HUGO SCHUCHARDT'S VIEW OF SIMPLIFICATION
IN PIDGIN AND CREOLE LANGUAGES

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The origin and nature of pidgin and creole languages has been subjected to more or less intense investigation since the 1880's by linguists and other social scientists. Almost everyone who has worked with these languages has been struck by their typological similarity to each other and by the predictable grammatical alterations they show with respect to the grammatical structures of the languages involved in their formation

Thus, phonologically they tend toward a CV(CV) syllable structure, tend to avoid consonant clusters, prefer a single r/1 liquid, etc. Lexically, the total roster of items is greatly reduced, with compensating polysemy. Syntactically, the functors of the target languages tend to disappear, the role of the contentors being augmented. Thus we see the articles, prepositions, and particles of various types in the target languages being eliminated and nouns, verbs, and adjectives gaining in syntactic importance by assuming functions of deixis, case relationship, and verbal auxiliary.

In the process of pidginization, let us define the source language or languages (L_s) as those spoken natively by the lower caste in an emerging relationship of slavery, indenture, contractual labor, or commercial transaction. The target language or languages (L_t) are those spoken by the dominant elite, who are directly or indirectly responsible for the societal disruption which caused L_t (or a pidginized meta-version of L_t) to become a model for second language learning by the lower caste. In this context, the term simplification will be defined as those typological similarities which characterize pidgin and creole languages as a group, and which contrast them with both L_s and L_t.

Since the 1880's, it has been recognized that the typological similarities in pidgins and creoles are explicable either by assuming 1) genetic relationship, whether in the traditional family-tree model or, more recently, by the interbranch magic of relexification, or 2) parallel development circumscribed by

universal physiological, psychological, or societal constraints.
These constraints have been variously termed the rules of contras-
tive and interference linguistics, universals of language contact,
the "simple register" of a language (Todd 1974 46, Ferguson 1971
143), the "inner form" of a language (Wilhelm von Humboldt,
Schuchardt), the deep-structure-recovery hypothesis (Bickerton
1975 170), and so on.

The great flare up of interest in pidgins and creoles in the
1880's and 1890's was partly in reaction to the absolutist position
in diachronic phonology maintained by the Neogrammarians. One of
the most severe critics of the Neogrammarians was Hugo Schuchardt,
an extremely industrious and insightful author whose works can
still be read with profit today. Schuchardt wrote extensively on
pidgin and creole languages in the 35 years preceding World War I.
Aside from the 9 Creole Studies of the 1880's and 1890's, he
wrote penetrating analyses of the Lingua Franca (1909) and Sara-
makkan English Creole in Surinam (1914). He was one of the few
creolists who studied the problem of simplification from a broad,
comparative point of view--something which might be called today
a "social ontogeny" of pidginization He assembled a large number
of case studies available either in print or in manuscript, or
for which data could be obtained through correspondence. The find-
ings from these studies exercised considerable influence on the
work of such scholars as Herskovits, Reinecke, Valkhoff, Hall, and
Bickerton.

Schuchardt was always careful not to engage in speculation
not warranted by (or far removed from) his data. From the outset
he rejected the extreme position taken by Adolfo Coelho

"The Romance language based creole dialects, Indo-Portuguese,
and the like owe their origin to the operation of psychological or
physiological laws that are everywhere the same, and not to the
influence of the former languages of the peoples among whom these
dialects are found. .   the essential traits of these dialects
are everywhere the same, notwithstanding differences of race,
climate, geographic distances, and even the period of history in-
volved. Thus, for example, one would look in vain within Indo-
Portuguese for any influence whatsoever of Tamil or Singhalese.
In the Portuguese Creole of Macao the formation of the plural by
reduplication of the singular <u>could</u> be attributed to Chinese in-
fluence, but this process is so rudimentary or basic that no con-
clusion whatever can be drawn from it. In the dialect of the
island of Sant' Iago <u>muito muito</u> is a superlative" (Coelho 1880
195)

Schuchardt's procedure was approximately as follows
1) Identify L_s and L_t. Labels for specific languages or language
groupings may then be used as a compound designation of a pidgin
or creole. L_s is the first term of the compound, L_t the last   For
example, Anglo-Indian would mean that English is the source
language and one or several Indic languages the target   Indian-
English would mean the opposite. Similarly, the term Tagalo-
Spanish means that Spanish is the target, in Hispano-Tagalog the
reverse holds true (Schuchardt 1891 286 ff.)
2) Perform a comparison analysis of L_s and L_t for identifica-
tion of patterns of errors or interference which constrain simpli-
fication   As far as possible, simplification is to be attributed
to specific language interference. Schuchardt identifies 3 levels
of interference
         a) the superficial level (simplification of pronunciation),
         b) the mechanical level (simplification of lexicon),
         c) the mental level (simplification of inner form)
(Schuchardt 1883 125).

Schuchardt then proceeds to set up a hierarchy of difficulty
based upon the inner form of L_s and L_t. Thus, for example, if
L_1 has Y rules and L_2 has Y+1 rules, the result of any process of
pidginization composed of L_1 and L_2 will favor the inner form of
L_1 for this feature. Schuchardt illustrates this in the passive
rule of Philippine Creole Spanish, where Tagalog (and Ilocano)
are L_s and Spanish L_t. Tagalog has a rule which requires passivi-
zation of an active sentence when the object NP is definite.
Spanish has no such rule. Thus, "a Spaniard says mata (tú) esta
gallina ['kill this chicken'], just as he says mata (tú) una
gallina ['kill a chicken'], and this will not be difficult for a
Tagalog to learn, it would be much harder for a Spaniard to dis-
tinguish between the Tagalog equivalent pataín mo itóng manúc
['let this chicken be killed by you'] and matáy ca nang isáng
manúc ['you kill a chicken'] "Schuchardt 1883 130).

Phenomena which Coelho regards as universals of pidginiza-
tion, Schuchardt tries to account for on a case-by-case basis   Re-
duplication and lack of copula are characteristic of Tagalog and
thus of Philippine Creole Spanish. Schuchardt sees no need of
further explanation despite the occurrence of these characteris-
tics in many pidgins and creoles worldwide, a fact which he was
surely aware of (Schuchardt 1883 136-138). Nevertheless, he main-
tains that "it is an entirely different matter when a German
[trying to talk Italian] says questo non bono 'this not good',

as opposed to a Tagalog [trying to talk Spanish]no bueno ese; in
the former case the copula will appear in the second dozen vocabu-
lary items, in the latter case it will still be missing even in the
most fluent speech" (Schuchardt 1883 142).

3)   After all such explanations are exhausted, step 3 is finally
invoked.   This involves what more recently have been called "devel-
opmental errors" in second language acquisition.   Schuchardt calls
them "phenomena which accompany the acquisition of every foreign
language" (1883 142).   By way of illustration, he cites the ten-
dency for enclitics and proclitics of L_t to disappear in L_p, the
pidginized product.   Thus, we have Philippine Creole Spanish ¿ cosa?
for Standard Spanish ¿ que cosa? 'what?, what do you say?', or the
elimination of the weak stressed reflexive particle se in a sen-
tence like ya conservá este lengua 'this language has been pre-
served' (Schuchardt 1883 142).   More generally, Schuchardt explains
the tendency for articles and prepositions to disappear in pidgin-
ization as a developmental error.

      (Incidentally, a recent study of pidginization involving
Foreign Workers' German as spoken by Southern Europeans and Turks
in Germany showed that even in those cases where both the target
and source languages possessed definite and indefinite articles,
the articles failed to appear in the pidginized product, evidence
which supports Schuchardt's "clitic theory" [Gilbert and Orlović,
ms.])

      As Schuchardt continued his detailed case studies of Romance
and Germanic-based pidgins and creoles, he was driven to find a
better (or supplementary) explanation for the similarities of simp-
lification in pidginization.   By 1909, the year his monograph on
the Lingua Franca was published, he had moved closer to Coelho's
position, but instead of putting emphasis on the learner, he now
concentrated on the "teacher "

      "All radical simplification (Radebrechen) of a language is a
product of its native speakers, it is very similar to the way child
language is based upon the simplifications which adults use when
speaking to children (Ammensprache).   Or if I may use a metaphor,
it is not the foreigners who chip out single stones from a nice,
tight building in order to build themselves miserable hovels, but
it is the building's owners themselves who hand them the pieces
for this purpose" (Schuchardt 1909 443).   He now approves of
Coelho's statement that ". .a people of whatever country, finding
itself in contact with strangers who do not speak its language,
reduce it too (tambem), so to speak instinctively, stripping it of
its grammatical forms in a way characteristic of the creole

dialects" (Coelho 1881'67).

The common use in L_p of an invariable infinitive for the verb
and an invariable singular for the noun, Schuchardt sees as the
doing of the European teachers. However because of the various
grammatical differences in the pidgin and creole languages known
to him, he conceived of simplification as representing a selection
from a given range of possibilities   He left open the problem
of whether all languages have a simple register and what the con-
straints on this might be (Schuchardt 1909 444-445).

In his 1914 monograph on Saramakkan English Creole in Suri-
nam, he again touched on this problem   Here he edges still closer
to Coelho by making teacher and learner jointly responsible for
simplification. The language learning frames or scenarios--to
use Fillmore's terminology--are very different in the genesis of
a pidgin as contrasted to tutored or untutored second language
learning, which proceeds in a "normal manner," (whatever that
means). There is an overwhelming need to communicate, and fast
"[The European teacher] strips the functors [alles Besondere]
from the European language, and the non-European learner disre-
gards or suppresses them. The two meet on a middle line!' (Schu-
hardt 1914 II).

For Schuchardt, the Negro Creoles with Dutch, English, French,
Portuguese, and Spanish L_t's are similar not because of a common
genetic origin--he was well aware of the considerable differences
between the African L_s's--but because of a parallelism due to the
similar social and psychological frames of language teaching and
learning   The same processes also account for the similarities
of the Negro Creoles as a group as against the non-Negro Creoles
(Schuchardt 1914 V).

On the whole, Schuchardt continued to favor culturally trans-
mitted mechanisms of simplification (if one views foreigners' talk
registers as being largely particularistic, not universal). The
framework of inquiry and the approach to research that Schuchardt
had established by 1914 has characterized most pidgin and creole
studies since that date. The many new case studies with large
amounts of published data (see for example Hancock 1971, and now
Reinecke et al. forthcoming) and more sophisticated theoretical
frameworks provided by various linguistic theories have contribu-
ted disappointingly little toward an explanatory theory of simpli-
fication   Derek Bickerton, for example, in what is surely one of
the most insightful books on pidgin and creole languages to appear
in many years, describes the simplifications observed in the

English Creole of Guyana as ". .owe[ing] their nature to the dis-
tance between the polar grammars of the continuum [the basilect and
acrolect]. .. the remoteness of the underlying basilectal grammar
from standard English could derive from one of two origins either
the retention of at least part of a pan-West African or at least
pan-Kwa underlying system [the African-base hypothesis, and the
one which Schuchardt surely would have supported, given the nature
of Bickerton's evidence], or the surfacing of some yet more abstract
system from a level at which Kwa and English (or, perhaps, any pair
of languages) would be indistinguishable" (Bickerton 1975 167).

This second explanation, the deep-structure-recovery hypo-
thesis, fits very nearly with what Coelho suggested as early as
1880, and it most probably would have been rejected by Schuchardt
To the end of his life he continued to advocate the strictly empi-
rical approach of interference and developmental error analysis,
followed by teaching and learning frame analysis, to use current
terminology. Similarities of simplification in situations where
genetic relationship is highly unlikely are seen as parallel devel-
opment, which may rest ultimately on some kind of universals, but
this must be shown empirically

Bickerton goes on to say that despite the massive amount of
data so far collected, "...the evidence for either hypothesis is
extremely scant" (1975 167), although he then presents some con-
siderations which incline him "slightly" toward the African-base
hypothesis.

The case studies which underlie the work of Schuchardt,
Coelho, Bickerton, and many others are all concerned with develop-
ing what could be called a "social ontogeny" of pidginization. A
promising new line of research concentrates more on the individual
or on small groups, on longitudinal studies of untutored second
language learning, especially when such learning leads to pidgini-
zation (e g., Milon ms , Schumann 1975). Pioneering work done by
Charles Ferguson has shown that the simple register of English can
be studied empirically and experimentally (Ferguson 1971, ms)
These and other approaches now need to be extended to target
languages other than English.

Although the tradition established by Schuchardt has been
essentially preserved, we now need to go beyond it--a develop-
ment which he himself would probably have welcomed. After all,
his over-riding concern was a better understanding of the nature
of language, and that, presumably, is our goal also.

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