To appear in *Word*

MICHEL DEGRAFF (ed.). 2001 [1999]. *Language creation and language change. Creolization, diachrony, and development*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. x, 573pp. The paperback edition contains a new preface.

In the volume *Language creation and language change: Creolization, diachrony, and development* the editor Michel DeGraff has brought together a collection of well-edited, integrated papers on creolization, language change, and language acquisition. The papers are written by a talented range of linguists: Dany Adone, Derek Bickerton, Adrienne Bruyn, Marie Coppola, Michel DeGraff, Viviane Déprez, Alison Henry, Judy Kegl, David Lightfoot, John S. Lumsden, Salikoko S. Mufwene, Pieter Muysken, Elissa L. Newport, Luigi Rizzi, Ian Roberts, Ann Senghas, Rex A. Sprouse, Denise Tangney, Anne Vainikka, Barbara S. Vance, and Maaike Verrips. The contributors are characterizable as formalists; the orientation is a UG orientation and the overriding assumption is one that, upon a moment's reflection, should be uncontroversial: creolization, diachrony, and language acquisition must ultimately be subject to one and the same set of constraints. The collection, thus, is an attempt to use a varied spectrum of studies to establish the core of the cross-study commonalities. The converse, of course, is that constraints apparently restricted to one of these three areas should be viewed with suspicion; at the very least, such apparent exceptions probably need reformulation. However, although the orientation is formal, the articles are themselves richly exemplified and by-and-large could be read with interest even by those with minimal interest in the framework being used.

The contributions of the editor Michel DeGraff are a significant part of what makes the collection so valuable. In addition to the integrated quality of the various contributions, D's introduction (1-46) and epilogue (473-543) are substantive and valuable overviews, highlighting themes running throughout the collection, providing overviews of the arguments, and explicitly drawing attention to disagreements between contributors, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the positions. As a consequence, all the contributions become more accessible and thus more valuable.

Understanding first language acquisition must start with the recognition that children do not simply imitate what they hear, that is, they do not simply imitate the primary linguistic data (PLD) they are exposed to, but instead they use this PLD to generate their own grammars, grammars that increasing approximate the E(xternalized) grammars around them, particularly for first languages. It is this model of acquisition that underlies not just D's pieces but the articles throughout the volume: acquisition, in this formulation, involves children using the triggers or cues in primary linguistic data (PLD) to develop an I(internalized) language; the role of the E(externalized) language in this process lies in the triggers and cues it provides. Where the learners differ from the PLD they are exposed to, these differences reflect different parameter settings, that is, the individual has an I-language that is different from the E-language to which the learner was exposed.

While the terminology can be identified with certain formalisms, at least two parts of these notions have a longer history. Weinreich notes (in Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog, 1968) that as early as 1880 Hermann Paul (Paul 1880) recognized not only that language resides primarily in individuals and secondarily in society but also that individuals had different grammars (that is, idiolects); thus, a necessary but not sufficient requirement for explaining

language change is accounting for changes within individual grammars (idiolects). A corollary of this problem, of concern to Paul and more recently to Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog is what they term the actuation problem: Given what appear to be the same conditions, why is it that sometimes a change happens and sometimes it doesn't. As Paul noted for diachronic change, it is not enough to correlate the changes with contact between differing lects; even given the existence of such variability in the PLD, the question of why a change sometimes happens and sometimes doesn't remains to be answered.

This belief in the primary of the individual lect, now identified with formalistic approaches but actually of wider parentage, takes the primary processes in acquisition to be the same for first language acquisition, second language acquisition, creolization and diachronic change. The differences, insofar as they exist, must lie in the differences in the PLD learners are exposed to and the consequences for learning. It is uncontroversial that child learners restructure as part of the learning process, but so do adult learners. Thus, in all language learning situations there are two layers of restructuring: we know recognize that the children do their own restructuring (as they always do when learning) and anyone familiar with second language acquisition knows that the adults do theirs. Neither can be ignored, of course. The other variable is in the PLD, which is constrained both by the structuring done by adult learners—in one sense, all adults as all adults continue to modify their grammars over their lifetimes—and by the structure of the languages the adults are learning. Thus, part of the solution to this/these problems lies in part in the systems of filters, parameters, and constraints inheritxxx in the individuals and how these interact with the variation in the available PLD. Another part undoubtedly lies in the availability of some sort of norm that the children can assimilate to as they continuing learning the language. Since our knowledge of these considerations is far from complete, significant work remains to be done.

The collected papers are sandwiched between D's opening overview and his concluding epilogue. The issue behind putting the first four papers together is whether children or adults are responsible for creole formation. Bickerton, in his chapter (49-74), takes the widely-known position associated with his bioprogram, that is, it is children exposed to restricted and unusually variable PLD are the primary agents of creolization. He is the most dogmatic in arguing that adults play almost no role whatsoever in creolization. However, at least part of this position seems to revolve around what constitutes 'primary'. Since many of the other papers refer to Bickerton's bioprogram explicitly or implicitly it is a good lead paper.

Within the Bickerton framework, Adone and Vainikka (75-94) deal with children acquiring questions, noting that children do not achieve the adult norm until they are from 5 to 8.

Mufwene (25-128) examines his daughter Tazie's speech between 20 and 30 months, focusing on which features match the features in Bickerton's bioprogram and which do not. Ultimately, Mufwene concludes that adults play a significant role in the formation of creole grammars, a position that, if I read it right, only Bickerton disagrees with. The final paper in this section is by Lumsden (129-158), who also argues that adults have a significant role in creolization, both in the relexification process and in structuring the PLD that serves as input to young learners.

The second section consists of two studies of the acquisition of sign language and a second language acquisition study of young students learning Irish. Newport (161-178) deals with the acquisition of sign language by Simon, a boy who learns sign language. She reports that

Simon's sign language is more systematic and less idiosyncratic than the input he is presented with, a condition that she offers several explanations for. The second paper in the section, by Kegl, Senghas, and Coppola (179-238), reviews studies of Nicaraguan sign languages, finding that considerable variation exists in what is acquired. K, S, and C correlate these differences with the age at which the learner first began acquiring sign, a finding quite similar to what one finds with second language acquisition, where age of arrival provides the most significant correlation with fluency. Like the Newport study, the PLD is somewhat irregular and quite variable; the younger subjects have a strong tendency to regularize their grammars. These studies are particularly valuable as they extend the survey to a set of data not usually considered in creole studies.

The Henry and Tangney paper (239-254) is a look at second language acquisition involving young learners in an Irish immersion program taught by fluent, but non-native teachers. In this case, the restriction on the data comes from the fact that the learners are only exposed to the language for a certain amount of time. Again, it struck me reading this chapter that the findings are similar to those typical of second language acquisition.

The third section, language processing and syntactic change, consists of a single paper, Sprouse and Vance's paper (257-284) is a study of the decline of null pronouns in Romance and Germanic languages. Essentially, the authors conclude that the variation involved reflects competition between two distinct grammatical subsystems.

The fourth section consists of three papers on parameter setting in acquisition. Ian Roberts' (287-328) chapter recasts markedness in terms of UG principles. The analysis itself deals with learnability, a central question for creoles as for any other type of language learning. Whatever the framework the various patterns are described in, the implicational relationships are interesting and insightful. Double object constructions are the focus of the Adrienne Bruyn, Pieter Muysken and Maaike Verrips paper (329-374), a detailed, careful quantitative study of variation in double object constructions, which points out that double object constructions occur in almost all creoles. The data and the discussion should be of interest to a range of linguists. Finally, in a relatively technical, formalistic analysis at times not obviously extendable to other approaches, Viviane Déprez (375-428) focuses on negative concord, largely in French and French-lexified creoles.

Finally, the concluding section has two papers, one focusing on movement and then learnability and one on the non-uniqueness of the structure of creoles, followed by DeGraff's synthesis paper. Lightfoot (431-452) focuses on verb movement papers in the volume, word changes in the history of English, and some contemporary word order issues in Berbice Dutch, before offering his own learnability theory. The general question of learnability is of interest regardless of framework and his treatment is interesting. Rizzi's paper (453-472) focuses on the similarities between creole features and the features found in language acquisition situations including first language acquisition. This position presumably combined with the structure of the PLD presented to the learner should account for the structure characteristics of a language, be it a creole or not. In short, the uniqueness of creoles is overstated in typical textbook accounts. The volume concludes with DeGraff's (473-543) very useful synthesis paper.

The volume quite correctly treats the acquisition of languages, whether they be first, second, creoles, or sign languages, as one and the same process. It establishes that the focus of

change is the individual, while at the same time making it clear that older learners often play a crucial role in the structuring of PLD. It argues against the uniqueness of creole languages, a position that always had a suspiciously Do-you-know-how-many-words-Eskimos-have-for-snow quality to it. And it begins to deal with what historical linguists sometimes term the actuation problem: Why did this happen here and now? Why not there and then?

References

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