Language contact in Brazil and the genesis of creole languages[1]

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This article seeks, first of all, to answer the question of why Portuguese did not creolize in Brazil. Based on inferences from the Brazilian case, the article presents a more general reflection on the conditions that allowed the emergence of creole languages in the Caribbean, since there is a strong parallel between the former plantation societies of this region and those of northeast Brazil. The first principal conclusion is that the socioeconomic specificities of Brazilian society in the colonial period vis-à-vis the plantation societies of the Caribbean did not allow a representative and lasting process of creolization of Portuguese. Rather, the assimilation of this language by millions of Indians and African slaves, and its nativization among their descendants produced a set of structural changes that today separate popular Portuguese from the linguistic variety of the Brazilian literate elite but didn't reach the radical stage of creolization. The points covered in the analysis allow us to question the dichotomy between homestead and plantation society, as well as the view that creoles result from successive approximations of the superstrate language by the speakers of substrate languages, as an adequate explanation for the formation of creole languages. Thus, the conclusion reached here is that creolization is characterized by a rupture in linguistic transmission that triggers a process of simplification and deep restructuring of the language of the dominant group by the speakers of the substrate. This understanding fits in better with the fact that creole languages are languages qualitatively distinct from their lexifiers, and not mere varieties of them.

Key words: sociolinguistic history of Brazil, genesis of creole languages, irregular linguistic transmission, homestead society, plantation society.

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1. Introduction

In the early 1980s, Guy (1981) hypothesized that the historical background of Popular Brazilian Portuguese (PBP) was a Portuguese creole that developed between the 16th and 17th centuries and entered into an accelerated process of decreolization beginning in the 18th century. Guy argued that the socio-historical conditions of colonial Brazil were highly conducive to creolization, such that it would be exceptional that Portuguese did not creolize in Brazil. Thus, according to Guy (1981: 313), the burden of proof should be on those who defend the hypothesis that Portuguese did not creolize in Brazil, and not on those who defend the hypothesis of creolization.

Contrary to this hypothesis, Naro and Scherre (2007) argued that there was no historical record of a Portuguese lexified creole in Brazil. In addition, current field research has not identified any variety of Portuguese in Brazil that has a creole status or has an undeniable creole history, even in studies of the language of relatively isolated Afro-Brazilian rural communities of maroon origins (Lucchesi, Baxter & Ribeiro 2009).[2] In view of this, Parkvall & López (2003) argued that, in the Caribbean countries where there was creolization, a post-creole continuum is now observed, extending from basilectal to more acroletal varieties (Rickford 1987). Therefore, it would not be plausible that a creole that gave rise to PBP would have disappeared completely, without leaving traces, since the social conditions of Brazil are no more favorable to decreolization than those observed in many Caribbean countries. Currently, the predominant view is that a broad and long-lasting process of Portuguese creolization has not occurred in Brazil, although localized processes of pidginization/creolization may have occurred in some particular situations, but

[2] The Afro-Brazilian rural community of Helvécia, situated in the extreme south of the State of Bahia, is the only community for which there is evidence that it may have gone through a past process of creolization (Ferreira 1984). However, it is an isolated case with some peculiarities, such as the fact that it came from large estates of Swiss and German settlers who settled in the region in the 19th century (Zimmermann 1999; Baxter & Lucchesi 1999). On the other hand, another aspect of language contact is evident in the "Secret languages" that were found in isolated rural communities in São Paulo State (Vogt & Fry 2013) and Minas Gerais (Queiroz 1998). These involve restricted vocabularies of Bantu (probably Kimbundu) origin that their speakers use with the grammatical structure of popular Portuguese. They are used in specific situations (so as not to be understood by outsiders, for example). It is likely that these secret languages had their origins in a lingua franca used in the region and were not derived from any Portuguese-lexified pidgin or creole.

they have not been diffused or perpetuated (Lucchesi 2009, 2012, 2015: 90-112).[3]

The first objective of this article is to analyze the socio-historical conditions of Brazil that prevented a representative and lasting process of creolization of Portuguese, although the country presents in its history situations very similar to those in which the creoles of the Caribbean were formed, particularly the sugar plantation society that developed in Northeast Brazil in the 17th century. This is the object of the first section of this article. The analysis of the conditions that prevented creolization in Brazil is inexorably related to the question of the conditions that fostered creolization, particularly of the so-called Atlantic creoles. Therefore, the discussion in the first section will provide the basis for a critique of the postulation of the homestead/plantation society dichotomy as an explanation of creolization resulting from successive approximations of the superstrate language by the speakers of substrate languages. This critique is presented in the second section of the article. The historical evidence gathered here reinforces the view that creolization is historically related to processes in which there was a rupture in linguistic transmission, triggering a process of simplification and deep restructuring of the dominant group language by the substrate speakers, giving rise to a pidgin, from which the creole language is derived. Therefore, it is assumed here that pidginization is a necessary condition for creolization (McWhorter 1998, 2000; Parkvall 2000; Siegel 2008, a.o.).

Finally, as the question of the historical conditions in which creole languages were formed is inextricably linked to the very conception of these languages, we present some considerations on the status of creole languages, defending the majority view that these languages are qualitatively different from the languages from their lexifiers, rather than mere varieties of those languages.

2. Language contact in the plantation society of colonial Brazil

The most favorable scenario for Portuguese creolization in Brazil during the colonial period is found in the so-called sugar society that became established in the Northeast, around the villages of Olinda and Recife, in Pernambuco, and Salvador, in Bahia, between the 16th and 17th centuries. In this region,

[3] This was the position of Rodrigues (2006: 155, fn. 2, my translation): "It is not improbable that some pidgins, or even creoles, developed in certain locations, but without having reached the stability that would allow them to expand in space and survive for a long time".

Portuguese colonization was massive, and the indigenous population was decimated and replaced with slaves imported from Africa. The transition from an indigenous labor force to African slavery would have occurred between 1570 and 1650 (Menard & Schwartz 2002: 10).

In the first phase of the plantation society in the Northeast of Brazil, between the second half of the 16th century and the end of the 17th century, Kimbundu was the most important substrate language. Strong evidence of this is that the first grammar of this language, the *Arte da Língua de Angola*, was written in Salvador in 1694 and published in Lisbon in 1697 (Rosa 2013). Its objective was the catechesis of slaves, as can be seen in the statement by Father Antonio Vieira that "in the 1660s there were 23,000 African slaves who were catechized in the language of Angola" (*apud* Petter 2006: 127). In addition to the sugar plantations, it is likely that Kimbundu was the language of the quilombos, such as that of Palmares (Silva Neto 1963: 85), which resisted during decades in the second half of the 17th century in the region of Alagoas and came to comprise thousands of inhabitants. It may be concluded from this predominance of Kimbundu that the policy of mixing slaves, both ethnically and linguistically, in Brazil, was more a *desideratum* than an effective practice (Arends 2008: 313).[4]

This did not prevent the imposition of Portuguese on Africans, and its assimilation as a first language (L1) among the Brazilian-born offspring of Africans, the *crioulos*. Africans would have displayed varying levels of proficiency in Portuguese, from the very restricted and rudimentary second language varieties typical of the slaves who, because of that, were referred to as *boçais*, to the more general knowledge of the language of slaves referred to as *ladinos*, typically those who came to Brazil in their youth or as young adults. The *crioulos* generally acquired a L1 based on a more or less restructured variety of Portuguese. In this sense, one should also consider the large number of mulattoes (mestizos, children of slave women with white masters and foremen), who, although often kept as slaves, enjoyed an even better condition than the *crioulos* and consequently tended to be more assimilated in cultural and linguistic terms (Silva Neto 1963 [1951]: 114; Risério 2004: 353).

The role played by slaves was directly linked to their linguistic proficiency, because their position and status determined the degree of contact with the language of the whites (Arends 1995: 19). Likewise, greater proficiency in the dominant language would facilitate the slave's ascension into

[4] The same can be said of São Tomé, where there was an initial strong Edo substrate (Hagemeijer 2011: 141).

the hierarchy of occupation roles, as there was a dialectical relationship between work role and the ethnic characteristic and linguistic proficiency of the individual: "[…]mulattos and *crioulos* were preferred for domestic duties, craftsmanship and supervision, whereas the hard work in the fields and other heavy tasks were relegated to the negroes, and especially to the Africans." (Cardoso 1990: 105, my translation).

It is difficult to estimate the weight of Africans and their descendants in the population of Brazil as a whole, and of the Northeast in particular. In 1600, the population of Brazil would have totaled a mere 100,000 inhabitants; the whites being only 30,000, as opposed to 70,000 Indians, negroes and mestizos.[5] In 1660, in a population of 184,000 individuals, African slaves accounted for 60% of the total: 110,000 as opposed to 74,000 whites and Indians. Four decades later, of the total population of 300,000 in 1700, some 170,000 would have been slaves of African origin, while whites, at the most, would have numbered 100,000. Therefore, the percentage of African slaves would have been of the order of 57%.[6] As it was in the Northeast that the sugar cane plantations were concentrated, the percentage of Africans and their descendants in this region would have been higher, approaching 70%.

Thus, throughout the history of Brazil, the plantation society of the Northeast, in the 17th century, would have been the most favorable scenario for Portuguese pidginization/creolization (P/C), as it maintained notable parallels with the plantation societies of the Caribbean, where during the same period many of the creole languages currently recognized as such were formed.[7] The question that arises, then, is: why did Portuguese not creolize in a consistent form in the plantation society of Northeast Brazil in the 17th century?

To answer this question, the first factor to be considered is the proportion of speakers of the superstrate language vis-à-vis Africans and *crioulos*. Not only in the 17th century, but from the very beginning of Portuguese colonization in the 16th century to the end of the 19th century, the proportion of Portuguese and their children born in Brazil remained at around the thirty percent level (Table 1).

[5] Naturally, the entire indigenous population that was not integrated into Portuguese colonial society is excluded.

[6] Source: *Estatísticas Históricas do Brasil: séries econômicas, demográficas e sociais de 1550 a 1988. 2a. ed. rev. do v. 3 de Séries estatísticas retrospectivas.* Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, p. 30.

[7] According to Arends (2008: 312), the creole languages of Suriname were formed approximately between 1650 and 1750. In the same sense, Parkvall (2000: 117) asserts that "all Atlantic plantation Creoles had basically crystalized by [1750]".

Table 1: Population of Brazil by ethnicity, 16th to 19th centuries[8]

Ethnicity	1583-1600	1601-1700	1701-1800	1801-1850	1851-1890
Africans	20%	30%	20%	12%	2%
Crioulos	-	20%	21%	19%	13%
Mulattos	-	10%	19%	34%	42%
Brazilians of European descent	-	5%	10%	17%	24%
Europeans	30%	25%	22%	14%	17%
Integrated Indians	50%	10%	8%	4%	2%

Therefore, the proportion of the dominant group in Brazil was always higher than the total of 20% that Bickerton (1981) defined as the maximum for creolization to occur. Although this index can be questioned (e.g., Arends 2008: 316), the percentage of speakers in the dominant group is crucial because it determines the degree of access of substrate speakers to target language models. The lower the proportion of speakers of the superstrate language, the more restricted will be the access of the speakers to that language, creating the conditions for P/C development. On the contrary, the greater proportion of speakers of the target language in Brazil would have allowed a greater access of the Africans and their descendants to the Portuguese, inhibiting P/C development.

In addition to the quantitative comparison, it is essential to contemplate a qualitative analysis of the social structure. The structure of Brazilian colonial society also seems to differ from the prototypical structure of the plantation societies of the Caribbean. In the case of Brazil, rather than envisaging a rigid polarization of masters vs. slaves, one must view the society in more nuanced terms, given the existence of a whole set of intermediate segments. In the sugar society of the Northeast of Brazil, "around the sugar plantation, a myriad of small sugarcane producers, farmers, and agriculturists supplied it" (Ferlini 2002: 25).

More often than not, the small slave producers engaged in food production, especially of cassava, to supply the sugar mills and coastal villages, and had an average of three to five slaves (Teixeira da Silva 1990: 72). Thus, the situation of these small landowners fits in with what Chaudenson (2001 [1992]) defined as a homestead society, since these few slaves would live closely with the owner, his (extended) family, and possibly other whites in the household. In these small properties, the access of Africans and especially of

[8] Source: MUSSA (1991: 163).

crioulos to grammatical models of Portuguese would be much broader than on a large plantation with more than a hundred slaves.[9]

However, contrary to Chaudenson's model, in Brazil this homestead society does not disappear with the establishment of the big sugar plantations. On the contrary, it is part of the system of mercantilist production, persisting around the large estate and playing an important role, not only in the supply of sugar cane for the mills, but especially in the production of food.

Thus, the general picture of land and slave ownership in Brazil throughout the colonial period reveals a small number of large landowners with large numbers of slaves, contrasting with a large proportion of small landowners, with up to a maximum of five slaves, and a considerable portion of medium-sized landowners (Teixeira da Silva 1990: 72). Even in the areas with the greatest concentration of sugar plantations, such as the Northeast in the 17th century, "the concentration of slave ownership was not as great as one might expect" (Cardoso 1990: 96, my translation). This representative presence of small properties with few slaves contrasts with the predominant scenario in the Caribbean, where small properties, when they came into existence, were quickly replaced by large slave properties, in the establishment of the plantation society (Singler 2008).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the mediation and greater complexity of plantation society in Brazil, in its broadest terms, was a crucial factor for the inhibition of potential P/C processes of Portuguese in the 17th century onwards. Although the Caribbean plantation societies should not be contemplated in a simplistic and reductive way either, there are indications that the dichotomy there would have been more pronounced than in Brazil, due to a greater concentration of sugar production on large plantations (Higman 2000; Burnard & Garrigus 2016).

Furthermore, the social factors that would have inhibited the creolization of Portuguese in Brazil in the 17th century only deepened throughout the 18th century. At the turn of the 17th century (1693-1695), the discovery of rich deposits of gold and precious stones in the present state of Minas Gerais inaugurated the so-called *ciclo do ouro* 'gold cycle', which would predominate in 18th century Brazil.

The demographic impact of the mining boom was immense, with the population of Brazil estimated at 300,000 individuals in 1700, reaching

[9] According to Cardoso (1990: 104-5), the average sugar plantation had dozens of slaves, whereas the larger ones had several hundred slaves.

approximately 3,660,000 inhabitants in 1800.[10] This corresponds to a twelve-fold growth throughout the 18th century, the largest in the history of Brazil, in relative terms. Portuguese immigration contributed greatly to this significant growth, as it is estimated that around 600,000 Portuguese migrated to Brazil only between 1701 and 1760 (Venâncio 2000: 65-66). Added to this was the huge contingent of African slaves. By the most recent estimates, the average annual landing of Africans in Brazil rose from just over 10,000 in the last quarter of the 17th century to nearly 17,000 in the period 1701 to 1725, reaching almost 25,000 slaves imported annually in the last quarter of the 18th century. In this way, almost two million Africans would have landed in Brazil throughout the 18th century.[11]

These slaves were divided between the mining area and the plantations of the Northeast, but most of them would certainly have been sent to the mines, and many planters moved to the Southeast, taking their slaves with them, to try their luck at mining. Rio de Janeiro received most of its slaves from the Angola region, speakers of Bantu languages, predominantly Kimbundu. Already Salvador, had begun to receive slaves from the so-called Slave Coast, or Mina Coast, which corresponds to the present states of Benin and Nigeria, predominantly speakers of the Yoruba and the Gbe groups, especially Fon and Ewe. Many slaves landed in Bahia were sold to Minas Gerais. A manual of conversation in Fon, written by a Portuguese in Vila Rica in 1741, is a testimony to this slave trade circuit, as well as to the use of an African lingua franca in 18th-century Minas Gerais society (Castro 2002).

Although the mining society had a large concentrated population of African slaves, who also used a lingua franca, such as Kimbundu and Fon, mining societies are not an environment conducive to creolization. In South American countries, such as Peru and Bolivia, that imported large contingents of African slaves to work in the mines, no creolization has been reported. The dynamics of slave labor in mining was quite distinct from slavery in agriculture, so that the situation of the slave in Minas Gerais society differs from that of the plantation setting with its large mass of slaves. Rather, it resembles more closely the conditions of the domestic and urban slave (Castro 1990: 108), making it possible for greater access to dominant language models, thus inhibiting P/C. Moreover, "the acute shortage of white women in the first decades [of the 18th century provoked] intense miscegenation" (Cardoso 1990: 106, my translation).

[10] Source: IBGE, 2000, p. 221.

[11] Source: *Voyages – The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* [http://slavevoyages.org/ assessment/ estimates]. Accessed on 24/09/2018.

The prominence of the mining economy in the Southeast of Brazil also had far-reaching consequences for the plantation society of the Northeast, profoundly altering the socioeconomic structure of this region. The increase in the price of slaves and strong competition from the sugar exporting companies established in the Caribbean by British, Dutch and French also impacted strongly on the Brazilian sugar northeastern sugar region. It further undermined the rigid concentrated mercantilist structure on the large slave properties and improved the living conditions of the slaves in the Northeast, since demand in the Caribbean increased the prices practiced by the slave trade (Teixeira da Silva 1990: 72). This improvement in the living conditions of the slaves favored an increased birth rate, which in turn would favor the approximation of the contact variety to the lexifier language (Singler 2008: 341).

Slaves born in plantation societies would generally have more access to the target language than Africans. As many historians have noted, this would clearly have been the situation in Brazil, where the *crioulos* were "raised in the family of the plantation proprietor and strongly imprinted by white society" (Mattoso 2003: 105, my translation). The effect would have been even stronger for mulattos. It should be pointed out here that, according to the data presented in Table 1, throughout the 17th century, the number of *crioulos* and mulattoes was equal to the total number of Africans (Africans represented 30% of the population, *crioulos* 20% and mulattoes 10%). However, the percentage of mulattos among the Brazilian population almost doubled between the 17th and 18th centuries (from 10% to 19%), so that the total number of *crioulos* and mulattoes was already double the number of Africans in the 18th century. And in the 19th century mulattos correspond to almost half of the population, reaching 42% of the total (see Table 1).

Therefore, the historical data presented here allows us to identify the factors that inhibited the P/C of Portuguese in Brazil:

i) The percentage of superstrate language speakers (30%) is higher than the proportion proposed as the maximum for P/C (20%);
ii) The large number of small planters with only 1 to 5 slaves, among the class of slave owners;
iii) A greater assimilation of the crioulos and especially of the mulattoes, who were encouraged to adopt the linguistic and cultural standards of the white society;
iv) The high degree of miscegenation in the formation of Brazilian society;
v) The advent of the gold cycle, in the 18th century.

Identifying the factors that impeded creolization in Brazil can help a great deal to understand the factors that led to creolization in societies with characteristics similar to those of the Brazilian society.

3. Implications of the Brazilian case for understanding the socio-historical conditions that made creolization possible elsewhere

Analysis of the Brazilian case inevitably raises the question of the conditions that made creolization possible, particularly of the Caribbean creoles. Although historically it bears many similarities with the Caribbean societies, Brazil is "a plantation society where, as far is known, no full-fledged creole ever emerged" (Arends 2008: 314). In this sense, the identification of the conditions that prevented creolization of Portuguese can help to identify those that allowed creolization in the Caribbean, contributing to a better understanding of the genesis of creole languages.

3.1. The homestead society *versus* plantation society dichotomy

In recent decades, creole linguistics has witnessed the growth in acceptance of the "approximation model" or "continuity hypothesis" formulated by Chaudenson (2001 [1992]), which is based on the homestead society / plantation society (*société d'habitation* / *société de plantation*) dichotomy as phases of the sociolinguistic process of creolization. At the beginning of colonization, in the homestead phase, the colonizers, their families and households would have been more numerous than the few African slaves, and all would have worked and lived in close contact. Thus, instead of forming a pidgin, these first slaves would have developed a second language variety very close to the language spoken by the dominant group. However, Chaudenson (2001 [1992]) points out that most settlers would have spoken a non-standard variety of the European language, so that the restructuring that would ultimately result in the creole language would have begun with changes already under way in the lexifier language (LL). Thus, the restructuring carried out by the slaves would only be a continuation of this process initiated in the lexifier.

The transition from homestead society to plantation society occurs with the growing import of new African slaves. These would learn the LL mainly from the slaves already established in the colony, according to what Mufwene (1994: 70) defined as "continuous approximations of approximations". With the increase in the number of imported Africans, there would be less and less access

to LL models, so that this sequence of approximations would result in the formation of the more basilectal varieties of the creole. Thus, creolization is seen as a gradual process in which the creole results from a progressive withdrawal from the LL. However, as the changes occurring in creolization would already have started in the LL, creolization is seen only as a continuation of the pre-contact changes, so that the creole language would just be a variety of the LL, rather than a qualitatively distinct language.

Mufwene (1996, 2001), who embraced Chaudenson's vision, reinforces the prominence of the LL and the hypothesis of continuity, through the founder principle, which he imported from biology, according to which the first individuals have an influence on the development of a population far beyond its small number. By this principle, the early African slaves, who would have spoken a variety very close to the language of the European settlers, would have had a disproportionately strong influence on the form that creole languages would assume, making the traits of the LL prevail, even if these early Africans were largely numerically insignificant in the face of the large numbers of subsequent African slaves.

This model of white supremacy and continuity is also a tributary of Chaudenson's (2001: 128) view that, in colonial societies, prestige would be concentrated in the space of the dominant group and that all slaves, to a greater or lesser degree, would seek to approach the standards of this group.

In view of the many questions that have been raised concerning the Chaudenson - Mufwene model, it is surprising that it has recently become so popular, although it is still far from being hegemonic.

3.2. Criticisms of the Chaudenson-Mufwene continuity hypothesis

A first criticism of Chaudenson's model is that in the formation of several Caribbean creoles, as in the case of Suriname, there was no alleged homestead phase, or when there was, it would have been very short (Arends 2002). Within the view of Chaudenson (2001: 64), more focussed on the French colonies, "numerical equality between the White and Black population was achieved after a relatively lengthy period (50-100 years)". Thus, the prevalence of the LL would have depended on the duration of the homestead phase, in which European colonizers would have been more numerous than Africans. However, Singler (2008: 352, fn. 5) argues that even for the French colonies, parity between whites and blacks would have been attained in 40 years or less. Singler (2008: 337) invokes the general principle accepted by creolists, that the sooner the parity between whites and blacks is reached, the less the influence of the LL.

Thus, the fact that many creoles developed without a homestead phase, or with very short homestead phases, would counter the view of the creole language as a continuity of the LL, favoring the vision of the development of a radical creole, restructured independently.

However, the most serious problem with Chaudenson's view concerns the very characteristics of the establishment of the sugar enterprise in the Caribbean. Such a venture required huge investments, which was undertaken with large estates that overwhelmingly employed the labor of slaves imported from Africa (Eltis 2001: 35). Compared to Brazil, this process was more intense and accelerated in the Caribbean, configuring what Higman (2000) called the "sugar revolution". This could explain why creolization occurred in the Caribbean, but not in Brazil.

The establishment of sugar plantations implies: (i) "a sharp change in the ratio of Africans to Europeans"; (ii) "a substantial reduction in the amount of overall contact that Africans had with Europeans" (Singler 2008: 335). Thus, Singler (2008: 340) concludes that:

> The societal transformations brought on by the rapid switch to sugar would have created a setting in which exposure and motivation would have been sharply curtailed for most Africans. Generally, then, the switch to sugar had as a direct consequence the disruption of the transmission of the lexifier language.

What we can add to this line of reasoning is that, regardless of the prior existence of a group of African slaves who acquired a version of L2 closer to the LL and the duration of the homestead society that would have made this closer contact possible, the great mass of slaves brought in for the establishment of the sugar plantation had little access to LL models, generally acquiring an L2 version with a dramatically reduced grammatical apparatus. In this case, it made no difference if the models of that dominant language were provided by the speech of the Europeans or the early Africans who spoke a variety very close to that of the settlers. What is relevant is that this group of European settlers and the first Africans constituted a group that was less and less representative of the large mass of Africans that was increasing with successive waves of slaves brought from Africa to the colony. Add to this the very low birth rate among the slave population:

> In few colonies of the Caribbean did the slave population reproduce itself. In all the rest, natural decrease obtained. Thus, maintenance of a slave labor force depended upon the ongoing importation of new slaves. (Singler 2008: 335)

In this scenario, Mufwene's founder principle doesn't hold, since the influence of the first slaves, despite their ascendancy over the newcomers, would have been very limited due to the separation between these two groups. Moreover, the validity of this principle in biology does not guarantee that it can be applied in the field of culture and the historical and social relations that have determined the formation of creole languages. Although there is a tradition in linguistics to entertain comparisons with biology, such as the view of languages as living organisms, these comparisons have proven to be quite inadequate to explain the socio-historical process of language constitution. The same can be said of the founder principle.[12]

Naturally, there would have been Africans and mainly creoles and mulattos who undertook domestic work, or more specialized or command functions in the production chain, *a fortiori* having more contact with the language of the dominant group and acquiring varieties of L2 closer to LL. However, they would have always constituted a minority in the societies in which creole languages emerged. The large mass of slaves who toiled on the land had very little access to models of the dominant language, acquiring what has been termed a jargon or a pre-pidgin (Siegel 2008). And to the extent that they were using this restricted code of emergency communication with each other, outside the circuit of the dominant group, due to an eventual heterogeneity of the substrate, or simply by adequacy to the new reality, the jargon would develop functionally and grammatically. So the hypothesis of pidginization would be the most plausible (McWhorter 1998, 2000; Parkvall 2000).

Here another pillar of the Chaudenson-Mufwene model must be refuted: the principle that all slaves would converge on the prestige models of the dominant group. This would obviously apply to domestic and more skilled slaves, particularly in the case of *crioulos* and mulattoes, but it wouldn't apply to the large mass of slave laborers, who would have been guided very little by the prestige of linguistic models, or because they did not have access to these models, or because they were not interested in reproducing them, for several legitimate reasons.[13] In this sense, Baker's (2000) vision for this L2 variety as a medium for interethnic communication is much more adequate. Free from the dominant language models, the large mass of the substrate would develop a pidgin qualitatively distinct from the LL. Derived from this pidgin, or having

[12] Singler (2008: 337-9) questions the parallel that Mufwene attempts to establish with cultural geography and criticises the founder principle as being *un-falsifiable*.
[13] Cf. Singler (2008: 344).

formed before its development, the creole language is also a language qualitatively distinct from its LL. Therefore, the adequate analysis of the socio-historical conditions in which the Atlantic creoles formed, specifically on the sugar plantations, consistently supports the hypothesis that a rupture in LL transmission is a *sine qua non* condition for the occurrence of the P/C process. This view fits in perfectly with the proper view that creoles are qualitatively distinct languages from their lexifier languages.

The main problem with Chaudenson's and Mufwene's historical view is that it is formulated to fit an inadequate conception that creole languages were formed from changes that gave continuity to changes that were already underway in the LL, and therefore are dialects of their LLs. Thus, some historical factors that Chaudenson and Mufwene postulate for creolization, such as the close conviviality of slaves and colonizers in small farms and a greater linguistic assimilation of Africans and their descendants, serve in fact to explain the formation of linguistic varieties of the LL that develop in certain situations of contact, like Popular Brazilian Portugues. However, they are not adequate to explain the genesis of creoles proper, like the Atlantic creoles. A comparison between the historical conditions in which both these language types formed can readily show this.

3.2. Inferences from the Brazilian case

The comparison of the conditions that inhibited the creolization of Portuguese in Brazil in the sugar plantation society of the Northeast in the 17th century, *vis-à-vis* the conditions that led to the emergence of creole languages in the Caribbean reveal that the first factor that differentiates the two is the socioeconomic structure. The significant representativity of small planters, with one to five slaves, seems to have been a decisive factor in preventing the creolization of Portuguese in Brazil, since these slaves, and especially their descendants, would have had more access to the language of their masters, acquiring a variety of L2 or L1 closest to the LL. The data available for sugar-producing societies in the Caribbean point to a more concentrated structure in large properties (Higman 2000, Burnard & Garrigus 2016), in which the large mass of slaves had very limited access to the LL.

The second factor that would have been decisive in inhibiting P/C in Brazil is of a cultural nature. The differences that characterize the formation of Brazilian society, already highlighted in classical works such as Freyre (1936) and Holanda (2002 [1936]), point to a greater assimilation of the children born to slaves born in Brazil. Often raised with the white children, the *crioulos* had

privileged access to the language of the whites. Thus, the principle that "*ceteris paribus*, the greater the proportion of locally born slaves, the closer the creole to its lexifier language", postulated by Singler (2008: 341) is especially applicable in the Brazilian case, inhibiting creolization itself, giving rise not to a creole language, but to a variety of LL.

This assimilation would be even more profound in the case of mulattos, who would have an even greater motivation to adhere to the values and models of white society, attaining in many cases a considerable proficiency in the dominant language. Considering that Brazilian society is one of the most mestizo in the world, one can see in the high degree of miscegenation one of the decisive factors for Portuguese not to have been creolized in Brazil. According to contemporary official data, almost half the population of Brazil was composed of mulattoes in the 19th century (see Table 1 above), and the proportion would have been higher in the regions that received the most Africans, such as Minas Gerais, Bahia and Pernambuco. Also, this proportion must also be even higher in general, because many mulattos could pass for whites if they were lighter in color and able to ascend socially.

It seems that access to LL models was much more restricted on the plantations of the Caribbean, even for *crioulos*. Furthermore, the degree of miscegenation in the Caribbean is generally much lower than that observed in Brazil, which, in turn, would be associated with the lower demographic weight of Europeans in the Caribbean *vis-à-vis* their relative weight in Brazil, but also the cultural and religious differences between the Catholic Portuguese on the one hand and the Protestant English, Dutch and even the French on the other hand.

However, it is necessary to formalize more general and abstract principles that work in the genesis of creole languages, to allow a qualitative interpretation of the demographic data, and not a mere quantitative analysis. The general principle postulated here is that the segregation/isolation of the substrate population is crucial for the P/C because it implies a severe restriction of access of the substrate speakers to the LL, determining a rupture in the linguistic transmission that prevents the transmission of a good part of the LL grammatical mechanisms, allowing profound changes in the phonetic form of the transmitted words and an independent grammatical restructuring.

This *segregation/isolation factor* must be considered on both the objective and the subjective levels. In the first case, it is a question of physical separation, with slaves dwelling in secluded quarters and constituting the entire labor force on large plantations, controlled only by a small number of foremen and masters, either European or African, or co-opted *crioulos*. On the subjective

level, it is the action of ideological mechanisms or social relations that favor or disfavor the integration of the Africans and their descendants in the colonial society. Miscegenation would have been a means of integrating Afro-descendants, while at the same time it was already the product of social relations favoring assimilation.

Finally, we must deal with a factor that is prominent in the context that makes P/C possible: the speed of establishment of the plantation society. Despite all the mediations necessary when considering this sociodemographic factor, it is undeniable that the rapid establishment of large plantations that imported large numbers of African slaves was a highly favorable context for P/C. This factor may be crucial in understanding why creoles developed in the southeastern United States, yet not in Northeast Brazil.

It is common in historiography to establish parallels between Brazil and the USA, both regarding their similarities and their differences, since they are two large countries with continental proportions and enormous potential for growth (which has been implemented much more in North America than in South America), and which resulted from a massive colonization of the American continent by European settlers, who decimated much of the native populations of these territories. Thus, a comparison between the USA and Brazil may be even more illuminating regarding the conditions that favored creolization and the conditions that inhibited it.

Although Brazil imported many more African slaves than the USA,[14] and the proportion of Afro-descendants is much higher in Brazil than in the USA,[15] creolization, which did not develop in Brazil, did develop in the USA and its result has endured to the present day. Thus, Gullah, an English-lexified creole, formed before 1750, is still spoken by some 250,000 individuals in the islands and coastal regions of the States of South Carolina, North Carolina,

[14] Brazil imported about 4.8 million African slaves between 1550 and 1850, while the United States imported less than four hundred thousand in the same period. Source: *Voyages – The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* [http://slavevoyages.org/assessment/ estimates].

[15] In Brazil, blacks and 'colored people' (*pardos*) account for 52.6% of the total population of about 208 million inhabitants, according to the National Continuous Household Sample Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua (PNAD)), of the (Brazilian Geographic and Statistics Institute (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)), published on 24/11/2017. In the United States, blacks and African Americans account for just over 40 million out of a total of 308 million Americans counted in a single race, which corresponds to 13% of the total. Source: Site of the United States Census Bureau [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/ tableservices/jsf/pages/ productview.xhtml?src=CF], accessed on 11/10/2018.

Georgia and Florida.[16]

One explanation for this is the speed of establishment of cotton plantations in the southeastern USA *vis-à-vis* the process of implantation of plantations in Brazil:

> Unlike Brazil, where the process was gradual and variable, [...] South Carolina adopted an Africanized labor force quickly and completely. In 1720, only half a century after the first English occupation of the region and a little more than a decade after the initial articulation of the plantation regime, the lands of the basin already had 12,000 slaves, the vast majority of them black, comprising two thirds of the population of the colony. (Menard & Schwartz 2002: 17-18)

Therefore, even though they concentrated on the cotton crop rather than sugarcane, the crop that most favored P/C (Arends 2008: 321), plantations in southeastern North America presented a favorable context for P/C, due to the notable rapidity with which the plantation society was established (in little more than a decade). And there was no homestead society, as advocated by the Chaudenson-Mufwene model. The speed with which the black population surpassed the white population, quickly constituting two-thirds of the total, must also have been a significant factor enabling creolization. All these demographic factors must be interpreted within the theoretical perspective presented here; that is, qualitatively, as indicators of a high degree of segregation and isolation of Africans and their descendants.

In this sense, one must also take into account the cultural and ideological level. The possibilities of integration of Africans, *crioulos*, and mulattoes in Brazil would always have been much greater than in the USA. It should be kept in mind that racial segregation was official in the USA until the 1960s. A very different situation occurred in Brazil, giving rise to the discourse of a "racial democracy", although this idea has been adequately disputed in recent decades. The greater racial segregation in the USA was also reflected by a much lower miscegenation level than in Brazil. It should be noted that interracial marriage was banned in many American states until the middle of the 20th century.

Therefore, the higher degree of segregation/isolation of the substrate population may explain why creolization developed in the USA and not in Brazil, although gross demographic data point to Brazil as the region potentially more favorable to P/C than the USA. This comparison between Brazil and the

[16] Some authors, such as Parkvall (2000), postulate that Gullah would have developed on islands of the English Caribbean, being later transplanted to the USA. Even if this hypothesis is accepted, it does not invalidate the fact that such a "protocreole" found favorable conditions to develop and perpetuate in the USA.

USA strongly supports all the reasoning developed so far, in the sense that that a rupture in the linguistic transmission of the superstrate to the substrate, caused by segregation/isolation of the substrate population, is a *sine qua non* condition for the occurrence of P/C. And it ratifies our assessment that a model such as that of Chaudenson-Mufwene, based on a gradual process of changes beginning in the internal history of the superstrate language, would be inadequate to explain the emergence of creole languages.

3.4. Conclusion of the critical assessment of the Chaudenson-Mufwene model

The comparison between the differences in socio-historical contexts that inhibited creolization in Brazil and fostered the emergence of creole languages in the Caribbean shows that the factors presented by the Chaudenson-Mufwene continuum model to explain the formation of creole languages are, in fact, factors that inhibit creolization. A closer relationship between the dominant group and the slaves on properties with few slaves and a greater assimilation of the substrate group to the superstrate models are exactly the factors that inhibited creolization in Brazil. On the contrary, the rapid establishment of the plantation society in the Caribbean, in many cases without an initial homestead society period, together with the concentration of land in large properties, was the scenario conducive to creolization. In addition, it should also be assumed that the possibilities of integration and assimilation of Africans, *crioulos* and mulattoes in the Caribbean would have always been much lower than in Brazil. Therefore, the comparison between the situation in Brazil and the Caribbean shows that if there is no rupture in linguistic transmission from the superstrate to the substrate, creolization is not possible.

But the *proton pseudos* of the Chaudenson-Mufwene hypothesis is that it is entirely subordinate to an inadequate conception of creole language, defined as a variety of LL, which results from gradual changes that would already have begun in the LL itself. Thus, their overall model to explain creolization could serve, in part, to explain the emergence of LL varieties, such as PBP, but it does not explain creolization.

In view of this, the necessary conclusion is that an adequate explanation of the genesis of creole languages cannot be arrived at if one does not start from an adequate definition of these languages.

4. Conclusions and inferences

The analysis developed here has revealed, firstly, that the concept of creole language cannot be merely socio-historical. If it were, PBP should be considered a creole or a post-creole, since in principle it would have formed under the same conditions in which Caribbean creoles formed, as Guy (1981) argued. However, it is a consensus among creolists that it is neither one nor the other. And, to the best of my knowledge, this consensus is not reached merely on a socio-historical basis, because, as far as I know, this is the first study that seeks to narrow the differences between the plantation societies of northeastern Brazil and the Caribbean to explain why there was no creolization in Brazil, while creolization occurred widely in the Caribbean.

PBP is not a creole language. It is merely a variety of Portuguese that displays reflexes of past changes triggered by linguistic contact, without constituting a language distinct from the Portuguese language. To account for this distinction, Lucchesi and Baxter developed the concept of "irregular linguistic transmission" (ILT), with creolization being a case of radical and profound ILT, whereas PBP would be the result of a lighter ILT process (Lucchesi 2008; Lucchesi & Baxter 2009). Although they are essentially the result of the same factor – discontinuity in the transmission of the language from the dominant group to the dominating group – the major difference in the intensity of the process results in a difference of quality in its product, according to the dialectical principle of the transformation of quantity into quality. A lighter ILT generates only a variety of the dominant language, while a radical ILT generates a new language, qualitatively distinct from the LL.

What distinguishes the two processes is the kind of change that affects the linguistic variety formed in the contact situation. In the case of radical ILT in which P/C occurs, the LL's words undergo such radical alterations in their phonetic form that in the vast majority of cases they become unrecognizable to LL speakers, which is not the case in milder cases of ILT, in which the form of the words, in spite of some important phonetic changes, is still recognized in most cases by the speakers of the varieties of Brazilian Portuguese spoken by the most educated sector or by speakers of European Portuguese.

On the grammatical level, there is also a clear watershed between light ILT and the P/C that occurs in radical ILT processes. The changes in the light ILT that generated PBP basically reached the grammatical mechanisms of more abstract semantic value, or without any information value. Even in these cases, unlike what usually happens in creolization, these mechanisms have not been

totally eliminated, and there is wide variation in the use of the following grammatical mechanisms:

i) Nominal and verbal agreement: *meus filho trabalha muito* (PBP); *meu**s** filho**s** trabalha**m** muito* (Standard Portuguese (SP)) 'my children work a lot';
ii) Personal pronoun case inflection: *ele viu **nós** na feira* (PBP); *ele **nos** viu na feira* (SP) 'he saw us at the fair';
iii) Infrequent use of the reflexive pronoun: *ela machucou no trabalho* (PBP); *ela machucou-**se** no trabalho* (PS) 'she hurt herself at work';
iv) Absence of passive morphology: *esse chapéu **faz** à mão* (PBP); *esse chapéu **é feito** à mão* (PS) 'this hat is hand-made';
v) Use of indicative mood forms with subjunctive (irrealis) value: *se o pai **estava** lá, não **deixava** ela fazer isso* (PBP); *se o pai **estivesse** lá, não **deixaria** ela fazer isso* (PS) 'if the father was there, he wouldn't let her (lit. she) do that'.

In addition to not completely eliminating these grammatical mechanisms, PBP does not display original and independent processes of grammatical restructuring that occur in radical ILT with P/C, for instance:

i) Obligatory realization of the subject pronoun even when the lexifier is a null-subject language (PBP retains the null subject property of Portuguese to a significant extent);
ii) Preverbal particles marking tense, mood, and aspect (TMA), resulting from the grammaticalization of adverbs and auxiliary verbs (PBP retains most of the verb inflection of Portuguese);
iii) A plural marker for nouns that also functions as a 3rd person plural pronoun, with elimination of number inflection on the noun (in spite of the wide range of variation in the use of the nominal number agreement rule, PBP maintains the Portuguese plural morpheme *-s*: *a coisa* : *a**s** coisa**s*** 'the things');
iv) Indication of gender of animate beings by lexical composition, with the elimination of nominal gender inflection (PBP maintains the Portuguese gender morpheme *-a*, and variation in nominal gender inflection is rare: ***a** menin**a** bonit**a*** 'the pretty girl');
v) Verb serialization to express dative, benefactive, comparative, instrumental etc (there are no serial verbs in PBP);

vi) Grammaticalization of the word for 'body' or 'head' as a reflexive pronoun (although its use is variable, PBP maintains the Portuguese reflexive pronoun).

These structures are not presented here in order to establish a creole prototype (as in Bickerton 1981) but are listed to contrast the type of changes that happen in P/C with the changes that occur in light TLI. Therefore, based on linguistic features, PBP may be readily distinguished from Portuguese creoles, whereas the distinction by means of socio-historical factors is more complex and less obvious. This demonstrates that the concept of creole language has a specific linguistic dimension that deserves to be explored and systematized.

Lastly, an adequate understanding of creole languages contradicts the continuum hypothesis that they have been formed through gradual changes ("approximations of approximations"), that are mere continuations of changes already begun in the LL, so that the structure of the LL is imposed on the process of creolization (on account of a "founder principle"), making the creole language a mere variety of the LL.

It is unreasonable to suppose that, in such a gradualist process, any nominal inflection of gender and number can be eliminated and replaced by lexical composition (in the case of gender) and by a grammatical mechanism of the substrate language (in the case of number). In the same way, it is practically impossible for all verbal inflection of a language such as Portuguese to disappear and be replaced by a system integrally formed by preverbal particles to indicate TMA in the gradual process assumed by the continuity hypothesis. In the same vein, it is unimaginable that by means of gradual "approximation of approximation" changes, a language such as Haitian can develop a post-nominal definite article with the grammatical specification of the language of the substrate, starting from the pre-nominal definite article of the lexifier language (Lefebvre 2001). The same applies to the replacement of pronominal anaphora by the grammaticalization of the noun for head or body, or the development of serial verbs. Such radical changes were only possible because there was a rupture in the linguistic transmission between the dominant group of the superstrate and the dominated groups of the substrate.

Therefore, the comparative analysis of the historical conditions in which PBP was formed *vis-à-vis* the conditions that allowed the emergence of Atlantic creoles in the Caribbean has revealed that, for creolization to occur, there must be a high degree of segregation/isolation of the substrate group. This produces a rupture in linguistic transmission, which in turn enables a grammatical restructuring of the vocabulary acquired by the substrate group, the final result

being a language qualitatively distinct from its LL. If the degree of segregation/isolation is not enough to produce this rupture and original restructuring of grammar, creolization does not occur. Rather, a variety of the dominant language is formed, which, although reflecting changes induced by language contact, as in PBP, is not a creole.

This article presents strong evidence that creole languages result from a heavily simplified and restructured second language variety, which is generically called a pidgin. This very traditional view in creole linguistic studies, advocated by many scholars in the field (e.g., Parkvall 2000; McWhorter 2000; Siegel 2008), has been increasingly questioned, without due empirical evidence and, we feel, without much theoretical consistency, which do not represent an effective progress in the study and understanding of the fascinating phenomenon of creolization.

Abbreviations

ILT=Irregular linguistic transmission; **LL=**Lexifier language; **P/C=**Pidginization/creolization; **PBP=**Popular Brazilian Portuguese; **TMA=**Tense-mood-aspect

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