode prevailing) | Prestige variety |
| j. | Not lingua franca though can be widespread in a the language community alongside basilect and acrolect | Development of local language community lingua franca | Lingua franca |
| k. | Minimal or no written mode | Minimal written discourse – few texts in limited range of genres | Developing written text tradition, expanding range of genres |
| l. | Mostly spoken | Widespread illiteracy except for small clergy and administrative elite Competition with Latin as written language Mostly spoken in smaller rural communities, but great similarity among language communities across a political or cultural region is apparent | Spoken and written use |
| m. | Limited social contact between users | Extensive social contact between users at local level but limited outside of local community and social strata | Extensive social contact between users |
| n. | Smaller language communities | Multiple smaller communities using very similar varieties of Old English add to make larger language community | Larger language community |
| o. | Multi-ethnic language community; or interaction between members of different ethnic or language communities | Multi-ethnic language communities (Celts as substrate such as slaves, Anglo-Saxon majority plus elite (in south) plus Norse elite (later in north)) | Multi-ethnic language community |

Figure 1: *Characteristics of Old Englishes per Pidgin and Creole* (Pidgin and Creole characteristics based on Culpeper 2005, Mufwene 2009 & McIntyre 2009)

Regarding English, convergence is most evident in the etymology of complex, sophisticated vocabulary in the Middle English period, which often mix lexical roots from more than one language, especially French and Latin. There is also the Celtic Hypothesis case, that convergence happened earlier with certain Brythonic language structure patterns prevailing on Anglo-Saxon over an extended period from several hundred years earlier (possibly from the fifth century).

Further, in the north of England where the Vikings raided and later more sedentary Scandinavians settled, some writers (Culpeper 2005, McWhorter 2008, McIntyre 2009) suggest more simply mixing of Norse and Anglo-Saxon. They suggest Scandinavians were visiting - in the same way that tourists from a country with a similar language may know enough of the language of the place to understand basically and be understood but not enough to be understood well. In this

sense local pidgins apparently would be more likely than a local creole which may develop later. McWhorter further suggests that as these visitors stayed, it was their children who gravitated towards the local English because it was “cool” (2008 p 118) especially after they threw off all the extra complex grammar morphology opting for syntactically leaner, more regularised English. Even so, Norse and Anglo-Saxon were both Germanic languages with an overlapping geography in Denmark. This makes the suggestion feasible though not conclusive, as these days we cannot know how exactly people spoke then.

If the history of English in England is used as an historical model for understanding how varieties of English develop in the world since then, pidginization and creolization processes give incomplete explanations. Rather, are they just stages in larger or longer processes of language development? Beyond Creolization is *decreolization* – when a creole increasingly shows features of a distinct language contributing to development of its own forms (McIntyre 2009 p 75) – or what resembles more succinctly a *post-creole* stage. Mufwene (2009) points to this view being current early in the twentieth century among linguists specializing in African American English development. Instead he opts for ecological factors (historical, socio-economic, etc.) rather than linguistic to explain it (pp 320-21).

Regarding the notion that the situation in England shows English as pidgin or creole, the chronological limit is when type-set printing of written texts starts in the last decades of the fifteenth century. One effect of type-set printing is economic: it is cheaper to print things using the same forms, such as spelling. Then, the varieties of English used at centres of printing, especially London, begin to be broadcast as a standard form. Then there appear multitudinous sources of textual evidence of English being a fully mature language: the push for standard forms of English, in government and later in commerce, as grammar treatises and dictionaries, various new genres of literature and later still the Received Pronunciation movement (lasting until the 1970s when the BBC abandoned the policy). And this is only inside England!

A View of Englishes as Pidgins or Creoles Outside of England

Braj Kachru’s Three Circles of English model (Kachru 1992) is an unavoidable issue in discussing English as creole or pidgin. His is by now an orthodox view despite attracting increasing criticism (Honna 2008, Pennycook 2009, Yano 2009) and comparison (Jenkins 2009, Morizuno 2009). A simplistic understanding sees first or Inner Circle (eg. British, Canadian, New Zealand) Englishes as native; second Outer (eg. Indian, Malaysian, Ghanan) as creole; and third or Extending or Emerging (eg. European countries, East Asian and many African Englishes) as pidgin-type varieties. An alternative way to picture this in context is to consider historically a ‘Three-circles-of-Germanic language family’ model for Old Englishes and also

Middle English: with northern German varieties possibly including Anglo-Saxon vernaculars at the centre, Old Englishes would be in the second (extending) circle (as a creole variety?), whereas Middle English would be in the outer circle heading out to form its own Three Circles model later. Of course it is more complex than that, especially in the modern ecology in which languages (especially English) have developed in communities bound by extra-linguistic and non-geographic characteristics.

As well, the Three Circles of English works as a world English mapping exercise though it works better if it permits fluidity and less rigidity than being bound by arbitrary nation-state, ethnic, and regional boundaries. Another criticism is that it appears to extend from a native-English centre, as though there is some primacy of such varieties involved. Though not intentional, this aspect has an imperiousness about it: that some varieties of English are characteristically more prestigious than others.

Among a clutch of variations (eg. Pennycook 2009 and Yano 2009 provide three-dimensional variations) a more reasonable, watered down variation on Kachru's original model is provided by Honna (1999. Also see Honna 2008 p 2, who provides a smaller-scale version for Asia on p 20). Honna uses more or less the same groupings of countries as Kachru's model, but substitutes 'English as a native language' (ENL) as the label for the Kachru's Inner Circle, and 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) for the Outer Circle. Beyond that he labels the Extending zone as 'English as an International Language' (EIL). It is in these two latter zones that English as pidgin and certainly as creole can be found. Further, Honna's variation model seems less imperious, more equitable than Kachru's and certainly more workable in order to gauge the ecology of English as pidgin or creole.

Advantages and Limitations of Viewing English as Pidgin or Creole

Old English rather than Middle or Modern *English English* (ie. the English of England) is more suitable than the later ages of English to examine for signs of pidgin or creolization. Earlier discussion tried to show how Middle English seems at best a highly developed creole or post-creole variety. The usefulness of considering development of English in England is that the regionalised and localised character of the map, plus competing influences of different language cultures and the peoples who brought them, resemble somewhat the situation of developing Englishes in the world today. For instance, competition among present-day local language cultures and external ones (eg. Anglophone, Francophone and even Arabic) inside a region like West Africa resembles Old English with Brythonic (Celtic), Anglo-Saxon-Germanic, Norse-Germanic, French and Latin.

Closer examination of the nature of pidgin development and creolization processes can go a long way to define what is going on. At a more local basis, variation among Englishes in different countries can be explained: eg. tighter, more widespread English in more centralised states like Ghana or Gambia; looser in the larger federated nation state of Nigeria; and more competitive variation in somewhere like Cameroon, where *Camfranglais* - Cameroon vernaculars plus French plus English - is even lingua franca in some communities (Kouega 2003).

It has been argued, too, how an identifiably ‘African’ variety of English can be used as a mode for articulating African identity (Kirkpatrick 2008 pp 111, 114). Implicit in this view is that language communities such as these build their own varieties of English as part of their cultural identities. Though there is credibility in this view regarding consolidated communities like India and Singapore, the view lacks substance regarding a less substantial, looser, wider-ranging cultural concept such as West Africa. Missing is English (even a pidgin variety) as lingua franca across the region (a Japanese English in this sense is considered later). Also, there would be limited range of communication functions: perhaps limited to literature, political or other cultural declarations, intercultural or international negotiation, commerce or other activities. However, African people independently using their own English in their own way, and in so doing asserting their identity to be labelled ‘African’, seems to be the kind of act Kirkpatrick refers to. The form this English takes, predictably including a mix of language forms and rhetorical styles from other languages could be understood as a product of creolization.

To extend these notions of English as regional lingua franca for trans-regional communication and for expressing local identity, is actually to leave local communities behind. For instance,

- i. in communities where English is the *sole language*, obviously local identity will be expressed through English, just as any other communication function.
- ii. however, where English *mixes with or is in competition with other languages* – as in a pidgin/creole context – it is more complex
- iii. in communities *where neither English nor a creole variety sharing English is lingua franca*, of course neither local identity nor other communication functions need be mediated through English, although the option is always there. Obviously a different language would be more normal

This trichotomy correlates in part with Kachru’s Three Circles of English model, with the qualification that language communities are not necessarily defined by nation-state borders.

The Individual in Multiple Language Communities and Language Cultures

The following hypothetical scenario illustrates advantages and limitations of the English-as-creole discussed above. In this scenario, rather than focus on a language community per se,

instead the focus is on an individual who over time moves among varying language communities. Some are large, some are microcosmic; some are relatively constant, others highly temporary.

In this hypothetical scenario, Cameroon is taken as the original ‘nation-state’ language community, in which a standard English competes with other creole (*Camfranglais* – French mixed with English and Cameroonian languages), pidgin varieties and also another European (French) and indigenous languages. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate aspects of this.



Figure 2: *Competing languages: a Cameroon bank note, bilingual but French text is more in evidence than English text. No African language text (or pidgin/creole) is present. Yet Cameroon culture appears as non-language text.* Source: <http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://aes.iupui.edu/rwise/banknotes/cameroon/CameroonP25-1000Francs-1985> Viewed on 1 October 2010)



Figure 3: *Institutional preference for more standard English evidenced in this sign outside a university in Cameroon.* (Source: <http://www.langaa-rpcig.net/Pidgin-Cameroon-s-Lingua-Franca-or+.html>. Viewed on 1 Oct 2010)

A Cameroonian national (with fictitious name ‘Jean’) may move through communities of very significant ethnic, social-cultural and linguistic differences inside and outside of Cameroon. Using an individual is instructive regarding the primary purpose of this paper: to present a view of English from the aspect of individuals who need to negotiate and navigate through changing

language cultures. This hypothetical example of ‘Jean’ is presented in Figure 4. English mixing with other languages occurs in every stage of the scenario.

| | | Comments on Jean’s use and experience of English as Pidgin/Creole |
|-----|---|--|
| i. | Jean Ote (fictitious character) is in his last year of high school in a town in an inland department in Cameroon. He speaks mainly Camfranglais or the local Kom language at home and socially, but has learned English and French in a French medium school. | <i>Diglossia: standard English similar to British for school and institutions PLUS local Camfranglais creole with Cameroon and Nigerian English expressions, word order and grammar</i> |
| ii | Jean is good at soccer and gets picked up by a semi-professional team in Douala the largest city down on the coast. Here he speaks English much more often though with a lot of local expressions and words, also French and Camfranglais sometimes. Jean is really good at soccer, gets into a team touring around Europe. | <i>Disglossia: more local Douala English variety for wider range of everyday life functions PLUS Camfranglais when with his team, for socialising and at home and French</i> |
| iii | Jean is spotted by a scout for Arsenal, an English Premier League football team in the north east of London. He moves there, where he needs to speak more like the English he learned at school, but also with local London Cockney and Estuary (area around London) English expressions, but French and Camfranglais only infrequently when he meets other Cameroonians or calling home. | <i>Modulated Cameroon English mixed with Nigerian and other common West African expressions and rhetorical style. Some mixing with London/Estuary English expressions.</i> |
| iv | Jean gets transferred to AC Milan in the Italian Serie A, where he uses English or French together with the team and speaking to the media, and very basic (pidgin-like) Italian for simple functions in the AC Milan team and outside such as ordering food, though he is picking up Italian more and more. He also has an Italian-English interpreter. Still he most commonly uses English with the largest range of people while in Italy, including much of the English he had learned and had to use in high school and while living in Douala but also some East London expressions. But with a player from Nigeria in the team who becomes his good friend, Jean uses English in a characteristic West African way often similar to how people speak in Nigerian (‘Nollywood’) movies which are popular in Cameroon. | <i>Diglossia: publicly and with non-Africans; with non-British people modulated standard London Estuary English with standard style English learned and used in school in Cameroon PLUS Cameroon/West African mixed variety with friends and people close around him</i> |
| v | Jean is chosen to represent Cameroon in the World Cup Soccer. He joins the team for a training camp and is isolated from everybody outside. The team’s manager is French but has been with the team for 5 years and understands much Camfranglais. | <i>Camfranglais creole as lingua franca, French</i> |

Figure 4: Shifts in ‘Jean’s’ use of English as Pidgin/Creole according to Changes in Language Community and Language Culture

These language cultures can be better understood through pidginization and creolization processes. In Stages i and v 'Jean' is inside a small fairly homogenous language community of people from the same ethno-cultural community with a high level of interests, goals and other contextual conditions in common. The predominant lingua franca, *Camfranglais* is determined less by the need to interact with people on a wider linguistic base – Jean is safely in a Cameroonian community in both contexts. The dynamics of creolization are irrelevant to Jean in these situations, especially Stage v, mainly because he is isolated from the other language cultures. However, over Stages i to iii the number and nature of language cultures in which Jean needs to function increase in number and complexity. Then a condition of diglossia exists: Jean needing to use multiple languages or language varieties at different times.

Taking English by itself, as expected in London in Stage iii Jean's own English may show basilect characteristics in a culture where a standard British English is the lingua franca. Here notions of English as a creole are relevant in Jean's own individual context – the lingua franca is London or Estuary English, and there would be a wide range of contexts for Jean to encounter and use English. In Stage iv in Italy, surprisingly English still predominates but it is also the context in which Jean needs to negotiate and navigate through the greatest complex of language communities and cultures – almost all of Jean's situations have the common condition that any variety of English could not operate as the lingua franca. As well, except for Jean's communication with his interpreter (quite a micro-language community) and possibly some pidginized English and Italian in the AC Milan team community, there is much language mixing. Many language events (eg. conversations in restaurants, interviews with media) are too short for any kind of language development process to develop. Yet, the same kinds of language events could be sufficiently repetitious for Jean to notice and begin to pick up language knowledge in an unorganized way – but at AC Milan the language is less likely English, more likely Italian. Instead, where Jean uses English, his English is a mix of Englishes from various language communities he has been in before - predominantly Cameroon/West African, standard school English and some London/Estuary variety – PLUS other languages like French and Italian. As far as Jean is concerned Stage iv provides multiple contexts for pidginization or creolization to occur, depending on the range of communication functions involved.

All this points to the main limitation of the English as Pidgin/Creole perspective: it works better when applied to mapping English use behaviour development in a language community. It is less satisfactory when profiling language use of individuals, in which case a diglossia condition – different languages or language modes in different situations - is highly likely. The fundamental reason for this is that individuals tend to move from one language community to another and (in the case of Stage iv) from one language culture to another, sometimes fairly quickly. Moreover,

at any given time they can be members of more than one language community. The impact of this limitation becomes more apparent when considering a pidgin/creole view of English in Japan.

Relevance of a Pidgin/Creole View to English in Japan

Do Japanese people normally need to use English to express their cultural identity? Inside Japan, the answer is surely negative – Japanese language is the lingua franca of that culture. Further, there is no evidence of efforts to maintain or promote a corpus of a Japanese variety of English by any public institution there (unlike in Singapore or Jamaica). If the perspective of nation-state language communities were abandoned, looking for different kinds of language communities could be more fruitful in a place like Japan. Indeed here the English-as-pidgin/creole perspective is relevant. This point is discussed later. First the culture of English in Japan needs examination.

The first place to look is in expectations in English education. Nobuyuki Honna (2008) believes a Japanese variety of English could and should be encoded and promoted, especially on consideration of the reality of English in Japan. He provides a model defining public and institutionalised expectations versus the reality of English teaching, expectations and outcomes in Japan. This is reproduced in Figure 5.

| Japan's ELT Model (Present, Unrealistic) | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Input</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>Output Expectation</u> |
| Students | American English | American English Speakers |
| Japan's ELT Model (Modified, Realistic) | | |
| <u>Input</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>Output Expectation</u> |
| Students | American English | Japanese English Speakers |

Figure 5: *Unrealistic and Realistic English Language Teaching Models in Japan* (Source: Honna, 2008. pp 146, 154)

The model prescribes a standard native variety of English, but somehow a Japanese variety develops. This is reminiscent of school-English situations mentioned before in Cameroon, and even in Jamaica. Problems with this view are that it is a generalization, and Honna is not specific on how Japanese English – as an alternative to American English - is acquired or learned. Honna's point is that Japanese English is a variety with heavy mixing: with Japanese language phonemes, semantics and even writing systems (Morizumi 2009. For semantics and writing systems see Stanlaw 2004). But almost all people do not use Japanese for one set of contexts or communicative functions and then use English for another set. And they do not customarily use Japanese English to communicate with each other. Rather, English is used in Japan normally for

communication with or from people outside Japan. For many people it is not even a normal event in daily life.

Language mixing is also a characteristic of creolization. Honna's model appropriately holds the goal of an 'American English' standard as unrealistic. However, is this an example of basilectalization? The orthodox schema for basilectalization is for social substrate to use a basilect (theoretically Japanese language), converging with or being prevailed upon by the acrolect language variety of social superstrate (theoretically American English). But Japanese English appears as basilect but does not have the social substrate construct basis. At best, people using English in Japan may see American standard English as a prestige variety (Honna, 2008 discusses this point) – a variety which they ought to know but can't or don't. This is because – quite fundamentally – the language community does not need to rely on American English or any English as a standard in order to communicate¹. It is necessary to look elsewhere.

Morizumi (2009) for one assesses Japanese English from the point of view of Japanese language forms, identity, and educational potential for Japanese English as lingua franca (he says no) or as an international auxiliary language (he believes possible and is optimistic about it). But Morizumi needs to resolve whether he is concerned with a language community inside or outside Japan.

Instead, the range of communicative functions in which a Japanese variety of English can be used needs to be considered. But even in institutionalised English language communities inside Japan (companies, colleges, and so forth), it is questionable the extent to which diglossia as such actually occurs.

But both overlook the fact that in local, regional and institutional language cultures in Japan, Japanese predominates - no variety of English is anything like a lingua franca. Small scale pidginization and creolization occurs only when non-Japanese are involved, depending on the range of communication functions concerned.

However inside Japan new institutionalized English language communities are forming: eg. Rakuten & Uniqlo (Fast Enterprises) instituting English as their working languages for middle management and above (Maeda 2010) and English being the alternative working language for Japanese government when dealing with non-Japanese people and institutions is involved (eg. foreign delegations, business communications). Then, if communication or interaction becomes

¹ Honna (2008) and Morizumi (2009) both orient their theses towards English being used for international contexts, despite Honna's own considerations about English being a Japanese language.

commonplace some creolization development should occur even if a standard English variety is codified and instituted, though within a range of common communicative functions. For instance, Honma (2008) endeavours to identify these functions through needs analysis of a sushi chef and a pharmaceutical company representative. The problem with this approach is that the focus is on the language mode rather than the more intrinsic communication needs and communication functions these people have to perform. Prioritise communication, and the English as pidgin/creole view becomes more compatible with Japanese English outside of Japan.

As Honma (2008) and Morizumi (2009) rightly point out (though for different reasons), the pervasive view of English in Japan is for engaging the outside world. A Japanese person normally is required to take their Japanese English with them in order to do this: either as diplomat, student, international soccer player or tourist, or even someone at a bar or restaurant taking an order from a foreigner using English². Then, in the language communities they join, the knowledge of English they acquire as individuals would necessarily incur some kind of pidginization or creolization. This is less complex than though quite similar to Jean's situation in London and in Italy discussed above. Also, similarly to Jean in Cameroon and later with the Cameroon football team, a Japanese person in a Japanese language community need not be so concerned with English at all.

English as Pidgin/Creole in Japan: Summary

To sum up about the situation of English in Japan, a creolization perspective can fit if American English is considered as a prestige variety, rather than as a superstrate acrolect (Japanese English being a basilect). The problem is that assuming English to be a lingua franca in Japan is a very false assumption, and so nation-state as the basis of a Japanese-English language culture or community is problematic. Instead, a view of English for engaging the non-Japanese world is more realistic. It is quite possible that people can acquire a repertoire of English enabling them to communicate in these contexts

English language education programs are just one alternative to assist this process. Alternatively, people have an option of communicating in a more natural, organic way using what language resources they have. Regarding English, it would necessarily become mixed with Japanese, producing a Japanese variety of English resembling a pidgin or creole. If the communication contexts become regular, then language communities adopting these language modes would develop. Such language communities of course would vary in size, temporality, and communicative function range and complexity. Here is where English as pidgin/creole becomes

² The point needs to be kept in mind that English is not the exclusive alternative language to Japanese. Current competitors include Chinese and Korean, and many of the points made in this section are applicable to those languages too.

relevant.

Pedagogical Issues: Discussion

A clear realization in the discussion so far is that a view of English as pidgin/creole is far more relevant to mapping developing English language communities than the English of the individual. Creolization is relevant to the individual only with reference to the prevailing community (or culture) of the language. To consider language communities at the level of nation-state is too limited. Rather, the hypothetical case of ‘Jean’ from Cameroon shows how individuals move through and need to negotiate multiple language communities and cultures, some larger and more constant, some smaller, more local and more temporary. It was also shown how in England, English developed over hundreds of years before an identifiable standard variety became institutionalised, and all through this period people essentially spoke it and picked it up naturalistically. Mass literacy and mass language teaching historically are fairly recent phenomena. One gap in the discussion so far is how a Japanese English has developed. One answer is through pidginization or creolization. The essential point here is the undeniable significance of how language varieties develop in response to:

- needs based on communication functions
- the various sets of language knowledge and behaviours people bring to new language cultures that form
- the relative socio-cultural status of these languages – as acrolect/basilect or prestige varieties – and any pre-existing lingua franca variety.

The first point about English (or any language) is that it does not need to be taught for it to be acquired and used by people in a community. As form of the language evolves, so do people’s knowledge of the language and appropriate communication skills (eg literacy, rhetoric skills) develop, more or less following a creolization pattern. As has been mentioned, in places as far apart as Jamaica, Cameroon and Japan, standard Englishes have been taught top-down in schools since the 20th century while creole varieties developed more from the bottom up. In cultures like in Japan, where a variety of English had not been needed, and where a different vernacular (ie. Japanese language) persists as the lingua franca, the natural acquisition of English at a general populace level is thwarted. On the other hand, historically, whenever a language – such as English – has been transplanted the future local variety never has become a mirror of the original variety brought to that language culture.

These conditions have prompted linguists like Honna and Morizumi in Japan to investigate possibilities for a local (Japanese) variety of English. This attitude is not just more realistic, it is also the most workable. Working against them in a place like Japan is the question of just

how much English is needed at all. The negative effect of this last point correlates with the Acculturation Model in Second language acquisition theory: that language acquisition is impaired if there is not intrinsic reason or motivation to use or learn the language (Schumann (1976) puts it in terms of the subject's social and psychological distance from local native speakers, but Schumann's study was done in Anglophone USA).

In part, this paper develops the concept of language communities, departing from more orthodox thinking of a nation-state based community on the one hand. On the other hand is the notion of individuals making their ways through various language communities and cultures. These are promoted as more realistic and workable perspectives: to see

- what language knowledge is needed
- what language knowledge in people develops, and
- what forms the language (variety) takes.

Understanding the nature of pidgin and creole formation facilitates this. But this is only half of a solution, limited to understanding what language variety/ies should be learned. The key pedagogical issue is how to do this.

i. English for Special Purposes

Firstly, understanding the nature of pidgins and creoles and then channelling natural organic creolization processes is one approach. Regarding language education itself, this approach is a stand-offish approach. Further, it would be limited in contexts where English is not a normal vernacular in the language culture, such as in Japan. Even so, a consolidated range of communication contexts and correlating communication functions should exist, and if possible these should be consistent and expanding. Then language learning regimes can be established to meet these needs. English for special purposes (ESP) programs can meet these needs, but effectiveness can be limited to the immediate contexts they are intended to cover. Also, the contexts and purposes can be far too various for a general culture of English to develop.

ii. Establishing an English Language Community

A second, more active approach has potential: engendering a language culture in which a variety of English becomes the lingua franca. In Japan, companies like Uniqlo and Rakuten wish to do just this. Yet, for a language culture to develop and take hold, there must be an ecosystem in which it can exist and flourish. Otherwise, even if a variety of the language is introduced, taught and learned, and unless it is needed and used, the chances are that it will be neglected and forgotten. A more extreme pessimistic view is that language education as such has no point which can be the case for some individuals, as Schumann (1976) discloses in his study mentioned before. More pessimistic was that the subject reported in Schumann's study was being taught

English in America where that language is pervasive as first language (L1) and lingua franca.

Further, this approach of artificially creating (or imposing) a culture of English has occurred in international air traffic control. However Hutchins, et al. (2006) report that inside non-English-speaking countries, recourse to the normal lingua franca occurs frequently, almost normally. This switch however is normally not one hundred percent, usually mixing English air traffic control jargon with the local language: in other words basic creolization. Figure 6 illustrates this.

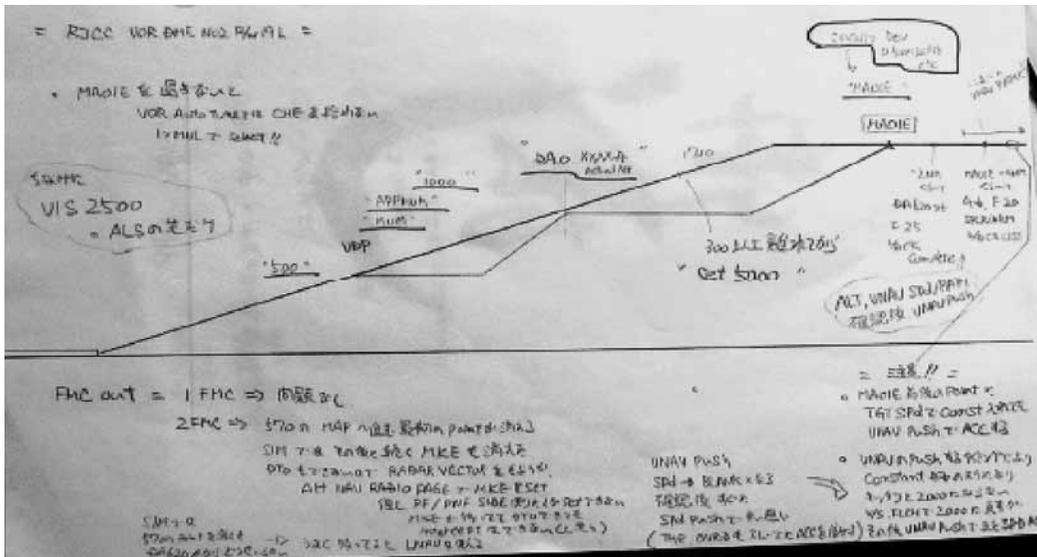


Figure 6: A Japanese flight deck first officer's annotations in English and Japanese annotations to a flight instrument manual. This is despite airline prohibitions of annotations on charts. (Source: Hutchinson, et al. 2006 p 95)

There is a pervading sense that this is not just tolerated, it is unofficially accepted. The point here is that, for instance, flight deck officers see clear communication in vital safety situations to be more essential than adhering to a corpus of aviation English. Returning to the two Japanese companies adopting English as lingua franca, one wonders how long Japanese may linger in those company cultures.

iii. Prioritizing Communication over Language Form

The last point suggests a third hypothetical solution: prioritizing communication needs over specifying language form. If people are taught to communicate using English together with other modes of communication, is that satisfactory? Purists would say no, and it would be too much of a compromising leap for most people to grasp. However, left to their own devices, arguably English would become mixed with other languages in any case.

In this paper, much attention has been given to the early historical development of English. The main reason for this is that a view of English as creole – an historical product of communication need. One essential point here is that people did not identify the languages used in England as ‘English’ for a few centuries. One of the first mentions of it comes in the 10th century from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles listing the five languages of Britain: “*Englisc & Brittisc ... & Scyttisc & Pyhtisc & Boc Leden*” [or ‘English, British (Celtic), Scottish, Pictish and Book Latin’] (quoted by Janson 2002 p 13). Old English as it was actually became a real basilect after the Normans invaded with their French and new adaptations of Latin. But before all this happened, people had a stronger priority than picking and choosing which language to speak. They just had to communicate. The text in Figure 7 shows early English glossing on a scriptural text in Latin. The glosses are not even intended to be English, rather just phonemic approximations of translations of key Latin words into how they might be said in the local vernacular.

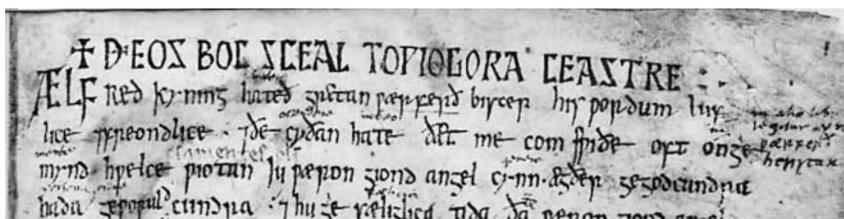


Figure 7: An example of language mixing: a fragment of a Latin text with English glossing from about the year 890. Above some of the Latin words are notes in English, or glosses. These notes were to help Christian priests translate the meaning to be conveyed verbally to local people in South West England. In this case, Latin acted as the acrolect. Whatever language variety in which the oral preaching was done became a basilect. (Source: Burnley 2000 p 21. Reproduction of a page from the Cura Pastoralis in the Bodleian Library in Oxford)

iv. Use of Writing Scripts from Outside of the Language Culture

A contemporary parallel to this practice of glossing is use of the phonemic katakana script for English words in schools in Japan, and Roman script for producing Japanese by many learners of Japanese language. Motivation for this is simple: comprehensibility for the writers. But Roman script and appropriate English literacy skills are part of English language culture and they need to be acquired for anybody to negotiate English text as readers or writers.

v. Information Technology

Yet the modern age information technology (IT) is more complex. Firstly, computer interfaces and internet-based discourse, first done in America were done in English. For example, email addresses have syntax based on English (eg. position of ‘@’ before the domain location), not to mention pervasive use of Roman script and English meta-language. Consequently there is an

almost unwitting mixing of English with whatever interface language mode is used online. This however is poor evidence of pidgin - or creolization. Rather it is arguable that these English forms have simply moved into the cultures of other languages. Translation software also defies the creolization phenomenon, texts produced with it still frequently lacking any coherent form inhibiting the communication functions of the language. Another way in which languages may appear to mix but actually don't is through multi-lingual templates. A common example is being able to choose a website menu in more than one language. These aspects of IT are still no substitute for a person simply acquiring enough skills in and knowledge of a standard variety of a pervasive world language like English. IT is a field where creole varieties of English are far less appropriate. However IT increasingly is geared towards communication of data and images in appropriate forms through appropriate media. People planning English language education could learn from this.

vi. Adapting to the Natural Ecology of the Local Culture of English

However pedagogical issues remain quite problematic. In Japan, partly this is due to distance between the context for learning or teaching English and contexts for its use. A simple explanation is that Japan is largely a context for English as a foreign language (EFL) rather than a place like England, Jamaica, or Cameroon where a variety of English is either lingua franca or a second language (ESL, or second-rung lingua franca). Until people in Japan regularly and extensively engage in communication using English with parties outside of Japan, Japanese English will remain a creole variety mixed too much with Japanese for it to be a viable alternative international English variety – for most people a limited pidgin variety at best. Yet, this is the natural ecology of Japanese English, in spite of all the teaching and learning of standard English varieties there. Language planners and language users too, need to recognize this and not fight against nature.

vii. Which English to Teach and How to Teach it?

Consequently, a key pedagogical issue is what English to teach? The same question has been broached by the Education Ministry in Singapore, and they articulate their answer this way:

AIMS OF THE SYLLABUS

At the end of their primary and secondary education, pupils will be able to communicate effectively in English ... They will be able to: ...

- speak, write and make presentations in *internationally acceptable English* that is grammatical, fluent and appropriate for purpose, audience, context and culture
- interact effectively with people from their own or different cultures. ...
- * 'Internationally acceptable English that is grammatical, fluent and appropriate for purpose, audience, context and culture' refers to *the formal register of English used in*

different parts of the world, that is, standard English.

(English Language Syllabus 2001 p 3. Italics mine)

Appropriate communication is emphasised, in ‘internationally acceptable’ English, inferring pragmatics as well as language form. Though the real world of English is something more various, the tone of this expectation is realistic. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Technology would do well to pay attention to this aspect of the Singapore English syllabus

Once which English (or Englishes) to teach is decided, a more important issue develops: how to teach - or learn - that English? The answer should be clear in this age: communicating is more essential than knowing any language for its own sake. Thus, a pedagogy placing primacy on communication and focus on form in order to make language communication clear and appropriate. Hopefully the preceding discussion of pidgin/creolization can provide some justification and natural guidance for language education policy and pedagogy to foster such an approach.

Conclusion

One point that has consistently been made through this paper is the communication aspect of creole language varieties and creolization. Indeed the need to communicate has driven people to acquire the language they need for engaging with people in different cultures and also simply with each other. The language acquisition processes for centuries were essentially naturalistic acquisition processes. Language mixing was – and is – a natural part of this process. The cases of English in its early evolutionary development in England, and more currently in Jamaica, Singapore, Cameroon and Japan have been used to consider these points from various angles. It has been shown that in each case it is normal for a creole variety of English to exist regardless of any standard English variety used or taught in different language cultures and communities. This seems to be the normal and natural ecology of English – English from the bottom up in a language culture is going to differ from an institutionalised standard variety from the top down. It is believed that this realisation relieves pressure on people who believe they must adhere to a standard variety of English. Also hopefully it can help make English language education more effective.

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