

7 Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis, as presented in chapter 1, was twofold; to examine evidence of substrate influence in Kriol resulting from transfer of features at an earlier stage of development, as well as to test the suitability of the Transfer Constraints approach as a means of accounting for which substrate features occur in a creole. Each of these aims will be considered in turn, in terms of their outcomes.

7.1 Substrate influences in Kriol

There has been substantial evidence of substrate influence found in Kriol. Reduplication, for example, is used in Kriol for the following purposes: to indicate a progressive activity when used on the verb (see chapter 3); to indicate intensity of an adjective (see chapter 6); and to indicate number of nominals, particularly those that are inanimate (see also chapter 6). In each case these feature characteristics have been shown to be a result of influence from the substrate languages, which all make use of reduplication in these ways. The functions of determiners in Kriol also display clear evidence of substrate influence. Kriol determiners, for example, classify nouns according number (see chapters 3 and 6) and discourse status (see chapter 3), as well as being used to indicate definiteness on proper nouns (see chapter 3). These feature characteristics have been influenced by the shared noun class feature characteristics in the substrate languages.

The three number and inclusive/exclusive categories can be understood to be the result of substrate influence, as is the punctual/continuous distinction, the use of future and potential moods and the Realis/Irrealis distinction in negative marking in the TMA system (see chapter 5). The range of semantic roles in use in Kriol prepositions, as well as the fact that the goal/location and possession/purpose prepositions express two semantic roles with the one form, are also both shown to be the result of shared substrate

feature characteristics having influenced the creole (see chapter 5). Other nominal modifying features in Kriol that appear to be the result of substrate influence follow: the use of a demonstrative adverbial construction as a temporal connective; centripetal/non-centripetal distinction in demonstrative adverbs; a postadjectival adverbial marker; the use of possession/purpose preposition with following nominal to indicate possession; and distinction between human, inanimate and higher animate nominals in number marking. Finally, both prenominal and postnominal number markers that express a sense of 'collectivity' (see chapter 6) and separate forms to express reciprocal and reflexive (see chapter 3), were not expected to have been found in Kriol. They do in fact occur in the language and are most likely the result of substrate influence, although further research is required to determine why these features appear to have previously transferred.

An important finding in this thesis is that Kriol shows evidence of the transfer of semantic categories. While chapters 3 and 4 were primarily concerned with the possibility of structural transfer from the verb and nominal complexes respectively, chapter 5 shifted the focus to semantic category transfer. Seven features were identified in relation to the semantic categories inherent in the pronominal, TMA and case marking systems of the substrate languages, which were expected to have been retained during levelling of the stabilising pidgin. Evidence of four of them were found in Kriol, which suggests that semantic category features were transferred to the preceding pidgin and due to high frequency use were retained during levelling and their influence is found in Kriol today.

It was also found in chapter 5 that substrate transfer at even earlier stages of pidgin development, in either New South Wales or Queensland, may also affect substrate influence in Kriol. This was discussed in relation to the *bala* feature (see chapters 5 and 6). Koch (2000) has shown, for example, that the use of constructions using *bala* may have been influenced by substrate languages in New South Wales, particularly in relation to its use with adjectives. As such previous substrate transfer may have resulted in the construction, *ADJbala*, being employed as a nominal due to influence of substrate

languages, which treat adjectives as nominals (along with nouns). This NSW/QLD Pidgin feature may then have diffused into NT Pidgin, which explains the existence of the frozen form nouns that carry this ending in Kriol. Alternatively, the *dubala* ending is found on NSW/QLD Pidgin pronouns and as such it can be expected that this feature diffused into NT Pidgin. Due to substrate influence in the Roper River environment, however, the *dubala* ending is used to represent most dual pronouns, which are now found in Kriol. In both cases it has been shown that it is also necessary to consider NSW/QLD Pidgin features.

7.2 Transfer Constraints approach

The Transfer Constraints approach has provided a comprehensive framework for systematically comparing the substrate languages and Kriol, in order to identify substrate transfer that may have previously taken place and evidence of the resulting substrate influence in Kriol.

One of the real benefits of using the reinforcement principle of frequency, apart from formulating feature transfer predictions, is that it takes as its starting point the substrate languages. As pointed out in chapter 1, previous methodology in this field, other than the Relexification Hypothesis, first described the pidgin or creole and only those features that did not appear to originate in English were analysed in terms of substrate transfer. This does not adequately address features that did not transfer nor provide any increased understanding of the processes that are at work during levelling of the stabilising pidgin. This revised methodology of exploring the substrate language features first, allows the researcher to determine the shared core substrate features that could be expected to have been retained during levelling. Furthermore, in terms of the process of levelling, frequency of use in the contact environment has been shown to be an important factor in whether or not features are retained.

According to those such as Thomason and Kaufman (1988), features common to the substrate languages would be expected to be found in the creole. As has been shown in this thesis, they are, however, often not. This is where the real advantage of the Transfer Constraints approach lies. Focussing on transfer at an earlier stage of pidgin development, the Transfer Constraints approach makes predictions about what can be expected in the creole, based on shared core features in the substrate languages. More importantly, however, it can also explain why particular features did not transfer, or more accurately, why they were constrained from transfer at an earlier stage of pidgin development. These features may have been constrained from transfer due of a lack of ‘somewhere to transfer to’ in the superstrate language because there may not be a perceptually salient morpheme in the superstrate that could be interpreted as having the function of a grammatical morpheme in the substrate languages and/or because there may not be a congruent morpheme that occurs in a similar syntactic position.

The Transfer Constraints approach was successful in this thesis in accounting for the shared core substrate features that were not found in Kriol. Of the twenty-seven predicted features that were expected to be found in Kriol, because of their high frequency in the substrate languages, seven were not found in Kriol. Of these seven features, six can be explained as having been constrained due to a lack of ‘somewhere to transfer to’. For example, the pronominal prefixes in all the substrate languages (see chapter 3), allow for both subject and object to be marked in prefix position on the verb. In English, however, there are no perceptually salient forms that occur in congruent SOV constructions. As such this feature is constrained from transfer to the preceding pidgin. Similarly, all the substrate languages employ a postnominal case marking system (see chapter 4). While a related feature is expected in Kriol, it is not found because the feature transfer was constrained from transfer at an earlier stage of pidgin development. This is because there are no perceptually salient forms that occur in congruent constructions in English that could be interpreted as postnominal case markers.

One of the main findings in regard to the Transfer Constraints approach in this thesis is the need to expand its application to include analyses of semantic and structural aspects

of each feature concurrently. While chapters 3 and 4 were primarily concerned with structural transfer, some also involved semantic aspects of each feature. Those that did so provided insights into feature transfer, such as, reciprocal marking, Progressive aspect marking and the position of the Determiners. For those features where only structural transfer was discussed, such as case and TMA suffixes and pronominal prefixes, no structural transfer was found. However, in chapter 5 it was found that there is evidence of transfer of semantic categories for each of these three features. It was therefore suggested that structural and semantic aspects of each feature should be addressed concurrently to provide insight into the extent of transfer in each case. This innovation was applied in chapter 6 and was successful in exploring instances of possible semantic category and structural transfer of nominal modification that have influenced Kriol.

Another innovation in the methodology of application of the Transfer Constraints approach in this thesis has been to utilise the results of feature transfer in regard to the central features of a language, in devising predictions of other feature transfer. The substrate language feature of case suffixes, for example, was presented and discussed in chapter 4, where it was found that no structural transfer of an equivalent postnominal case system had taken place as there was no evidence of such a feature in Kriol. As previously mentioned, this feature was constrained from transfer due to a lack of perceptually salient forms in congruent constructions in English. In chapter 5, however, it was shown that the shared core categories of semantic roles expressed by the case markers were, however, transferred to the pronominal prepositions of the preceding pidgin. It was shown, for example, that the substrate languages' genitive/purposive case marker influenced the inclusion of the possession/purpose preposition of Kriol. So, when in chapter 6 the use of the genitive case was discussed in relation to marking possession in the substrate languages, these previous findings could be utilised to form accurate feature predictions. It was already apparent, therefore, that the construction would most likely call for the pronominal use of the possession/purpose preposition to mark possession in Kriol, which was found to be the case. Once again this innovation in methodology may be included in future applications of the Transfer Constraints approach.

7.3 Other findings

Previous sociohistorical research, as well as new information on the development of pidgins and creoles in the Roper River region was presented in chapter 2. One of the most significant findings from that chapter is that Kriol is expected to have emerged gradually throughout the Roper River region, and not in one generation. The stage of bilingualism by Kriol speakers is clear evidence for this, which was only distinguishable by taking into consideration the role of the pastoral industry in the development of the creole, which hitherto was only considered in relation to the pidgin development.

Another finding from chapter 2 is the identification of the time periods when transfer and levelling are expected to have occurred. Transfer is most likely to have occurred during the ‘station’ phase of contact (1900s–1930s) when the already stabilised NT Pidgin was expanding. This is the period in which most speakers were bilingual in their ancestral languages and the pidgin. This clearly supports Siegel (2003), which suggests that transfer is most likely to occur during a bilingual expansion phase such as this, rather than Siegel (1999), which suggested that transfer occurred in the early formative years of a pidgin. This thesis therefore provides support for this modification in the Transfer Constraints approach. Levelling is most likely to have occurred during the ‘community’ phase of contact (1930s–1960s), which highlights how recently this creole emerged in Australia.

Another finding from this thesis is in regard to the possibility of structural transfer between agglutinative and isolating languages. The Roper River substrate languages are highly agglutinative, while Kriol is in fact isolating, although it can allow for some affixation. In terms of structural transfer, the claim that fixed affix position could be transferred to word order position in the creole was tested in chapters 3 and 4 and it appears that there is no clear evidence that such structural transfer occurs alone, without semantic considerations. Yet all possible cases of feature transfer required information as

to the expected position of a feature in relation to the head of the phrase, as used in chapters 5 and 6, in order to discuss congruence in relation to the superstrate language. As noted in the previous section, the structural and semantic aspects of each feature are best analysed concurrently and as such structural transfer is best discussed in terms of congruence. It is an important finding, however, that congruence continues to play an important role between agglutinate and isolating languages as in the Australian context.

7.4 Further research

It has become clearly apparent that more detailed grammatical descriptions are required, both for the substrate languages and Kriol. Comparative analyses, the likes of which are presented in this study, are only possible if such research is available. Particular features that have been identified in this thesis that require further descriptive research are: reciprocal and reflexive constructions, adjectival constructions, demonstrative constructions, deictic measure, Whole Part apposition, proprietive constructions and TMA categories. Further research into substrate transfer in the areas of verbal modification, phonological and prosodic features, as well as discourse structure are also imperative; the results from which can be expected to be most fruitful.

As mentioned in chapter 1, there are numerous regional varieties of Kriol. These all require research in order to determine their stage of development as well as evidence of substrate transfer. It would be particularly pertinent to develop a feature list of the substrate transfer that could be expected, based on the results of this thesis, and compare it to these other regional varieties of Kriol and their respective substrate languages. Inconsistencies especially may provide greater insights. Such a feature list could also be compared to material on NSW/QLD Pidgin, in order to more accurately determine when substrate transfer may have taken place.

Finally, the application of the Transfer Constraints approach to other pidgins and creoles is required. Research into substrate transfer, in the field of pidgin and creole studies,

must account for features that show no evidence of transfer as well as those that do. As has been shown in this thesis, the Transfer Constraints approach can do just this, especially by describing constraints on transfer. Only in this way will the actual processes involved in substrate transfer and language contact environments be more fully understood.

Appendix 1

Refer to Table 10: Examples of L2 contact language (1908-1918) p.68

Item 1.

From NTAS NTRS F790. 17865/1908.

Mission Station

Roper River

December 27th 1908.

Yesterday I been catching fish with one fellow lubra, Minnie. Other two lubras, Nellie and Dinah sit down alonga camp, to water garden for Master. Dogs sit alonga camp too. Minnie been sleep alonga top, not by water edge. I no hearem black fellow come up, me lookem alonga water alonga my line. Spear come alonga my rib – I yell. Black fellow been killem me. Jump up I see Henry run for chuck spear along me. I Sawyer Henry, Johnny (“Borrooloola Johnny”) Jack (who is Lindsay’s brother and who belonga Cathie) George old man Mickie who threw spear at me in water but missed. Henry threw spear into my knee. Then one spear skinnem my shoulder. I not see Harry and not see Dick. Not see who throw spear alonga my rib – the first throw. Swam over to other side, walk slow fellow. I not run gut come out plenty. Tiger and Henry swam after me to killem me more. I jump into river and hide in reeds alonga bank. Him two fellow Tiger and Henry walk alonga bank - but no findem me. Then I sneak up river bank and walk slow fellow to Station, other side I sit down. By then the boat come over and fetch me. When the spear hit me the ? right up on top – dinnertime.

We hereby declare the above to be a substantially correct reproduction of the story told today by Toby, we being all present at the recital. No leading questions or suggestion were given. signed J F. G. Huthnance, R. D. Joynt, Charles Sharp and James Noble.

Item 2.

From Lewis (ed.) 1998:72

‘He could speak very good Pidgeon English and he said,

“What name?” (What is it?) ...

“What name you call him?” I replied, “cigar!”

He answered, “No bloody fear, suck easy!” He must have thought I said, “suck hard!”

Item 3.

From Joynt (1918:17)

“Me been go alonga camp; me been taken slate, pencil. Me been catchem Dennie and been yabber, yabber alonga slate. Me been makem A B C plenty time. Dennie been look hard feller. Byne-by him been talk: ‘Me like makem all-e-same, which way, you savy? ‘Missionary, him teach ‘em me and all about. You come alonga Mission, him teach ‘em you, alla same.’ Dennie been talk, ‘Me like come up,’ so me been bring him alonga dinghy.”

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