Dynamics of a Creole System

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Cambridge: CUP

1975

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Extract

[...] We set out with the problem of accounting for a wide range of variant structures, all produced within
the same quite small speech community, and all, apparently, understood by most if not all members of
that community, even though the varieties that deviated most sharply from standard English were quite
unintelligible to the uninitiated native English-speaker. We claim that this range of structures is produced
through prolonged contact between on the one hand a creole language, probably already containing
considerable variation, and deriving in the first instance from inhibition of normal second-language
learning processes, plus first-language loss, in a non-European population, and on the other the European
language that formed the target of that creole's antecedent pidgin, in this case English.