

## Koineization in Medieval Spanish



*Contributions to the Sociology of Language*

88

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# Koineization in Medieval Spanish

*by*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Approaches to the study of language and language change have long been characterized as following in one of two tracks. The focus might be the external aspects of the status and use of language, or, in line with what was considered more properly linguistic, the internal structural features and the changes they undergo. Little relationship was seen to exist between the external (social and cultural) and the internal (structural), and an exclusive focus on the internal features of language came to characterize linguistic research, whether synchronic or diachronic. Although some scholars questioned the value of this approach, they lacked the theoretical base to counter the views of others who believed and believe still that the sole object of linguistic study should be the internal structure of the language.

Belief in the autonomy of language finds its origins in certain metaphors that have long governed scholars' views. In the nineteenth century, the dominant view held that language was a biological organism, which was born, grew, decayed, and died. This belief in the independent life of language led to its study apart from the context of its use. In the twentieth century, this metaphor, though not at all dead, has blended with and been superseded by others, particularly that of language as machine.<sup>1</sup> This view, evident in Saussure's definition of a language as a system *où tout se tient*, has led to ever more precise representations of language as efficient system. While certainly enhancing descriptions of language structure, such a position has left little room for language change, and has led, paradoxically, to the view that language systems must alternate between perfect and flawed states.

James Milroy (1992: 23) has argued that such metaphors have actually hindered research on language change. Continuing the machine metaphor, he points out that internal combustion engines are also systems, but they do not change themselves; they can only be changed from without. Still, the understanding that speakers do not, in general, consciously effect changes in the linguistic system has reinforced the idea that change can only be explained system-internally. Therefore, even when attempts have been made to include external factors in explanations of change, the view of

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language as an autonomous entity has tended to impede an accurate conceptualization of how external factors might contribute to change.<sup>2</sup>

In recent decades, however, sociolinguists have strongly defended the notion that it is not languages that change but rather speakers who change language.<sup>3</sup> To the non-specialist, such an observation may appear self-evident, even trivial, but the biological and mechanistic metaphors so dominated linguistic inquiry that the importance of speakers to language change was for a long time largely ignored. Milroy (1992: 24) points out that linguists who have worked within a wholly system-internal approach have made notable headway in defining the linguistic *constraints* on change, but that they have been unsuccessful in dealing with the Actuation (and Transmission) Problem: "Why do changes in a structural feature take place in a particular language at a given time, but not in other languages with the same feature, or in the same language at other times?" (Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog 1968: 102). In order to answer this question, perhaps the fundamental problem in the study of language change, the researcher must focus on what speakers in society do with their language. To do so is not to reject the idea of language as system, but rather to supplement this idea with a conception of language as a tool or pool of resources that is used by speakers for specific purposes (Milroy refers to this as "speakers' teleology"). From this perspective, linguistic change is seen as the product of the interplay of speakers and systems in specific and changing social contexts.

Keller (1994) follows a logic like that of Milroy in arguing for the use of *invisible-hand* explanations in historical linguistics. Keller points out that languages are social institutions, or *phenomena of the third kind*, and that they cannot be explained in the same ways that natural phenomena or human artifacts are explained.<sup>4</sup> Rather, like other social institutions, languages arise and change as the unintended results of collective and intentional human actions (as do traffic jams, or footpaths across lawns). An invisible-hand explanation of linguistic change will therefore be composed of two levels: a micro-level and a macro-level. The micro-level examines intentional speaker activity and the constraints upon that activity. The constraints, or ecological conditions, include intralinguistic factors such as the linguistic varieties and the specific features associated with each, as well as extralinguistic factors, such as sociocultural, psychosocial, cognitive/learning, and biological conditions that enable and restrict speaker behavior. Speaker (inter)actions, summed and viewed collectively, then

lead to consequences on the macro-level, which is constituted by the linguistic structures, processes, or outcomes that need to be explained.

Of the extralinguistic factors affecting speaker activity, only those relating to social conditions are normally open to change. For this reason, Milroy emphasizes the link between social change and linguistic change, and argues that the primary task of historical sociolinguistics is the establishment of explicit causal links between these two domains (Milroy 1992: 222). To the extent that patterns of social change and linguistic change co-occur in different situations, models and theories of change can be abstracted from real cases of change. In this study, I critique, elaborate and apply a sociolinguistic model of change, koineization, which provides a means of linking certain kinds of structural changes to a specific type of social change. Koineization is generally considered to consist of processes of mixing, leveling, (limited) reduction or simplification, which occur in social situations of rapid and intense demographic and dialect mixing. The model has been developed primarily from studies within the variationist paradigm of new towns (e.g., Omdal 1977; Trudgill 1986; Bortoni 1991; Kerswill 1996; Kerswill and Williams 2000) and colonial and post-colonial language varieties, often as an extension of research on other contact varieties such as pidgins and creoles. These include discussions on the origins of different varieties of overseas Hindi-Bhojpuri (e.g., Moag 1979; Gambhir 1981; Siegel 1987, 1993; Barz and Siegel 1988; Mesthrie 1993), and, to a lesser extent, colonial English (e.g., Trudgill 1986; Trudgill, Gordon, and Lewis 1999). Unsurprisingly, the model has been applied to language change in other colonial contexts, including Latin of the Roman Empire (Wright 1996) and American Spanish (e.g., Fontanella de Weinberg 1992; Granda 1994; del Valle 1998; Hidalgo 2001).

The model of koineization represents a significant theoretical advance for our understanding of language change as influenced by dialect contact and mixing. Traditional historical linguists, heavily influenced by Neogrammarian, structuralist, or generativist/formalist principles, were loath to admit explanations based on dialect contact or mixing in any but anomalous cases of change; the ideal explanation was either internal to the system (and thus little more than a description) or internal to the speech community (if this aspect was considered). Indeed, as we will see in Chapter 2, it is no accident that much early work on koines was carried out by scholars already interested in contact varieties such as pidgins and creoles, or variationist sociolinguists, who were drawn to the study of dialect contact through their study of language/dialect variation and its relationship to

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linguistic change. Still, even in sociolinguistics, study of dialect mixing has only now begun to enter the mainstream.<sup>5</sup>

Although this model has most often been associated with colonial varieties, it is my contention it should be useful for linking the unique social consequences of the medieval reconquest and repopulation of the area we now know as Spain (phenomena with no obvious analogues in medieval France, Italy, and England)<sup>6</sup> with the particular formative changes of medieval Spanish (or, more precisely, Castilian).<sup>7</sup> In fact, as I discovered as I began to research the topic, Ralph Penny had already proposed this idea in his brief study *Patterns of linguistic-change in Spain* (Penny 1987). Penny suggested that the model of koineization (as defined by Trudgill 1986) could and should be applied to the history of Spanish, not only colonial varieties, as in the work of Fontanella (1992), but also peninsular Spanish itself. Penny pointed out that the medieval expansion of Castile and Castilian had occurred in a series of geochronological stages of population movement and dialect mixing (Penny 1987: 4–7):

1. Burgos and the early county of Castile (late 9th and 10th centuries)
2. Toledo and surrounding regions (from 1085 and into the 12th century)
3. Seville and the valley of the Guadalquivir (mid- and late 13th century)
4. Granada and surrounding regions (from 1492)
5. The conquest and colonization of America, and the sudden conversion of Seville into the sole port of entry/exit for the colonies (from 1492 and into the 16th century)
6. Judeo-Spanish, in exiled Sephardic communities of the Mediterranean (following the expulsion of 1492)
7. Madrid, following its designation as capital of Spain (from 1561)

According to Penny (1987), there are numerous features of Peninsular Spanish that might be ascribed to koineization, such as the absence of phonemic splits and the small inventory of phonemes relative to other Romance languages. Other such features include:

- reduction from four to three degrees of aperture for tonic vowels
- reduction of final vowels from four to three
- merger of /b/ and /β/
- loss of voicing in sibilants
- leveling from four to three verb classes
- almost complete leveling of second and third verb classes
- extreme leveling of irregular verb forms

- leveling of perfect auxiliary verb to *haber*
  - interdialectal solution to third-person object pronouns
  - merger of /j/ and /ʎ/ in Andalusia (*yeísmo*)
  - merger of the antecedents of /s/ and /θ/ in Andalusia (*seseo/ceceo*)
  - replacement of *vosotros* with *ustedes* in Western Andalusia
  - aspiration and loss of /-s/ in Andalusia
- (Penny 1987: 8–17)

However, Penny (1987) kept his comments speculative; he did not attempt to tie most of these changes to any particular stage, provide evidence for such linking, or enter into a detailed explanation of how particular features originated, were selected or spread. Subsequently, Penny has returned occasionally to the topic (e.g., 1992, 1995, 2002) and has published a recent volume, *Variation and Change in Spanish* (Penny 2000), which includes significant discussion of the effects of dialect mixing on the history of Spanish. In his more recent publications, Penny has begun a more in-depth analysis of some of the problems identified by him, and has begun to answer the question he himself poses in his (1987) essay: “is it possible to observe a correlated series of linguistic levelings and simplifications, in the way the theory predicts?” (Penny 1987: 8). To this end, he has analyzed the origins of Judeo-Spanish (1992) and the rapid propagation of the aspiration of etymological /f/ after the naming of Madrid as capital in 1561 (2002). In Penny (2000), he discusses still more features of Spanish that may have arisen as a result of koineization. Still, this volume was designed as a broad overview and introduction to variation and change in the history of Spanish, and Penny therefore did not aim to link specific changes to specific periods (though he does consider some changes that might be associated with the Burgos phase), nor to engage in detailed reconstructions of particular changes. At this point, then, the questions that Penny posed in 1987 have yet to be answered, particularly for the early medieval periods of koineization. Indeed, while the importance of the Burgos phase (or *período de orígenes* as it is known to most historians of Spanish) has long been recognized, the sociolinguistic significance of the Toledo and Seville phases remains undemonstrated. Moreover, Penny (2000: 5), following Wright (1999), expresses reservations about periodization of the history of any language, including Spanish, and so avoids reliance on the historical schema of geochronological stages of koineization he had proposed earlier (though he continues to suggest them as possibilities).

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Penny's original suggestions and unanswered questions form the starting point and organizational basis for much of this study. I have chosen to study only a limited number of features, and, in the interest of exploring its usefulness, I have chosen to maintain the geochronological framework outlined in Penny (1987). The number of features has been limited to only a few for each stage (not all of which were mentioned by Penny), because my primary intent has been to show, in a thorough and detailed manner, how certain changes can best be explained in terms of koineization, and in so doing to offer evidence for the validity of the model as elaborated and defined in Chapter 2. I have limited discussion to the levels of phonology and morphology (or morphosyntax in the case of *leísmo*), in part because these are the linguistic levels that have received most attention in Hispanic historical linguistics, but also because these have been the components of language least obviously related to social and cultural change. I have also limited my discussion to only the first three stages proposed by Penny – those which began and ended in the medieval period. This is so for two main reasons. First, the year 1500, a traditional break-off point between medieval and modern Spanish, marks a convenient break-off point for this study, which would otherwise require entry into the even more complex issues surrounding the origins of American Spanish (though the last chapter includes discussion which will be of interest to those studying this topic). Second, the late 15th century marks the advent of printing and with it the beginning of widespread effects of standardization (Harris-Northall 1996b), a process which may erase or blur the effects of koineization (see Chapter 2). Indeed, even though application of the model represents a clear example of what Labov (1975) has called “using the present to explain the past”, medieval Spanish also represents an ideal context and variety on which to test and explore the explanatory power and limits of the model, in that the competing effects of standardization – so difficult to escape in the modern world – were largely absent. And, even though we must still contend with that perpetual dilemma of historical linguistics – relative paucity of data – medieval Spanish is a variety that has been thoroughly studied, and for which we possess fairly plentiful documentary evidence, sometimes (particularly in the Seville phase) much more than that available for some of the colonial/post-colonial language varieties that have been studied as koines up to now.

The study is divided into four core chapters (Chapter 2–5). In the first of these, I begin by reviewing the history and use of the term *koiné*, from which the term and concept of koineization is derived. Given the recent



development of this model, it is only to be expected that consensus about all its defining features has yet to be reached. Even so, a thorough understanding of the model is necessary if it is to be used to reconstruct events at great time-depths (1100 to 700 years ago in this study). Inevitably, my own research has led to re-evaluation of earlier proposals on koineization. I therefore examine key studies that discuss or apply a model of koineization (particularly Siegel 1985; Trudgill 1986; and Kerswill and Williams 2000), synthesizing this earlier work, relating it to more general theories of language change and pointing to possible problems, limits, and refinements. I also propose certain methodological procedures or guidelines that should be adhered to when using the model to analyze and explain past changes.

From there, I move to investigate, in three further chapters, the first three periods of possible koineization and rekoineization suggested by Penny for Castilian: the Burgos phase (Chapter 3), the Toledo phase (Chapter 4), and the Seville phase (Chapter 5).<sup>8</sup> In each of these chapters, I review the social and demographic history of the period and region, and develop sociolinguistic reconstructions of certain changes that can and should be linked to koineization as it is defined in Chapter 2. But I have also varied the organization of each chapter as needed. For example, the Burgos phase has received a great deal of attention from scholars, so Chapter 3 includes a review and critique of previous discussions of the linguistic significance of this phase, as well as the medieval period in general. In this chapter I argue that there are at least two groups of changes for which koineization was a primary cause, but I also discuss three other changes less clearly related to koineization, and, in the interest of exploring the explanatory limits of the model, consider to what extent koineization may or may not contribute to our understanding of their development.

Unlike the Burgos phase, the Toledo phase has not generally been recognized as significant to the development of medieval Castilian, so my primary aim in Chapter 4 is to show that there are several groups of changes that can be attributed to koineization in this period. I also consider the relationship between koineization and the spread of Castilian features in neighboring regions, a phenomenon which appears to have accelerated at this time. Until very recently, the Seville phase had been largely ignored by scholars, but during the past decade the Spanish scholar Frago Gracia has made strident claims that many of the features that today characterize the Andalusian dialect of southern Spain had their origin in the dialectal and demographic mixing of the 13th century. Chapter 5 is therefore, in large measure, a response to the work of Frago Gracia (e.g., 1993), whose

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research and views I consider in some detail. In fact, I challenge his arguments that a key modern feature of Andalusian, *seseo*, arose in the 13th century. On the other hand, I do find convincing textual evidence of other changes not considered by Frago which support his more general claim that the Seville phase was an important period of (rapid) change. This particular case will illustrate the importance of adhering to the methodological guidelines outlined in Chapter 2 when employing the model at a great time-depth.

## Chapter 2

### Koines and koineization

The model of koineization, of fairly recent development, is based on earlier metaphorical use of the term *koine*. We therefore begin with an overview of the origins and modern use of the term in the linguistic literature, and of the confusion that its varied meanings have sometimes provoked. The primary aim will then be to define, as thoroughly as possible, what koineization is, and what it is not. Several scholars have sought to answer these questions, though their responses do not agree in all respects, so I have organized the bulk of this chapter as a critical review of previous discussion of koineization, with the goal of synthesizing this earlier work and my own views. Throughout, the various facets of koineization are put in relation to other theories of language use and change, but a special section focuses on the differences between koineization and other processes with which it may interact in real cases of change, or be confused in scholars' discussion of change. The chapter concludes with the definition of a prototypical model of koineization, and the proposal of methodological guidelines for application of the model.

#### 1. Koine and koines

*Koine* is a term with a long history and a wide variety of interpretations. It has its origin in the name of a variety of ancient Greek that became the common language of the eastern Mediterranean. Subsequent metaphorical or technical use of the term has referred to a broad range of language varieties that share some or all of the characteristics of the original Greek *Koine*.

##### 1.1. The Greek Koine

The κοινή (from *koinē dialektos* or *koinē glōssa* 'common tongue') was a mixed dialect based largely on the prestigious Attic dialect of Athens. From the middle of the fifth century B.C., when Pericles converted the

Confederacy of Delos into an Athenian empire, the influence of Attic spread rapidly throughout the Aegean. Most of the other city-states in this empire spoke Ionic dialects (to which the comparatively archaic Attic was closely related)<sup>9</sup> and resented the control of Athens, but the emerging Koine, usually referred to as *Great Attic* at this early stage (Bubenik 1993: 12; Horrocks 1997: 29), was useful for commerce and general intercourse and was also employed as the (written) language of administration (Horrocks 1997: 33). It has been suggested (Thomson 1960: 34; Hock 1986: 486) that a likely birthplace for the Koine was the Peiraeus, or port of Athens, where Attic speakers and Ionic speakers from other parts of the empire interacted, along with Doric speakers from the neighboring Peloponnesus. However, its use as written “standard” and spoken vernacular was never restricted to the Peiraeus, since contact between Attic and Ionic speakers occurred in a variety of contexts. The city-states in the Attic League had to provide soldiers for the Athenian armies, as well as deal with Athenian officials in their territories and Athenian administrative documents composed in official Attic (Horrocks 1997: 31).<sup>10</sup> Athens also sent out numerous Attic-speaking colonists to the colonial territories, where they interacted with Ionic speakers. Many speakers of Ionic also took up residence in Athens, and through their interaction with Athenians may have contributed to changes in the speech of “middle-class” residents of the city. Great Attic thus developed in part as a second dialect of Ionic speakers, but it became the native dialect for following generations in some of the Ionic cities. Eventually, Philip of Macedon adopted Great Attic as his language of administration and it later spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean as a result of the conquests of his son, Alexander the Great.

The early Koine may have benefited from its ambiguous relationship to traditional Attic; its difference from Attic may have made it more acceptable to the dominated Ionic speakers of the empire (Hock 1986: 486), while its similarity perhaps lent it prestige and made it acceptable to Philip of Macedon. It has been characterized as a “de-Atticized Attic” (Hock 1986: 486) and as a “de-Atticized Ionicized Attic” (Bubenik 1993: 13). It is interesting to note that this mixed and simplified form of Attic was decried from the beginning as being impure and corrupt (Palmer 1980: 175), and centuries later, under the Romans, a campaign of “Atticization” was launched to improve it (Buck 1933: 22). The following features have often been identified as typical of the mixed and simplified nature of the original Koine:

1. Highly distinctive Attic *-tt-* was largely replaced by the more widespread (Ionic) equivalent *-ss-*, thus:

Attic	Koine	
<i>glōtta</i>	<i>glōssa</i>	'tongue'
<i>phulattō</i>	<i>phulassō</i>	'guard, watch'
<i>tettares</i>	<i>tessares</i>	'four' (Hock 1986: 486)

2. Distinctive Attic *-rr-* was replaced by more widespread (Ionic) *-rs-*:

Attic	Koine	
<i>arrēn</i>	<i>arsēn</i>	'male' (Hock 1986: 486)

3. Attic *-ā-* (<\*-ayw) was replaced by more widespread *-ai-*:

Attic	Koine	
<i>elāa</i>	<i>elaia</i>	'olive' (Hock 1986: 4)

4. Dual number, a feature of Attic, was abandoned in the Koine, as in most other Greek dialects (Hock 1986: 486).

5. Attic *-eōs* and Ionic *-ēos* were replaced by Doric *-āos* in *lāos* 'people' and *nāos* 'temple', leading to a more regular declension for these nouns (Hock 1986: 487).<sup>11</sup>

6. Pitch accent was lost, replaced by a stress accent (Thomson 1960: 35).

7. Phonemic vowel quantity was abandoned (Thomson 1960: 35) and distinctive consonant length was lost (Horrocks 1997: 113);

8. The number of vowels was reduced; diphthongs became monophthongs (Palmer 1980: 176–177).

9. Final *-n* was regularized in the accusative (Thomson 1960: 35).

10. The optative disappeared (merged with the subjunctive); the infinitive became common in use with prepositions; the imperfect and aorist were reorganized on a new uniform basis; numerous irregular verb forms were regularized (Thomson 1960: 35).

11. The particle *ἄν* was replaced by a more transparent periphrasis (Thomson 1960: 36).

12. In some cases new words replaced both Ionic and Attic equivalents:

Attic	Ionic	Koine	
<i>naūs</i>	<i>nēūs</i>	<i>plōion</i>	'ship'

(Bubenik 1993: 15)

This list of characteristics is attractively simple and clear – deceptively so – but not all who have used the concept and the term koine have agreed on the features that characterized the original Koine. This has led to varying and problematic interpretations of the term's meaning. Indeed, the great distance between the present and the period in which these social and linguistic changes occurred has made it difficult to define the features of the Koine, much less a clear notion of how the Koine was produced. One problem has been that this temporal distance (and lists like the one above) has

tended to give a falsely static impression of the Koine. Many scholars appear to have conceived of it as a finite state, but in reality the Koine was constantly developing. Palmer (1980: 177) points out that precise dating of attestations of these changes shows that they did not all occur concurrently, but rather appeared and spread at different times over the course of centuries, along with the social and geographical spread of the Koine. For example, Horrocks (1997: 35, 27) discusses the replacement of *-tt-* by *-ss-* and the loss of dual number as a feature of early Great Attic (presumably lost even earlier in a prehistoric Ionic phase of dialect mixing), but believes the loss of the pitch accent (and with it the resultant loss of distinctive vowel and consonant quantity) to have begun in classical times and only to have reached completion in the (Egyptian) Koine by 150 B.C. (Horrocks 1997: 109). Indeed, many of these phenomena were attested in one or several contributing dialects prior to the formation of the Koine itself.

Another assumption, not unrelated to the view of the Koine as a static entity, has been that the Koine was uniform across the Hellenistic world. However, this seems to have been true primarily of a conservative and standardized Koine which was employed in official documents. Horrocks (1997: 61) observes that the “very high grammatical and orthographic standards of even very ordinary ‘official’ papyrus documents from Egypt” suggests that even low-ranking officials must have received rigorous training in this formal variety. On the other hand, more private documents reveal significant regional diversity, and there exist features of Egyptian Koine which distinguish it from the Koine of Asia Minor, or that of Palestine and Syria (Bubenik 1989: 175–252; Horrocks 1997: 60–64).

With regard to the causes of these changes, Thomson (1960: 35) seemed to assume that the extension of Greek to non-native speakers played a role, but he offered no further details. Others have seen the changes that resulted in the Koine as examples of “normal” development. Indeed, Buck dismissed out of hand the possibility that the changes in the Koine were in any way unique:

But mixture in vocabulary is common to most of the present European languages. There were also changes in pronunciation, in syntax, and in the meaning of words, similar to the changes that have taken place in the other European languages. (Buck 1933: 22)

Buck was partially correct in making these assertions, but, as will be discussed below, there is reason to believe that there are distinct though generalizable processes which led to the formation not only of the original Koine but also of many other language varieties that share similar histories

of dialect mixing and demographic movement. More recently, scholars such as Bubenik (1993) and Horrocks (1997: 41) have come to view the changes which characterize the Hellenistic Koine, especially in such new urban centers as Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamum, as arising from the combined effects of top-down imposition of the Koine by the ruling dynasties (favoring overall uniformity), dialect leveling resulting from the mixing of the dialectally heterogeneous immigrant masses from old Greece, and imperfect acquisition by indigenous populations of the language undergoing koineization (favoring interregional diversity).<sup>12</sup> Horrocks makes the following useful observation on the issue of uniformity and variation in the Koine:

It is essential, then, to see the Koine not only as the standard written and spoken language of the upper classes (periodically subject to influences from belletristic classical Attic), but also more abstractly as a superordinate variety standing at the pinnacle of a pyramid comprising an array of lower-register varieties, spoken and occasionally written, which, in rather different ways in the old and the new Greek worlds, evolved under its influence and thereafter derived their identity through their subordinate relationship to it. (Horrocks 1997: 37)

## 1.2. Modern use of the term koine

Modern metaphorical or technical use of the term koine has grown as scholars have attempted to identify commonalities between (the development of) the original Koine and other language varieties. In fact, this has been only too easy to do, as different scholars have identified different features of the original koine as being key to its nature. The meanings assigned to metaphorical uses of the term koine became increasingly diverse as use of the term grew during the 20th century. According to Cardona (1990: 26), modern use dates from Meillet's (1913) discussion and analysis of the original Koine. Meillet reported three meanings for the term: for Hellenistic Greeks, the language of everyday use; for Hellenistic grammarians such as Apollonius Dyscolus, the language of reference for use in grammars, and possibly the base from which new dialects arose; for modern Hellenists, the base for modern Greek (Meillet [1913] 1975: 253–275).

Meillet suggested that it was easier to define the structure of a koine by what it was not (the dialectal features it lacked) than by what it was, thereby establishing the problematic notion that koines are merely the

“least common denominator” of contributing varieties (see below). He also emphasized the long and apparently punctuated development of the Koine:

la κοινή n'est pas une langue fixée, ce n'est pas non plus une langue qui évolue en obéissant régulièrement à certaines tendances; c'est une langue où il y a une sorte d'équilibre, constamment variable, entre fixation et évolution. (Meillet 1975: 256)

Most importantly, however, Meillet argued that the features of the Koine were not unique to it, and suggested that Vulgar Latin, among other languages, showed a similar history of social expansion and structural reduction (Meillet 1975: 257).<sup>13</sup> Meillet's discussion thus identified the usefulness of “ce terme commode et nécessaire”, as he calls it, and thereby initiated its more general use as a means of categorizing language varieties.

Jakobson ([1929] 1962: 82) was another early user of the term, and observed that dialects which serve as vehicles of communication in large areas and gravitate towards the role of koine (by which he seemed to mean *lingua franca*; see below) tend to develop simpler systems than dialects which are restricted to local use (these ideas were further explored in Andersen 1988). Despite such early use, the term apparently remained highly specialized and rarely used until the second half of the 20th century (Cardona 1990: 27). Cardona offers as another early example the following passage from Tagliavini's *Origini delle lingue neolatine*:

Probabilmente il francone, parlato alle corti dei re merovingi e carolingi, era una lingua mista, una specie di koiné formato da elementi franchi salî e franchi ripuarî, nonché da elementi romanzi e germanici assai vari. (Tagliavini 1949: 206)

Tagliavini uses the term to refer to a variety that results from the mixing of not only related but also unrelated languages, thus employing it in a way that seems justified only in the broadest sense (i.e., if the feature of mixing is the only one picked out by the metaphor; but see below for discussion of the potential impact of non-native speakers).

Although not all scholars would use the term with such liberty, it has nevertheless received a tremendous variety of interpretations in the linguistic literature. Siegel (1985) argues that this is so because the original Koine had six different features which scholars could highlight (or ignore) in making comparisons. According to Siegel, the Koine:

- was based primarily on one dialect
- had features of several dialects



- was reduced and simplified<sup>14</sup>
- was used as a regional lingua franca
- was a standard
- was nativized to some extent (Siegel 1985: 358–9, 362)

In order to determine the dominant interpretations of the term, Siegel analyzed references to some 36 language varieties as koines (Siegel 1985: 359):

1. Literary Italian (Pei 1966: 139)
2. Church Kikongo [Congo] (Nida and Fehderau 1970: 152)
3. Standard Yoruba (Bamgbose 1966: 2)
4. Bahasa Indonesian (Pei 1966: 139)
5. High German (Germanic Review 1(4): 297 [1926])
6. Bühnenaussprache [Stage German] (Dillard 1972: 302)
7. Hindi (Hartmann and Stork 1973: 123)
8. Latin in the Roman Empire (Hill 1958: 444)
9. Belgrade-based Serbo-Croatian (Bidwell 1964: 532)
10. Mid-Atlantic koine [England] (Times Literary Supplement, 22 April 1965)
11. Network Standard English [U.S.A.] (Dillard 1972: 302)
12. Melanesian Pidgin (Ervin-Tripp 1968: 197)
13. Fourteenth-Century Italian of Naples (Samarin 1971: 134)
14. Town Bemba (Samarin 1971: 135)
15. Fogy [Senegal] (Manessy 1977: 130)
16. Kasa [Senegal] (Manessy 1977: 130)
17. Congo Swahili (Nida and Fehderau 1970: 152)
18. Lingala [Congo] (Nida and Fehderau 1970: 153)
19. 'Interdialects' of Macedonian (Lunt 1959: 23)
20. Koineized colloquial Arabic (Samarin 1971: 134)
21. Ancestor of modern Arabic dialects (Ferguson 1959a: 616)
22. Vernacular of north China, seventh to tenth centuries (Karlgren 1949: 45)
23. Calcutta Bazaar Hindustani (Gambhir 1983)
24. Israeli Hebrew (Blanc 1968: 237–51)
25. Eighteenth-century American English (Traugott 1977: 89)
26. Fiji Hindustani (Siegel 1975: 136; Moag 1979: 116)
27. Trinidad Bhojpuri (Mohan 1978)
28. Guyanese Bhojpuri (Gambhir 1981)
29. Surinam Bhojpuri (Gambhir 1981: 184)
30. Mauritian Bhojpuri (Gambhir 1981: 184)
31. Slavish [U.S.A.] (Bailey 1980: 156)
32. Italian-American (Haller 1981: 184)
33. Slave languages [Caribbean] (Dillard 1964: 38)

34. English-based nautical jargon (Hancock 1971: 290n)
35. Black Vernacular English (Mühlhäusler 1985: 8)
36. Canadian French (Gambhir 1981)

Siegel reports that very few of these language varieties could be said to have all the properties of the original Koine, and he found wide variation in the meanings assigned to the term itself. Studies 1–22 used the term to refer to a lingua franca (any variety used for intergroup communication); studies 1–11 used it to refer to regional standards. A majority of the studies indicated that several dialects must contribute to the formation of a koine. Only a few studies included reference to a base dialect, reduction and simplification, or to nativization (Siegel 1985: 362).

Though Siegel restricted himself to studies published in English, his general conclusions appear valid for studies published in other languages as well. Still, further variation in meaning does crop up. For example, Romance philologists have long used the term koine to describe certain medieval literary varieties, such as the Provençal of the Troubadours and the “Sicilian” dialect of the court of Frederick II, praised by Dante in *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (Elcock 1960: 399, 459). These varieties certainly show mixing and the elimination of dialect features, but they appear to have been the result of conscious selection and limited to use in writing by a tiny elite. They have also been labeled, perhaps more appropriately, literary standards (Elcock 1960: 455).<sup>15</sup> In Italian linguistics, the term has also been used to describe certain (probably spoken) regional varieties that arose from the Middle Ages around principal urban centers (e.g., Venice, Turin, Milan, Genoa, Naples, Palermo). This use follows those that emphasize dialect mixing, use as lingua franca and/or regional standard. More recently, koine has also come to be used as a sociolinguistic label for a certain level in the dialect continua that characterize most regions of Italy (Berruto 1989: 13). Pellegrini ([1960] 1975: 37) divided these continua into four levels: dialect, regional koine, regional Italian, Italian standard. The regional koines are thus seen as distinct from the regional standards, but their lingua franca function remains significant, as does, at least for some authors (e.g., Cardona 1990), the mixing, reduction, and simplification of dialect features.

Given such wide variation in actual usage, it is unsurprising that explicit definitions of the term have also varied widely. The following give some idea of this variation (some of these are quoted in Siegel 1985):

- “a form of language resulting from a compromise between various dialects and used as a common means of communication over an area covering all the contributing dialects.” (Graff 1932: xxxvii)
- “a compromise among several dialects” used “by a unified group in a self-contained area within a larger linguistic area”. Pei also considers a koine to be a planned language: “a deliberately sought sublimation of the constituent dialects rather than an unconscious and accidental merger”. (Pei 1966: 139)
- “Koine is the term for a ‘common’ dialect which lacks prominent features of the more conventional dialects of a language. It is the end result of dialect levelling.” A koine is often considered “good” speech in the language and is most often a standard dialect. (Dillard 1972: 302)
- “KOINÉS. A standard normally has its origin in the dialect of some particular territory, which comes to enjoy superiority over those of neighboring regions, for non-linguistic reasons (usually political, less often economic or social, never purely literary). Such a favored dialect comes to be the common language or KOINÉ . . . used throughout its region, where it is usually comprehensible to most of the speakers of the neighbouring dialects. In the course of its spread, the koiné retains its basic relationship to the dialect on which it is based, but takes in features from related dialects, as in the instance of Span. /xuérɡa/ *juerga* ‘spree’ from Andalusian . . . or French *fabliau* ‘animal-fable’ from Picard (≠ ONFr. *fablel* ‘little fable’).” (Hall 1974: 104)<sup>16</sup>
- “The spoken language of a locality which has become a standard language or lingua franca.” (Crystal 1992)

Though a more precise definition of the term has been developing since the publication of Ferguson (1959a), widely varying interpretations still abound, even in more recent studies such as those in Sanga (1990) and Knecht and Marzys (1993), where, for example, the terms koine and standard are frequently conflated.

The different interpretations given to the term have produced a situation in which its use often produces more confusion than clarity. Siegel (1985: 363) sets out to resolve this problem by specifying a technical meaning for the term. He claims that the concept of dialect mixing is fundamental, and specifies that the contributing varieties must be language varieties that are either a) mutually intelligible or b) share the same genetically-related superposed language (1985: 375–376).<sup>17</sup> These may include regional dialects, sociolects, and “literary dialects”. For the last category, Siegel based his claim on the development of Israeli Hebrew, which Blanc describes as a

result of the mixing of “a variety of literary dialects, several substrata, and several traditional pronunciations” (Blanc 1968: 238–239). But this definition raises the problem of “non-native” speakers in the demographic mix: should learner interlanguages be included among the contributing varieties of a koine? The impact of non-native speakers has also been identified as important to the development of the Hellenistic Koine (e.g., Horrocks [1997] reports Coptic substrate features in Egyptian koine texts) and the early Arabic koine (Ferguson 1959a). Mesthrie (1994: 1865) defends their potential importance in the development of any koine, since the variants of native speakers of unrelated languages are less likely to be perceived as “foreign” in the mixed linguistic pool of the prekoine (cf. LePage 1992). However, certain constraints need to be placed on this broad view of contributing varieties, at least for prototypical cases. First, adult interlanguage features may form part of the pool, but these speaker-learners must have easy access to input and interaction with native speakers. This in turn implies that such “foreign” speakers do not form a majority in the community, since their dominance would reduce the likelihood of their obtaining sufficient access to the language (varied though it may be). Thus, the range of contributing varieties or subsystems must be expanded to include interlanguage varieties of second language learners.<sup>18</sup>

Siegel also warns that many of the definitions given to the term koine are either too broad or too narrow. Thus, using koine as a synonym of *lingua franca* or common language robs it of usefulness, as does restricting koine to the meaning of “planned, standard, regional, secondary” variety or one based primarily on one dialect. Perhaps more controversially, Siegel’s explanation could be read as favoring a close identification between koines and standards:

unplanned, nativized, or transported languages may be koines if they exhibit the mixing of any linguistic subsystems such as regional dialects, literary dialects, and sociolects. However, although a koine may or may not be a formal standard, it is implicit in all definitions that a koine has stabilized enough to be considered at least informally standardized. (Siegel 1985: 363)

In reality, Siegel meant socially-based language norms rather than the codified language norms that characterize standard languages, and Siegel (1987: 201) clarifies this issue by abandoning use of the term “informal standardization”. The definition might also be improved by emphasizing that prototypical koines not only may be but necessarily are unplanned, nativized, and transported varieties (see below).

According to Siegel, most koines are characterized to some extent by reduction and simplification, though he comments:

requiring a koine by definition to exhibit these features would be too restrictive, as the amount of reduction or simplification may differ between koines according to both the conditions under which they developed and their current developmental stage. (Siegel 1985: 363)

Recent research (e.g., Kerswill and Williams 2000) shows that there are cases of koineization without obvious examples of simplification; this is due to the pre-existing similarity between the contributing varieties, in which most variation is allophonic. Mohan (unpublished paper; reported in Siegel 1985: 361–2) points out that koines are of two types: those based on dialects with great structural similarity (such as that studied by Kerswill and Williams), and those based on more highly differentiated dialects. While I think these “types” have to be viewed as extremes on a scale, greater difference between the contributing dialects can be expected to lead to greater perceived simplification in the resultant koine. On the other hand, Siegel’s reference to the “current developmental stage” is problematic, since it implies that a koine, once formed, continues to be in some way identifiable as a koine; as will be emphasized below, koines are only identifiable in a historical sense.

Siegel concluded his discussion of koines with the following definition:

a koine is the stabilized result of mixing of linguistic subsystems such as regional or literary dialects. It usually serves as a lingua franca among speakers of the different contributing varieties and is characterized by a mixture of features of these varieties and most often by reduction and simplification in comparison. (Siegel 1985: 363)

The claim that a koine normally serves as a lingua franca requires some qualification. A koine would only serve as a lingua franca for non-native speakers, since for native speakers it would serve as a primary (perhaps even sole) means of communication. The function of lingua franca may be important in the development of regional koines. Siegel explains that:

a regional koine usually results from the contact between regional dialects of what is considered to be a single language. This type of koine remains in the region where the contributing dialects are spoken. (Siegel 1985: 363)

Petrini (1988: 34, 42) points out that regional koines with no native speakers can be extremely unstable, varying from speaker to speaker and from situation to situation, and may be no more than an abstract perception of

the linguist who observes the frequently similar results of multiple accommodations by speakers. Petrini claims too that a regional koine as a clearly distinct variety is likely to arise only as it gains native speakers, most often in urban centers, who serve to stabilize the norms of the koine. This regional koine is then used as a *lingua franca* by speakers of rural dialects, but such use is secondary to its use by native speakers.<sup>19</sup>

The notion of koine as *lingua franca* is more problematic in the case of immigrant or colonial koines. According to Siegel, an immigrant koine:

may also result from contact between regional dialects; however, the contact takes place not in the region where the dialects originate, but in another location where large numbers of speakers of different regional dialects have migrated. Furthermore, it often becomes the primary language of the immigrant community and eventually supersedes the contributing dialects. (Siegel 1985: 364)

In this case, it seems that the *lingua franca* function would only exist for a short time, until the speakers of the contributing dialects die off. After that, all or most speakers of the koine are native speakers. However, there is a larger issue here: emphasis on the use of koines as *lingua franca* may reveal an assumption that koines develop primarily in order to facilitate clear communication. This is a partly valid assumption in the case of language subsystems that are sufficiently different to impede mutual comprehensibility (as seems to have been the case in many socially subordinate koines, such as those used by workers in the Bhojpuri-Hindi diaspora), but most dialects are in fact mutually comprehensible (or become so quickly with interaction), so effective communication cannot be identified as the only or even the most important factor in koine formation. This issue is discussed in greater detail below.

Another valuable effort to define koine as a technical term is that of Mesthrie (1994). Mesthrie, like Siegel, analyzes modern use of the term in relation to the original Koine, for which he identifies four key features:

- (a) its development as a new, common variety based on existing dialects of the language (common is taken in the sense of “shared”);
- (b) its use as a common (or “vulgar”) medium of communication between speakers with different first languages or speakers from different dialect areas;
- (c) its use as the standard/official language of a politically unified region;

- (d) changes in its structure on account of its wide use as both first and second language (involving a synthesis of these at some stage).  
(Mesthrie 1994: 1864)

For modern uses, Mesthrie explains that in one stream of thinking, the formal criteria of (a) and (d) are considered primary, and in another, the functional properties of (b) and (c) are considered primary. Mesthrie rejects (b), (c) and (d) as criteria for definition of koine:

The major objection to (b), (c), or (d) alone as a defining criterion is that on its own each defines a language variety or linguistic process that has a well-established label: (b) is synonymous with *lingua franca* (and the process of language spread); (c) is better described as ‘standardization’; and (d) describes the phenomenon of substrate influence in second language acquisition or in language shift. (Mesthrie 1994: 1864–1865)

Mesthrie identifies (a), or the incorporation of features from several (regional) varieties of a single language, as the only necessary feature of a koine (however, see below for consideration of the impact of language acquisition). In effect, Mesthrie rejects the synchronic functions – *lingua franca* or standard – as defining features of a koine, and accepts only those aspects that are essentially diachronic in nature, resulting from the process of dialect mixing:

While the processes involved in koineization are of considerable interest to the linguist, once a koine has formed there may be nothing to distinguish it from older dialects of the language. (However, subordinate immigrant koines do often show a significant reduction in inflections.) Generally, the designation koine might be appropriate at a particular stage in the history of the language, but loses significance once the variety becomes established as the first language of a new generation. Like any other natural language a koine may in time develop new regional subdialects, as shown by the history of Greek. (Mesthrie 1994: 1865).

Hence, koine has become, in its technical sense, merely a convenient label for those language varieties and states that result from the social and linguistic processes of koineization.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Models of koineization

Most recent discussions of koines have shifted from a focus on the resultant state to a focus on the processes of koine formation. Though Samarin (1971) was the first to use the term *koineization*, others before him had already begun to shift focus to the diachronic study of koine formation. Ferguson's (1959a) study of the Arabic koine, which he claimed was the common base for modern spoken dialects of Arabic, was essentially an exercise in reconstruction of a stage of the language. He attributes the formation of this variety (perceived as uniform) to "a complex process of mutual borrowing and leveling among various dialects", while most of the 14 features he discusses show some sort of loss, reduction or simplification. Given the time depth of this study and the lack of documentary evidence, no further study of processes was possible. Blanc (1968) argued that modern Israeli Hebrew was "gradually given a definite shape by a slow 'koineizing' process drawing on several pre-existing sources . . . Usage had to be established by a gradual and complex process of selection and accommodation which is, in part, still going on, but which now has reached some degree of stabilization" (Blanc 1968: 238–239). Samarin (1971) was only indirectly concerned with koineization, but he suggested use of the term as a means of differentiating a unique process, distinct from dialect leveling or borrowing, that leads to the formation of a new dialect. Samarin (and Dillard 1972: 300) also emphasized that koineization involves the suppression of localisms or prominent stereotypable features as speakers of different dialects mix together in new social contexts, particularly in cases of migration.

None of these studies engaged in detailed discussion of the process or model of koineization. However, the growth of studies of pidginization and creolization also drew scholars' attention to other types of colonial/post-colonial languages, among them the numerous varieties that arose as a consequence of the Bhojpuri-Hindi diaspora. In the aftermath of the abolition of slavery, European colonial powers shipped hundreds of thousands of Indian peasants on indentured contracts to other colonies. The immigrants spoke primarily genetically-related Indic languages from the north, but in some cases there were also speakers of Dravidian languages from the south. The Indic varieties included dialects of Bhojpuri, Avadhi, other eastern and western varieties of Hindi, Bengali, Rajasthani, Panjabi and Calcutta Bazaar Hindustani, with widely varying degrees of mutual comprehensibility between the different varieties. In each colony, a compro-



mise variety arose that was used as an in-group language among the Indian laborers. The areas where these new dialects have been identified and studied include Fiji, Surinam, Natal (South Africa), Trinidad, Mauritius and Guyana (Siegel 1988a; Mesthrie 1993: 26–29).

## 2.1. Siegel's stage-based model

As these different varieties received more scholarly attention, efforts to define common principles of koineization began to appear. An early effort is that of Gambhir (1981), but the most well-known and influential in this tradition is that of Siegel (1985), who was investigating the development of Fiji Hindi (or Hindustani; e.g., 1975, 1987, 1988b). In his (1985) study, he synthesizes notions of *koines* and *koineization* from other studies in order to arrive at a technical definition of *koine* (reported above) and a more precisely defined model of *koineization*, based on his own findings and that of others. His model is based on a sequence of four possible stages of *koineization*:

1. *Prekoine*. "This is the unstabilized stage at the beginning of *koineization*. A continuum exists in which various forms of the varieties in contact are used concurrently and inconsistently. Levelling and some mixing has begun to occur, and there may be various degrees of reduction, but few forms have emerged as the accepted compromise."
2. *Stabilized Koine*. "Lexical, phonological, and morphological norms have been distilled from the various subsystems in contact, and a new compromise subsystem has emerged. The result, however, is often reduced in morphological complexity compared to the contributing subsystems."
3. *Expanded Koine*. A stabilized *koine* "may become a literary language or the standard language of a country. This extension of use is often accompanied by linguistic expansion, for example, in greater morphological complexity and stylistic options."
4. *Nativized Koine*. "A *koine* may become the first language for a group of speakers . . . This stage may also be characterized by further linguistic expansion (or elaboration), but here some of it may be the result of innovations which cannot be traced back to the original *koineized* varieties." (Siegel 1985: 373–374)

Siegel emphasizes that not all these stages need necessarily occur in any particular case of *koineization*, and provides examples of such variable development (see Table 1). Siegel consciously modeled this presentation

on then-current approaches to the study of pidginization and creolization, and borrowed his paradigm (Table 1) from the developmental continuum for pidgins and creoles (Table 2) constructed by Mühlhäusler (1980: 32). At first glance, the proposed relationship seems eminently reasonable, since pidgins, creoles, and koines all result from language contact and demographic mixing, and they are often found in colonial or post-colonial regions. However, as Siegel himself has argued in later work (see below), there are significant differences between pidginization/creolization and koineization, and these differences underlie some problematic implications of the (1985) stage-based model.

*Table 1.* Developmental continua of koines. Source: Siegel (1985: 375).

prekoine	prekoine	prekoine
↓	↓	↓
↓	stabilized koine	stabilized koine
↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	expanded koine
↓	↓	↓
nativized koine	nativized koine	nativized koine
(Fiji Hindustani)	(Guyanese Bhojpuri)	(Greek Koine)

*Table 2.* Developmental continua of creoles. Source: Siegel (1985: 375), based on Mühlhäusler (1980: 32).<sup>21</sup>

jargon	jargon	jargon
↓	↓	↓
↓	stabilized pidgin	stabilized pidgin
↓	↓	↓
↓	↓	expanded pidgin
↓	↓	↓
creole	creole	creole
(West Indian English Creole)	(Torres Strait Creole)	(Tok Pisin)

Pidgins are generally understood to result from contact between typologically distant varieties, while prototypical koines (such as Spanish) result from contact between linguistic subsystems that show high degrees of mutual intelligibility. Since speakers in a koineizing context can usually un-

derstand each other, the need to communicate information – which plays the key role in pidginization – cannot be a generalizable primary motive for alterations in speaker production (though it may play a greater role when contributing varieties show greater structural differences, as in the case of Fiji Hindi). More importantly, prototypical pidgins and creoles arise in very specific social circumstances in which speaker-learners are separated from models – native speakers of the target variety – at the same time that they must communicate with the socially-distant model speakers or, more importantly, other speakers with whom a common language is not shared. The social context of koineization could not be more different, for the speaker-learners, be they native speakers of a related dialect, second language learners, or children, must be assumed to have easy access to abundant, if highly variable, input. Indeed, within the Thomason and Kaufman (1988) model, koineization is properly categorized as change with language maintenance (but see below).

As a result, it becomes difficult to accept an unintended implication of the stage-based model: that both pidginization and koineization are characterized not only by mixing (which remains undefined but which we may assume means the appearance of features from several source dialects in a resultant koine) and simplification, but also by reduction/impooverishment. Siegel borrows Mühlhäusler's (1980: 21) definitions of simplification ("an increase in regularity or a decrease in markedness") and reduction ("a decrease in the referential or non-referential potential of the language"). But while simplification is indeed a linguistic process of koineization, reduction of this sort cannot be, for reduction as defined here includes the extreme structural/lexical reduction of pidgins, which makes full comprehension difficult or impossible outside of contexts of direct oral communication, where gestures, intonation, and the possibility of clarification substitute for structural complexity. Since learners in a koineizing situation are not deprived of input, there is no reason for extreme reduction to occur.<sup>22</sup>

If extreme reduction does not occur, then there is no need for a stage of structural expansion, which in pidgins is associated with the expansion of functions and/or creolization of an existing pidgin; this occurs as the pidgin is extended to use in new communicative contexts, and it therefore requires new vocabulary and more systematic marking of grammatical relations to make it less context dependent and more fully functional as a primary means of communication. Since no radical reduction such as that affecting pidgins is present in koineization, expansion must be reinterpreted in the

context of koineization. It is certainly true that any expansion of contexts of use is likely to require an expansion of the lexicon, but this is true of any language that acquires new functions. In fact, Siegel exemplifies this third stage with the use of the koine as a literary or standard language. The inclusion of standardization is not entirely unwarranted, for it reflects a frequent reality: koines tend to be selected as standards, since standards also require the minimal variation in form that characterizes koines. However, while standardization does include a process of elaboration of the lexicon and syntax, particularly of written language (Haugen 1966: 933; Lodge 1993: 26), this is not quite the same as expansion in pidginization/creolization, which includes especially an increase in morphological complexity. Moreover, standardization may enter into competition with koineization. For instance, Fontanella (1992: 42–54) argues that in the history of American varieties of Spanish, standardization has sometimes (partially) impeded koineization, as in the interior of Mexico, and sometimes reversed its effects, as in Buenos Aires (see below). Rather than including processes such as lexical expansion or standardization within a model of koineization, it is probably best to see them as interacting with koineization.

Another problem with the parallel stages of pidginization and koineization is the timing and significance of nativization. In pidginization, relative stabilization of grammar and lexicon may occur before nativization (as in the well-known case of New Guinea Tok Pisin), but pidgins are not native languages, and structurally they are very simple and therefore easily learned by adults; nevertheless, they are relatively unstable with regard to phonology, since each speaker's version will be affected by his/her native language phonology. In large measure, it is the nativization stage of creolization that leads to full stabilization of a pidgin (although the question of how many and what types of features need to be stabilized in order to consider the variety stabilized will depend largely on the perspective taken). Here then, there is a problem with Mühlhäusler's original proposal. In fact, while adults do play important roles in the selection of features, nativization by children is probably key to full stabilization or focusing of a koine (Mesthrie 1994: 1866; Kerswill 1996). Petrini (1988: 42), as mentioned above, argues that the developing koine or prekoine of the Italian region of Ticino has so far failed to stabilize because there are no native speakers of this variety, and Kerswill (1996) argues that in a koineizing community the first signs of the new koine will become evident among the older members of the first generation of children (see below).