

# The Determinant Phrase in the Spanish Interlanguage of Native Speakers of Swahili



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Interlanguage of Native Speakers of Swahili

By

María Landa Buil

Translation into English  
by Wilesse Otten-Annisette

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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To Jairo, Nicolás and Alejandro  
To the memory of my father



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The present study examines the determiner phrase (DP) in the subject (SU), predicate, and direct object (DO) position in the Spanish interlanguage (IL)<sup>1</sup> of four native speakers of Swahili. The features of the DP in this IL are compared with those of Spanish-lexifier Creoles such as Palenquero, Chabacano and Papiamentu. The target language of the participants of this study is Spanish, which constitutes the lexifier of Palenquero, while their L1, a Bantu language, is the substrate of Palenquero. The objectives of this work are to describe the DP of the Swahili-Spanish interlanguage, observe Bantu transference, as well as to determine, in the case of similar contact languages, if adult speakers would carry out comparable processes and create a grammar akin to that of Palenquero. The corpus for this study was gathered through 14 interviews carried out during a 25-month period at the State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania. This work arguably goes beyond existing research in this field since it is the first time that a corpus of this kind has been compiled. Additionally, it is also the first time that a Spanish interlanguage is being compared with Creoles which share the same lexifier or target language (Spanish) and, in the case of Palenquero, the same substrate (Bantu).

Attempts to establish a relationship between research on second language acquisition (SLA) and research into pidginization and creolization are not new and according to Siegel (2006) the possible connections between these areas have been debated for more than a century. Among the major studies which inspired this research is that of Bickerton (1977), a renowned expert in Creole languages who, in his proposal entitled the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis, distinguished between pidginization (creation of a pidgin) and creolization (creation of a Creole). The former is defined as an SLA process with restricted input while the latter is considered to be the acquisition of a first language

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<sup>1</sup> The term interlanguage was coined by Selinker (1972). For the purpose of this work, the definition of an interlanguage provided by Liceras (1992) will be used. Liceras defines an IL as a structured and idiosyncratic linguistic system which is developed by a language learner during foreign language acquisition.

(FLA) with restricted input where the children of pidgin speakers and the so-called language bioprogram must be involved.

Schumann (1978), using features of pidgins as a point of reference, proposes the pidginization hypothesis of SLA in his analysis of data from the English spoken by Alberto, a Hispanic emigrant to the United States. He indicates that, after 11 months of residence in the United States, Alberto's English showed evidence of fossilization features similar to those of a pidgin. According to Schumann (1978) pidginization is any form of reduced or simplified speech used by people who speak different languages to facilitate communication. He also argues that it may be an initial stage of SLA. The grammatical structure of pidgins is characterized by a lack of inflectional morphology and the tendency to eliminate grammatical transformations. In support of the view of Kay and Sankoff (1974), Schumann further mentions the possibility that pidgins and other types of incomplete competence, such as child language, SLA, bilingualism and aphasia, when compared to natural languages, reveal in a more direct manner the underlying universal structures and processes of linguistic competence.

Andersen (1981), in his comparison of a study of 24 speakers of Hawaiian English pidgin (Bickerton and Odo 1976) with Schumann's (1978) research on Alberto, concludes that pidginization constitutes a feature of all the initial stages of SLA. Valdman (1983) also observes parallels between creolization and SLA. Although creolization is a phenomenon which develops over more than one generation, while a second language is acquired by an individual, Valdman maintains that from a psycholinguistic perspective these two processes do not differ considerably. He attributes this to the use of linguistic and cognitive universals, despite differences in terms of social factors which promote or inhibit the acquisition of the target language. He further states that creolization occurs when social conditions cause the learner to develop a language which is partially independent of the target language. This new language, in special social situations, serves as the principal medium of communication and cohesion of a recently formed community. However, in SLA, social conditions may or may not lead to the acquisition of the target language.

After the boom of the 70s and the early 80s, of which the above cited studies serve as good examples, discussions between SLA researchers and Creole language scholars seemed to have subsided for a time. However, in recent times the intellectual exchanges between both areas of research have regained momentum. This has been evident in the articles and studies done by several individuals, an example of which is the monographic work

*Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (2003) featuring a preface by Kouwenberg and Patrick entitled “Reconsidering the Role of SLA in Pidginization and Creolization”. Another recent example is *L2 Acquisition and Creole Genesis* (Lefebvre, White and Jourdan 2006). In the introduction of this work the editors state that the articles contained therein describe scenarios in which speakers must find linguistic solutions to contact situations. Although language contact situations which give rise to the creation of a pidgin or Creole and the “normal” acquisition of an L2 exhibit great differences, these writers propose that the cognitive processes involved in both cases could be similar or at least comparable. Among these processes are simplification, relexification and transfer during the initial stage, restructuring and reanalysis during the developmental stage and fossilization in the final stage. In addition to highlighting the differences between, and similarities of, both systems, it is also important to attempt to find linguistic solutions for both and it is in this regard that it is believed that comparisons will enrich the problem-solving process.

This present study is underpinned by the proposals and analysis of all the previous researchers and was developed during this new phase of discussion between both areas of research. It is in the form of a longitudinal study, as speech samples were collected over a period of 25 months from four native speakers of Swahili studying Spanish at the State University of Zanzibar. Data collection for the study commenced in the second semester of the Spanish language programme (April 2006) and ended in the sixth and final semester (May 2008). In order to ensure a deeper level of analysis the scope of the study was limited to the DP since this element in Bantu languages has aroused great interest since 9 different noun classes exist in this language group with each class being marked by different prefixes for singular and plural. These prefixes in turn agree with the prefixes of the determiner, the adjective and the verb (Mohamed 2001).

From the data collected the DP in subject, direct object and predicate position was isolated and analysed. Swahili is a null subject language with no articles. It also possesses features expressing gender and number, and EPP<sup>2</sup> with raising of the noun in the DP with adjective (Adj) (the noun raises to NUM<sup>3</sup>) and in the DP with noun and explicit determiner (D)<sup>4</sup> (the noun raises to D). In analysing the IL, the following elements were examined: the presence or absence of explicit Ds, especially articles,

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<sup>2</sup> EPP is the acronym for “extended projection principle”.

<sup>3</sup> NUM, here, and GEN, below, are used to refer to the features of number and gender as well as functional categories.

<sup>4</sup> D is used to refer to the determiner as well as the position of the modifier.

functional categories such as GEN and NUM, and the strong features or EPP feature which legitimize movement of the noun to the position of the specifier (see Chapter Four). This was done by observing the explicit morphological realization of gender and number on the D, the noun (N) and the Adj, as well as the raising of the N in the DPs with Adj to the functional category NUM, resulting in the N-Adj order (see Chapter Three, section 3.2, illustration 7a and 7b) and the raising of the N to D resulting in the order N-D.

This present study will attempt to not only answer questions related to the logical problem of language acquisition (what elements are available to the learner when he/she is faced with the acquisition of a new language (Chapter Two, section 2.2.1.), but also resolve the problem of language acquisition development (how it changes over time). Therefore, the longitudinal development of those features of the DP found in the IL which differ from those of standard Spanish will be observed to determine if denativization or decreolization—that is, a development toward the accepted norms of the Spanish language—has resulted. In relation to the logical problem of language acquisition, the features and combinations of features of the L1 Swahili DP will be examined to determine if they have been transferred to the IL, and to determine whether features of the L2 English are present in the Spanish IL (L3) of the participants. In addition, traces of the Swahili nominal class system in the DP of the Spanish IL will be sought.

As already explained, another objective of this study is to compare the characteristics of the DP in the collected linguistic corpus, that is, in the IL of the language learners, with the features of the DP of Spanish-lexifier Creoles, such as Palenquero from Colombia, Papiamentu from the Dutch Antilles and Chabacano from the Philippines. Of special interest are the features of the Palenquero DP since, according to Lorenzino (2000), its pluralization and morphosyntactic features seem to be greatly influenced by a Bantu<sup>5</sup> substrate, the language family to which the L1 of the

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<sup>5</sup> The Bantu languages comprise 500 languages spoken in Africa belonging to a branch of the Benue-Congo language family, a sub-family of Niger-Congo languages. They are spoken throughout a very extensive area which includes south Cameroon, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Twelve of these Bantu languages are spoken by millions, with Swahili being the most widely spoken; it is spoken by 5 million people as a first language and by 30 million as a second language. It is also used as a lingua franca in a significant number of African countries. Guthrie (1948) classified all Bantu languages and tried to reconstruct the *proto-bantú* or proto-language of this



participants belongs. In addition, the Palenquero DP possesses the EPP feature with raising of the N to the D category in the case of a DP with a possessive determiner (see Chapter Three). In table 1-1 a comparison of the two language contact situations which will be analysed can be seen.

**Table 1-1**

Swahili L1 + English L2	Bantu substrate
interlanguage	Palenquero
Spanish L3/target language	Spanish lexifier/superstrate

This comparison may arguably shed some light on the relationship between SLA and creolization, as well as the logical problem of language acquisition. If the features of the DP in the interlanguage of the selected students coincide with those of Palenquero, bearing a high degree of idealization given the evident difference in both language situations, it can be postulated that, with similar contact languages, adult speakers who created the pidgin which gave rise to Palenquero would have created a similar grammar to that of the participants in this study and that this was the foundation of the creole language. This would permit an argument in support of the importance of the substrate in the creation of Creoles and of the L1 in SLA. On the other hand, if it is observed that the participants' grammar coincides with those of other Creoles which do not share a common substrate with the L1 of the participants in this study, Bickerton's position regarding marked characteristics as a result of the bioprogram can be supported. Likewise, it can be argued that nativization processes, developed during the genesis of pidgins and Creoles as a result of restricted access to the input, are also implicated in SLA.

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language family. According to this writer Bantu languages originated 2000 years ago in East Nigeria and Cameroon, and from there they spread to the south and east of the African continent. The majority of the languages of this group form sentences with the basic SVO sequence. The most prominent grammatical feature of Bantu languages is the extensive use of prefixes and infixes. Each noun belongs to a class and each language can have approximately 10 noun classes in total. For some writers such as Carsten (2006) these classes are really grammatical genders. Gender is indicated by a prefix on the noun, as well as on the adjectives, determiners and verbs which agree with it. The plural varies for each gender and is indicated by a change in prefix.

In his bioprogram theory, Bickerton did not include the SLA of adults (a concept related to Chomsky's notion of universal grammar (UG)<sup>6</sup>). According to this author pidgins are created through SLA processes carried out by adults and this constitutes a different phenomenon to creolization, which involves the intervention of children and first language acquisition during which the innate processes of the bioprogram would be carried out (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.1). Nevertheless, it is believed that adults have access to the principles of UG, although it is evident that the manner in which this access occurs is not exactly the same as in the case of first language acquisition. Following Liceras (1996), Schwartz and Sprouse (1994, 1996) and White (1985, 1986), this study assumes that, although at early stages adult learners may have access to the UG through their L1, their parameters can be reset. Resetting parameters also involves adding features which are absent in the L1 or reassembling features in different combinations to those possible in the L1 (see Lardiere 2007 and 2009 in chapters Two and Four).

According to Mather (2006) it is necessary to distinguish between the mental process of SLA (associated with I-language, defined by Chomsky in 1986)<sup>7</sup> and the linguistic result of that process (E-language). The distinction between I-Creole and E-Creole was made by DeGraff (1999a). According to Mather, in terms of I-language, creolization can be explained to a great extent by SLA processes; in other words, for this author, the origin of Creoles can be viewed as a special case of SLA which occurs under unique historical, demographic and social conditions.

In this present work the characteristics of the DP of the IL of four adults are compared with those of the DPs of three Creoles. This is

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<sup>6</sup> Chomsky (1975) defines UG as "the system of principles, conditions and rules which are elements or properties of all human languages". Chomsky (1981) added that this UG characterizes the pre-linguistic stage of children. Bickerton maintained that his bioprogram theory differed from that proposed by Chomsky; however later on he recognized that both theories were similar and therefore compatible (Bickerton cited in Macedo 1986).

<sup>7</sup> In a controversial footnote, Chomsky (1986) stated that ILs do not represent I-languages or internal languages. Many writers disagreed with this statement. Liceras (1996) opined that ILs, although they are not exclusively reflective of the options allowed by UG, are natural languages because they are realized as mental representations whose foundations are the established principles and categories from previous linguistic experience. Like her, we think that L2 speakers have intuitions (more or less indefinite) which enable them to acquire properties of the L2 which are not adequately specified in the data, which shows some level of access to the UG be it direct or indirect. Liceras also thinks that access to UG and the setting of parameters or assemblage of features must be distinguished.

validated by Bickerton's notion of distinguishing between a pidgin and a Creole. The IL of the speakers is the product of an individual grammar with a very high level of variability while pidgins would be the collective output of different ILs which is then shared by a speech community as a form of communication. The evolution of a pidgin into a Creole must include a process of L1 acquisition so that the resulting grammar does not possess the variability of an IL. In this regard, this study differs from the views of Lefebvre et al. (2006) and Mather (2006), since they state that there is no distinction between the pidgin and Creole (at least with regard to the mental processes involved in the creation of both) and that there is a pidgin-Creole *continuum*. Although it is possible to find features of Palenquero in the IL, this does not mean that Palenquero could have been created by adult learners, rather the adults who created the pidgin from which Palenquero was derived used SLA resources and some of the characteristics of this pidgin remain in the Creole.

To further analyse this, Chapter two discusses in detail the relationship between SLA research and studies on the origin of Creoles—on one hand, relevant cases in which theories of pidginization and creolization have been used to analyse studies on acquisition and, on the other hand, studies in which the findings on acquisition are analysed in an attempt to explain the genesis of pidgins and Creoles. Additionally, a review is carried out of different positions which researchers take regarding Bickerton's concept and those of other scholars such as Lefebvre, White, and Jourdan (2006).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, hypotheses such as those of Schwartz and Sprouse (1994, 1996) and their Full Transfer/Full Access (*FT/FA*) model are discussed. According to this model adults who acquire an L2 have full access to UG, although their starting point will differ from that of a child who is learning an L1 since in the case of the adult there is also full transfer of the structure of L1 sentences (or of the functional categories). Additionally, in this chapter the theories on the possible processes involved in SLA and the creation of pidgins and Creoles are analysed. These theories include the role of the substrate and the L1, relexification (Lefebvre 1998) and transfer (Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996), the role of default options, UG and the bioprogram (Bickerton 1977; De Graff 2005), the role of the lexifier and the L2 (Chaudenson 2001) as well as some "mixed" or neutral positions, such as those of DeGraff (1999) or Mufwene (1990).

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<sup>8</sup> Bickerton differentiates between FLA and SLA, as well as pidgins and Creoles while Lefebvre et al. (2006) consider pidgins and Creoles to be a continuum, and the cognitive processes which form part of the formation of one or the other are in essence the same.

Chapter Three takes the form of a detailed analysis of the characteristics and features of DPs of the languages relevant to this study: Swahili (L1), English (L2), and Spanish (L3), as well as the three Spanish-lexifier Creoles: Palenquero, Papiamentu and Chabacano. In Chapter Four different theories which were proposed to explain the acquisition of the DP during SLA, especially with regard to GEN, NUM and EPP features, are reviewed (Beck 1998; Eubank et al. 1997; Garavito 2008; Garavito and White 2002; Hawkins and Yuet-hung Chan 1997; Lardiere 2005, 2009; Licerias 2006, 2009; Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996). Additionally a number of studies such as those of Parodi, Schwartz, and Clahsen (2004), Sabourin, Stowe, and de Haan (2006) and Jakubowicz and Roulet (2008), which analyse IL data and attempt to debunk the most relevant theories on the acquisition of the above-mentioned features, are examined. Lastly, a brief review of the theory of third language acquisition is done, given that in the case of the participants in this study their second language is English while Spanish is their third language.

Chapter Five details the longitudinal study including the hypotheses emanating from the research questions, the participants' background and related information, the methodology for data collection and the creation of the linguistic corpus. Additionally, in this chapter the data gathered is analysed and the results are presented. Lastly, Chapter Six offers general conclusions and suggestions for future research. The present study ends with the bibliography and two appendices which include a sample of the transcriptions (Appendix A), and the codification system designed for this work, as well as a small sample of a coded transcription (Appendix B).

# CHAPTER TWO

## SLA AND CREOLIZATION

### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter the different theoretical proposals which have sought to establish links between the processes involved in SLA and those present in Creole genesis will be examined. The most renowned theories in both areas of research will be reviewed and analysed in relation to how they have addressed the existence or non-existence of these possible links.

### 2.1 Relationship between Second Language Acquisition and Creolization

As explained in Chapter One, attempts to establish links between SLA and creolization commenced more than a century ago with some level of success being attained during the 70s and the early 80s in studies such as those of Bickerton (1977), Schumann (1978), Andersen (1983) and Valdman (1983), among others. At present, a second wave of success is being experienced in both disciplines, for example, through works such as the 2003 monograph on *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* no. 25, featuring a prologue by Kouwenberg and Patrick. Another noteworthy publication is the 2006 volume edited by Lefebvre, White and Jourdan aimed at reviving exchanges among experts in SLA and creole languages. To date, this publication brings together the most illustrative areas of research and theories on the differences and similarities between SLA and creolization. In this volume, Sprouse (2006) points out that one of the problems affecting collaboration between researchers in SLA and those in creolization is that the former focused on cognitive processes of SLA, while the latter focused on the historical development of creoles. This difference in focus, he argues, has hindered the exchange of ideas between both academic communities. In his article Sprouse goes on to urge experts in both research areas to apprise each other of their respective findings and theoretical positions.

There exist a number of studies seeking to clarify SLA by means of pidginization and creolization, and other works which have attempted to explain Creole genesis using data obtained from studies on SLA. These studies will be reviewed in section 2.1.1.

### **2.1.1 The Theory of Pidginization and Creolization in Second Language Acquisition**

Pidgin and creole speech communities have long served as analogic references for SLA processes. In this section two major SLA studies which were influenced by existing research on the origin of pidgins and Creoles will be reviewed. The section will commence with the study by Schumann (1978), in which he argued that the early stages of SLA exhibit characteristics typical to pidginization, and that language learners who are not acculturated remain at this pidginized stage. This will be followed, in section 2.1.1.2, by a review of the study by Andersen (1983) in which he introduces the concepts of nativization and denativization—processes which he postulates, are evident in both SLA and in the creation of pidgins and Creoles. Lastly, in section 2.1.1.3 the terms “pidginization”, “creolization”, “depidginization” and “decreolization” will be analysed from an SLA perspective.

#### **2.1.1.1 Schumann and the Concept of Pidginization in SLA**

In 1978 Schumann carried out an 11-month longitudinal study on the development of the IL of six native speakers of Spanish who had migrated to the US. One of these immigrants was Alberto. Schumann pointed out that, after 11 months residing in the US, Alberto’s English contained some of the prototypical features of pidgin languages. According to Schumann, a pidgin is any form of reduced and simplified speech used by people who speak different languages in order to facilitate communication. The grammatical structure of pidgins is characterized by a lack of inflectional morphology and a tendency to eliminate grammatical transformations (Schumann 1978). Alberto’s reduced and simplified English shared the following features with pidgins which have English as a lexifier:

1. Use of the negation “no” in the majority of its utterances;
2. Absence of subject/verb inversion in questions;
3. Absence of auxiliaries;
4. Unmarked possessives;
5. Use of the unmarked form of the verb;
6. Omission of subject pronouns.

Alberto's English appeared to have undergone what Schumann refers to as pidginization, since his IL seemed to have remained fossilized. At that stage, his IL shared features with pidgin languages, a common occurrence in the initial stages of SLA. In an attempt to explain the reasons why the subject did not advance in his acquisition of English, a Piagetian test of adaptive intelligence was administered. The test proved that Alberto had no cognitive deficiencies and therefore this was not the cause of his language acquisition problems. Schumann attributed Alberto's acquisition problems to the psychological and social distance he felt from native English speakers in the US.

According to Schumann (1978) social distance pertains to the individual as a member of a social group in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. Moreover, he argues that this distance involves sociological factors such as domination versus subordination, assimilation as opposed to acculturation preservation, enclosure, size, congruence and attitude. The author argues that social distance and hence a bad language learning situation will exist when the second language learning (2LL) group, whether dominant or subordinate, wishes to preserve their linguistic identity or enclose themselves from the target language population, when the 2LL group is both cohesive and large, when the mother tongue and target language cultures are incongruent, when both groups have negative attitudes toward each other and when the L2 group intends to stay in the target language environment for a short time (Schumann 1978, translated in Licerias 1992).

Psychological distance, however, constitutes an individual rather than a group phenomenon and includes factors such as language shock, culture shock and accent, integrative versus instrumental motivation, and permeability of the ego. This is therefore associated with the attitude of the learner as an individual rather than as a member of a particular social group, which should not be underestimated because an individual can deviate from the general tendency of the group. Schumann is of the view that the factors which create psychological distance between the learner and the speakers of the target language are affective in nature. In the case of Alberto, the extent of social, as well as psychological distance appeared to be considerable. According to Schumann, this is seen in the persistence of typical pidgin features in his English, which are generally observed in the initial stages of SLA.

For Schumann (1978) SLA constitutes one aspect of acculturation and therefore the extent to which the learner acculturates to the target language group will determine the extent to which he/she acquires an L2. Acculturation and SLA will in turn be determined by the psychological

and social distance existing between the learner and the target language culture. It is assumed that the greater the psychological and social distance, the more difficult it will be for learners to acquire the target language. Given that pidginization could be an initial universal stage of SLA, Schumann points out that it is important to explore which cognitive processes cause or permit L2 production. Like Kay and Sankoff (1974), Schumann states that it is possible that pidgins and other types of incomplete linguistic competence (baby talk, SLA, bilingualism and aphasia) reveal in a more direct way than do natural languages, the universal structures and processes which underlie linguistic capacity. Both the child in the initial stages of first language acquisition and the pidgin speaker reduce and simplify the language to which they are exposed into a set of primitive categories which are undoubtedly innate. These primitive categories emerge in speech as utterances which are relatively unmarked by inflections, permutations and functions (Schumann 1978, translated in Licerias 1992).

Corder (1975), in the same vein as Kay and Sankoff (1974), maintains that simple codes represent a basic language which are expanded and complicated during the process of language learning and are not reductions of a more developed code. As such, they are nearer to the underlying structure or internal form of all languages. Moreover, these approximate systems remain accessible for specific communicative functions (imitation of baby talk or foreigner talk), as well as for a hypothetical basis in second language learning. Schumann (1978), like Corder (1975), is of the view that pidginization in SLA results initially from cognitive constraints and persists due to social and psychological constraints. Therefore, the early stages of SLA could be characterized by the temporary use of a simple code, which is unmarked and similar to a pidgin. This pidgin would be the product of cognitive constraints caused by lack of knowledge of the target language. The code can reflect a regression to a set of primitive universal categories which were previously manifested during the initial stages of first language acquisition. Therefore, under conditions of social and/or psychological distance, this form of pidginized speech could persist.

McLaughlin (1987) states that the analogy established by Schumann (1978) between the processes of pidginization and the early stages of SLA is based on a comparison formulated by Whinnom (1971) of the biological difference between primary, secondary and tertiary hybridization. Primary hybridization refers to the separation of a species into different breeds and, when applied to linguistics, it is comparable to the separation of a language into different dialects. Secondary hybridization refers to the process of combining different species and corresponds linguistically to



the IL of L2 learners acquiring the target language under conditions of restricted contact with native speakers of that target language. Tertiary hybridization is the process whereby a new variety of animal or plant is created; the secondary hybrids are crossbred and for some reason they are unable to crossbreed with the species from which they emerged. In the case of pidgins, this stage is necessary in order for a genuine pidgin to be created. The dominant speech community has minimal contact with one or two subordinate speech communities and these subordinate communities use the contact language to communicate among themselves. Using this hybridization analogy, Schumann (1978) distinguishes between a pidgin language and the process of pidginization. Although the IL of the L2 learners can show signs of pidginization it would not constitute a true pidgin. For this to occur, the IL would have to become a contact language spoken by the entire speech community.

Meisel (1977) argues that for a pidgin to be deemed a dialect it must be linguistically stable, which does not occur with the ILs of L2 learners. Other authors such as Fox (1983) maintain that this criterion is too restrictive and therefore excludes the early stages of almost all pidgins since it is common that they initially exhibit great variation and instability. In section 2.1.1.3 the notion of pidginization will be discussed together with other relevant concepts, namely creolization, depidginization and decreolization. However, before this is done, the processes of nativization and denativization (Andersen 1983) must be explored.

### **2.1.1.2 Andersen and the Processes of Nativization and Denativization**

Andersen (1981), in comparing the study by Bickerton and Odo (1976) based on 24 speakers of Hawaii Pidgin English, and Schumann's (1978) research on Alberto, discovers the following similarities:

1. Dependency on word order rather than inflections to express grammatical relationships;
2. Coexistence of transfer of word order from native languages with Standard English;
3. Sporadic appearance of preverbal markers preceding verbs reinterpreted as auxiliaries;
4. Use of basic negation from the pidgin;
5. Absence of subject/verb inversion;
6. Prevalence of uninflected verbs.

Andersen (1981) concludes that pidginization is a universal feature of the initial stages of SLA. He argues that researchers of pidgin and creole

languages and SLA are essentially studying the same phenomenon, each group from a different perspective. Andersen (1983) goes further in his attempt to explain the internal processing mechanisms which occur in SLA. He distinguishes between the processes of “nativization” and “denativization”. Nativization is related to the concept of assimilation as postulated by Piaget, that is, the learner adapts the input to an internalized vision of the L2 system. According to Andersen (1983), during the initial stages of first and second language acquisition, creolization, pidginization and the creation of an IL, there is one commonality; the creation of a linguistic system which is at least partially autonomous of the input used to construct the system. The system can be considered native by the individual since construction of the linguistic system is dependent on the mental capacity of the individual which makes it possible for a new “native” language to be formed.

Denativization refers to the accommodation of the language learner to the external norm, that is, the learner adjusts his/her IL or internal system of the target language so that it is approximated to the language being learned.

“When circumstances cause the learner to reconstruct his interlanguage to conform more closely to that of the input, he must in effect dismantle part of his “native” system.” (Andersen 1983, 12)

Therefore decreolization, depidginization and advanced stages of first and second language acquisition constitute types of denativization.

The concepts of nativization and denativization are used in Andersen’s model to differentiate the stages in which the learner constructs his IL utilizing independent internal processes. During these stages the IL is adjusted so that it coincides with or approximates to the target language.<sup>1</sup> In the case of nativization the process is consistent with the processes of natural acquisition and with the constraints on perception and production. In the case of denativization the learner overrides the natural processes of acquisition in order to move closer to the target language. Andersen maintains that nativization occurs as a result of restricted access to input from the target language and, unlike Schumann, focuses less on identifying the factors which cause this restricted access. With time and great exposure to input, Andersen argues that the learner’s IL will begin to move closer to the structure of the input received.

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<sup>1</sup> Andersen’s concept of nativization shows no connection to the possible influence of the L1 or native language in the IL.

### 2.1.1.3 Creolization, Pidginization and Depidginization Applied to Second Language Acquisition

Schumann and Stauble (1983) highlight the differences in definitions of the terms *pidginization*, *creolization* and *depidginization* which exist in the literature. Bickerton and Odo (1976) argue that pidginization is the acquisition of an L2 with restricted access to input. When greater access to input from the target language occurs, the IL continues to develop through a process of depidginization. In this regard, it appears that there is no distinction between the term *depidginization* and *decreolization*. Andersen (1981) shares a similar view regarding the term *depidginization*, which he defines as a process of denativization. According to him the IL or the pidgin develops toward the external norm when the social, psychological and physical distance between the learner or the learner's speech community and the target language community are diminished. This is comparable to the process by which an L2 is successfully acquired. Other authors such as Ferguson and Debose (1977) define *depidginization* as the development of a pidgin language when it is used in a large number of communicative contexts without access to input from the target language.

Bickerton (1977) suggests that the advanced stages of SLA can be compared to decreolization in the sense that the learners can be situated along a continuum between the native language and the target language similar to that of speakers of a creole language who can be placed along a post-Creole continuum ranging from the Creole to the Standard. Stauble (1978) argues that the development of the learners' L2 beyond the initial stages is similar to decreolization because in both cases the process is influenced by acculturation and is carried out using processes of substitution and restructuring. Substitution refers to the replacement of non-standard morphemes by those modelled after the standard of the target language. Restructuring refers to the reformulation of grammatical rules in order that they are adjusted to the input of the target language.

Schumann and Stauble (1983) use the concepts of substitution and restructuring to draw parallels between studies on English negation in SLA, in the depidginization of Hawaii English Pidgin and in the decreolization of Guyanese Creole. In the three cases substitution of the surface forms was initially observed followed much later by restructuring of the underlying components in order to eventually replace auxiliary negation. The negative forms *don't* and *don* are not analysed as an auxiliary or a negation, but are introduced into the system of negation as mono-morphological units which simply replace *na* in the creole language and *no* in the pidgin and the IL of the L2 learners. Restructuring will be observed much later and these mono-morphological negators will begin to

function as both tense (T) markers and negation markers. They conclude that *depidginization*, *decreolization* and SLA are manifestations of the same type of linguistic phenomenon.

In the present study, like Bickerton and Odo (1976), the terms *depidginization* and *decreolization* will be treated as equivalents, at least from the standpoint of the process involved. Denativization will be defined according to Andersen (1981), as a process which occurs when the learner's IL moves closer to the target language and is adjusted to what the learner perceives as the external norm from the input received. The term creolization will refer to the opposite, that is, the process which occurs during the initial stages of acquisition when the learner begins to create his IL using internal and innate processes. In this sense, creolization and nativization constitute synonymous terms.

### **2.1.2 Second Language Acquisition as a Model to explain Creole Genesis**

As seen thus far, the possibilities for collaboration between both areas of research and the benefits to be gained are numerous. Nevertheless, several experts in creole languages have analysed data from studies on SLA with the aim of shedding light on the processes involved in the creation of pidgins and creoles. In this section two major studies will be examined, that of Valdman (1983) (see section 2.1.2.1) and the more recent work of Mather (2006) (see section 2.1.2.2). This latter study forms part of a new era of ground-breaking research which compares SLA and creolization.

#### **2.1.2.1 Valdman and the Parallels between the Psycholinguistic Process of SLA and Creolization**

Valdman (1983) argues that parallels exist between creolization and SLA. Despite the fact that creolization is a phenomenon which occurs over more than a generation while ILs are acquired by individuals, the author maintains that from a psycholinguistic perspective these two processes do not differ substantially. Both processes involve the application of linguistic and cognitive universals. However, they differ due to social circumstances which promote or inhibit the acquisition of the target language. According to Valdman the process of creolization takes place when social conditions cause the learner to develop a language which is partially independent of the target language. This new language serves, in special social situations, as a principal medium of communication and cohesion for recently

emerged speech communities. Conversely, in SLA, the social conditions normally lead to acquisition of the target language.

Valdman (1983) accepts Andersen's (1981) concept of *nativization* and maintains that it is a process in which, at least in the initial stages of SLA, learners establish relationships between form and meaning which are independent of the target language, and it is in this sense that the author finds similarities between the process of SLA and that of creolization. He further points out that substantial differences in the relationships between form and meaning can be observed in several creole languages and that the development of an autonomous system of form/meaning relationships could have extended over several generations. Valdman postulates that adults have access to the cognitive and psycholinguistic mechanisms which underlie this development.

For Valdman the same laws operate in SLA and creolization, with differences being observed only in the extent of nativization that occurs; in the case of SLA it would be less, while in the case of creolization it would be much greater. This difference is due to social factors. Valdman (1983) disagrees with Bickerton's bioprogram, since, as seen in section 2.2.1, Bickerton argues that adults are incapable of creating those parts of a language which are unavailable in the target language. According to Bickerton, adults do not have access to Universal Grammar (UG)<sup>2</sup> and only children are able to create a creole language using the processes of first language acquisition. However, Valdman (1983) and Andersen (1981, 1983) maintain that adults are capable of restructuring. In generativist terms it could be argued that these authors are postulating that adults have access to UG and that, during the process of developing a pidgin language, the intuitions of those who speak the pidgin as an L2 will be those that determine the direction of the pidgin's development. According to this view, the gradual development of the pidgin into a Creole (after several generations of being spoken as an L2), as well as sudden creolization (as a result of acquisition of the pidgin as an L1 by children) would be determined by the same laws which would be natural laws adjusted to the natural hierarchy of development.

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<sup>2</sup> Valdman does not use this terminology from Chomskyan theory. Chomsky (1975) defines UG as "the system of principles, conditions and rules which are elements or properties of all human languages"; in later works Chomsky (1981) adds that this UG characterizes the "prelinguistic stage of children".

### **2.1.2.2 Mather and Creolization as a Type of Second Language Acquisition**

Mather (2006) states that, although it has been argued that SLA and Creole genesis are realized by completely different mental processes, given the evident influence of substrate languages in Caribbean Creoles and the relatively minor role of L1 transfer in SLA, this does not take into account the distinction between cognitive processes and linguistic outcomes. Also disregarded is that transfer from the L1 has a great impact on the initial stages of the grammatical development of the learners' IL. Of importance to this author is the difference between the mental process of L2 acquisition (associated with I-language, defined in Chomsky 1986) and the linguistic outcome of the process (E-language). The difference between I-Creole and E-Creole was made by DeGraff (1999) and this difference is very relevant to Mather's (2006) work since, according to the author, in terms of I-language, creolization can be explained principally by SLA processes. According to Mather (2006) Creole genesis can be viewed as a special case of SLA under unique historical, demographic and social conditions.

As detailed in section 2.2.1, Bickerton (1977) argued that pidginization was a process of L2 learning with restricted input, while creolization was defined as the learning of a first language also with restricted input. Mather states in his 2006 article that, even if one disagrees with Bickerton, it is clear that the processes employed during pidginization and creolization are the same processes which are used in the acquisition of first and second languages, although the final outcome is not full acquisition of the lexifier due to extreme social and historical circumstances. For this author, it is important to differentiate between the mental process of SLA (related to I-language, defined in Chomsky 1986) and the linguistic result of this process (E-language).

Although the objective of SLA is the L2, the final product is often a fossilized IL. There are many factors which influence and affect the level of acquisition; for example, the learner's motivation and the psychological and social distance (Schumann 1978) must be taken into account. The learner is driven to learn a new language in order to integrate into a particular community and is often corrected during the learning process by his teachers, in the case of institutionalized learning contexts, or by native speakers. Pidginized or creolized varieties (Mather seems to use both terms interchangeably) are evident in situations where a learner, in a new speech community, is not motivated to learn the language of that community, he does not receive formal language instruction, or there is restricted access to the L2. This author viewed creolization in the same