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**THE CREOLENESS OF  
UNSERDEUTSCH (RABAUL CREOLE GERMAN):  
A TYPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, we discuss to what extent the German-based contact language Unserdeutsch (Rabaul Creole German, cf. Volker 1982) matches the category ‘creole language’ from both a socio-historical and structural perspective. As a point of reference, we will use typological criteria that are widely supposed to be typical for creole languages. It is shown that Unserdeutsch fits fairly well into the pattern of an ‘average creole’, as has been suggested by data in the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures* (Michaelis et al. 2013). This is despite a series of atypical conditions in its development that might lead us to expect a close structural proximity to the lexifier language, i.e. a relatively acrolectal creole. A possible explanation for this striking discrepancy can be found in the primary function of Unserdeutsch as a marker of identity as well as in the linguistic structure of its substrate language Tok Pisin.

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## KEYWORDS

Creole languages, German-based, language universals, language structure, linguistic typology, Rabaul Creole German, Unserdeutsch

## 1 PRELIMINARIES

Unserdeutsch (Rabaul Creole German) developed among mixed-race children at a Catholic mission station in Vunapope (near Rabaul) at the beginning of the twentieth century (cf. Volker 1982; Maitz 2017). At that time, the whole Bismarck Archipelago was under German colonial rule, including the Gazelle Peninsula in north-eastern New Britain, which is the cradle of Unserdeutsch. Today, only about 100 elderly L1 speakers of Unserdeutsch, the only German-lexified creole language in the world, are still alive (cf. Maitz 2016; Maitz & Volker 2017). Apart from its unique lexifier language, Unserdeutsch ought to be of particular interest for creolists in several aspects.

First, it developed amidst an exceptionally sharp contrast between a strongly isolating extended pidgin language (Tok Pisin) as its main substrate, and a highly inflected Germanic superstrate language (German). Second, to mention only the two aspects that are specifically relevant here, the socio-historical and socio-communicative profile of Unserdeutsch, on the one hand, displays a range of similarities to other creole languages in the world, but, on the other hand, shows a considerable number of very atypical characteristics. Regarding the high amount and various kinds of atypical characteristics, one would probably expect a language structure that is atypical for a creole language. The question arises, whether or to what extent the grammatical structure of Unserdeutsch reflects its socio-historical and socio-communicative peculiarities. To put it differently: To what extent does Unserdeutsch meet into the cross-linguistic or typological definitions of creole languages (cf. Arends, Muysken & Smith 1995; Bartens 2013; Michaelis et al. 2013; Velupillai 2015; Holm & Patrick 2007)?

Until lately, it would have been difficult to answer this essential question, since the language data available were not sufficient for such a purpose. Only a very small amount of the material collected by Craig Volker in 1979 and 1980 survived, the main part having been lost since then (cf. Götze et al., this

issue). In addition, a considerable amount of the remaining data is actually Standard German rather than basilectal Unserdeutsch, since many of the speakers at that time were proficient in the lexifier language as well. However, only basilectal Unserdeutsch, the pole most distant from the lexifier, can be considered when it comes to investigating the creoleness of the language.<sup>2</sup> With the new documentation project launched at the University of Augsburg in 2014, there are now enough data suitable to reach firm conclusions.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, we shall pursue the question of the creoleness of Unserdeutsch by describing its fundamental, typologically relevant structural features based on new language data and by confronting them with results of research in creole universals. We will begin by briefly addressing typical and atypical features in the genesis and the socio-communicative profile of Unserdeutsch from a creolistic point of view (section 2). This is followed by methodological reflections on the empirical basis of the structural analyses as well as the point of reference used in determining creole typicality (section 3). Afterwards in section 4, basilectal Unserdeutsch will be located among the world's creole languages by means of fundamental typological (phonological, morphological, and syntactic) criteria.<sup>4</sup> We conclude in section 5, by summarising and discussing the results of the analyses.

## 2 THE CREOLE (NON-)TYPICALITY OF UNSERDEUTSCH

The ontogenesis of Unserdeutsch has been described in detail elsewhere (cf. Volker 1982; Maitz 2017). Therefore, the typical and atypical conditions in the genesis of Unserdeutsch will only be outlined in broad terms here, referring to the papers mentioned above for a more detailed overview.

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<sup>2</sup> For some further details on the creole continuum of Unserdeutsch see Maitz (2017).

<sup>3</sup> Further information about the interviewed speakers and the fieldwork methodology used for data collection can be found in Götze et al. (this issue).

<sup>4</sup> In that section, we are bound to draw on main differences between Standard German and Unserdeutsch in order to set both apart. A detailed description of typological features of Standard German, however, is far beyond the scope of the present study. For basic linguistic aspects of Standard German, please refer to works such as Hawkins (1986), König & Gast (2009) and Wiese (1996) as well as the literature mentioned at relevant points in the text.

On the one hand, Unserdeutsch can be regarded as a typical representative among the world's creole languages for at least the following reasons:

- a) The language emerged at a missionary station, thus in a German colonial settlement environment (cf. Mufwene 2009).
- b) Being a colonial variety, its development is a result of linguistic and social violence (cf. Arends, Muysken & Smith 1995: 4).
- c) It constitutes a (fully) nativised, restructured contact variety.
- d) Its birth depicts an abrupt, catastrophic development scenario (cf. Bickerton 1988; Thomason 2008: 251).
- e) It developed in a contact situation including (at least) one local language and one European language. Its grammar is strongly based on the local language (substrate language, in this case Tok Pisin), while its lexicon is derived predominantly from the European language (superstrate language, in this case Standard German) (cf. Thomason 2008: 243; Tryon & Charpentier 2004: 5).

On the other hand, at least the following characteristics can be argued to make Unserdeutsch appear as a rather atypical case among the creole languages of the world:

- a) Unserdeutsch is a boarding school creole. It thus belongs to the small set of creole languages that emerged in a school context rather than among slaves in the environment of plantations. Therefore, children and youths did not only act as language 'regulators' in this case, but also as 'innovators' (to use these vivid, but problematic terms).
- b) The children amongst whom Unserdeutsch developed had full access to the lexifier language: they indeed acquired an expanded oral and literal competence of Standard German. This was due to the enforced acquaintance and usage of Standard German in the mission school from the very beginning. This circumstance runs contrary to the assumed typical development of pidgin and creole languages including restricted access to the lexifier language at an early stage (cf. Lefebvre 2004: 8–9).
- c) Unlike most other pidgin and creole languages (cf. Bakker 2000: 48; Romaine 1988: 24), Unserdeutsch served as a means of horizontal in-group communication instead of vertical out-group communication even

before its nativisation (cf. Maitz 2017). This explains why Unserdeutsch could already become an exclusive means of familiar everyday communication among the first speaker generation within the small, close-knit and strictly endogamic mixed-race community. As a consequence and in contrast to classical pidgins, Unserdeutsch was already significantly expanded in its usage and its functions before the process of nativisation set in.

- d) Due to the small size of the language community and its close-knit social networks (particularly resulting from the forced intragroup marriages), the language could stabilise remarkably quickly. Within only one generation, it was largely established and the process was almost completed already in the second speaker generation.

From the perspective of a sociolinguistically grounded language typology (cf. Trudgill 2011) we must assume that social structures or functions of language are reflected in the structure of a language. In other words, the socio-communicative conditions of the Unserdeutsch genesis should be reflected within the structural design of the language, according to our starting assumption. Several aspects of the macro-sociolinguistic context regarding the development of the language and its use are counted among those that have been identified as complexity retaining or complexity increasing factors in the light of recent research. This means that these social aspects are considered to retain or increase irregularity, syntagmatic and/or paradigmatic redundancy, and/or morphosemantic intransparency according to sociolinguistic typology (cf. Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2009, Maitz & Németh 2014, and Trudgill 2011). In the case of Unserdeutsch, the following aspects suggest the retaining of structural complexity:

- a) the speakers' unrestricted access to the lexifier language and their competence in it,
- b) the high prestige of Standard German and the low prestige of Unserdeutsch caused by a standard language ideology, which is typical for colonial contexts (cf. Lippi-Green 2012: 235–247) and which was widespread in the social environment of the language community (as seen in emic language names such as *Kaputtene Deutsch* 'broken German' or *Falsche Deutsch* 'wrong German'),

- c) the small, socially isolated and therefore closed community with its dense social networks (cf. Trudgill 2011),
- d) the fact that Unserdeutsch served as an emblematic in-group code, an esoteric language (in the sense of Thurston 1987), and
- e) the fact that Unserdeutsch was used in expanded contexts of everyday communication.

Against this background, we hereafter want to pursue the issue of whether the typological profile of Unserdeutsch actually deviates from the profile of other creole languages or not. More precisely, we will approach the question whether Unserdeutsch does in fact show a noticeable structural complexity in the context of creole languages (cf. the claim of creole grammars being the world's simplest grammars, McWhorter 2001).

### 3 METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

When it comes to determining the structural creole typicality of Unserdeutsch, this is naturally only feasible by means of a point of reference. In this respect, one soon comes across the widely debated question concerning the existence of structural creole universals. It is not our present task to give a full reflection of the entire discussion here. In a simplified manner, the different research positions can basically be differentiated into two opposing factions: On the one hand, there is the *uniformitarian position*. Its advocates strictly reject the idea of structural creole universals, arguing against the backdrop of the postcolonial conviction that creoles are full-fledged languages no different from non-creoles (cf., e.g., Mufwene 2000; DeGraff 2005). Not least, they argue with the fact that until this day no relevant structural features occurring either in *all* creole languages or otherwise *only* in creole languages could be identified. On the other hand, there is the *exceptionalist position* (cf., e.g., Bakker et al. 2011; McWhorter 2000; 2001). Its proponents hold the view that creole languages share certain typological similarities that set them apart from non-creoles, mainly because of the particular sociohistorical context of their emergence. Such similarities, backed by some statistical evidence, are not necessarily seen in specific grammatical features, but rather in a cluster of co-occurring features or in the

absence of certain fundamental features. The unexceptional (non-)occurrence of features is not as relevant as statistic evidence concerning the appearance of certain typological features (cf. especially Bakker et al. 2011).

By addressing the issue of the creole typicality of Unserdeutsch, we are automatically positioned within an exceptional, or rather distinctional, framework (cf. Bakker et al. 2011: 35). We thus hold the view that the particular sociohistorical characteristics of creole languages may justify certain typological convergences. These relevant characteristics may be seen in (1) the relatively young age of creoles in comparison to non-creoles, (2) the crucial role of universals of second language acquisition in the development of creoles (reflected in L2 simplifications), and, last but not least, (3) the relatedness of common superstrate or substrate languages.

In this study we examine the occurrence and realisation in Unserdeutsch of three fundamental typological variables, each on the level of phonology, inflectional morphology and syntax. The features chosen are those that are mentioned as typical most frequently in the relevant literature and, if available, supported by statistical evidence. All of them are fundamental and generic typological characteristics, since we are not concerned with specific individual grammatical features or categories.

As far as it is possible and seems reasonable, our main basis of comparison is the data of the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures* (Michaelis et al. 2013). These data depict the currently most reliable picture of an “average creole”.<sup>5</sup> Especially in cases where the typological feature refers to the relationship between the creole and its lexifier, we will compare the Unserdeutsch data to the system of Standard German. Further, preferably empirically oriented, literature will be consulted if it seems reasonable in the interest of a more differentiated interpretation of the findings.

The primary data that have been collected via semi-structured narrative interviews as part of several field trips to Papua New Guinea and Australia between 2014 and 2017 (cf. Götze et al. 2017, this issue, and Maitz, König & Volker 2016) serve as our empirical basis. Only the basilectal part of the data is considered here, since the creole character of a given variety is naturally lower towards the acrolectal pole (cf. Maitz 2017). The corpus is

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<sup>5</sup> By using the term ‘average creole’ in this paper, we do not intend to add another theoretical construct to the ongoing debates about shared profiles of creole languages. We use the term at this point only to refer to a statistical mainstream regarding certain typological features of creole languages as reflected in the APiCS data.

currently under construction so that the whole data have not yet been collected and prepared in a form appropriate for use in corpus research. Therefore only the data already transcribed and hence accessible for systematic analyses could be included here, forcing us to forego quantitative statements. Although in principle this lowers the resilience of our data, in reality, however, the data already evaluated and all experience from the field clearly show that especially basilectal Unserdeutsch shows at most a very small variation with regard to the typological features examined here. This variation may, since not explicitly addressed, be disregarded insofar as the following analysis does not aim at a detailed presentation of grammatical facts, but merely intends to show typological tendencies. Moreover, individual deviations from the rule, or their realisations in high frequency environments, have been excluded, as these are obviously lexically stored constructions (chunks) that are not rooted in the system of the language. Finally, we disregard all sorts of individual occurrences, because, as mentioned before, only recognisable patterns are relevant in this context.

## 4 THE TYPOLOGICAL DESIGN OF UNSERDEUTSCH

### 4.1 Phonology

Three articular phonological features are most frequently mentioned – and of course discussed – in creolistic universals research (cf. Velupillai 2015: 53–54, McWhorter 2001, Klein 2006, etc.). These are (1) the absence or depletion of typologically unusual, marked vocals and consonants of the lexifier language, (2) a relatively small phoneme inventory, at least in comparison to the lexifier language, and (3) simple syllable structures.<sup>6</sup> With regard to these typological features, it is said (in a somewhat simplified manner) that creole languages tend to be phonologically less complex than non-creoles (cf., e.g., McWhorter 2001 and Parkvall 2008). Even though these claims have been questioned over the last years, with cross-linguistic

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<sup>6</sup> What is also frequently named among the central phonological features of creole languages is the absence of (lexically or grammatically distinctive) tone (cf. McWhorter 2000: 86–90; Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013c). Like all pidgin and creole languages in the Pacific region, Unserdeutsch does not have distinctive tones. This is hardly surprising, since Tok Pisin as well as Standard German are not tone languages.

(counter) evidence leading to an increasingly nuanced view (cf., e.g., Klein 2006 and Velupillai 2015), one can clearly state that all three claims apply to Unserdeutsch (for a more detailed description cf. Maitz & Volker forthcoming).

#### 4.1.1 Phoneme inventory

The issue of phoneme inventory and the absence of marked phonemes shall be treated jointly, as these aspects are related to some extent.

Taken as a whole, it can be seen that the phonology of Unserdeutsch is largely based on its substrate language, Tok Pisin (cf. Laycock 1985). The most obvious aspect is the vowel system, which essentially corresponds to the system of Tok Pisin. Basilectal Unserdeutsch displays a five-unit vocal system similar to Tok Pisin, consisting of the five short vowels /i/, /ɛ/, /a/, /u/, /o/. With the exception of /ɛ/, these are qualitatively identical with the vowels of Tok Pisin. As can be seen by this, there is a clear tendency for the long vowels of the lexifier language to be shortened in basilectal Unserdeutsch, as in (1) (for a phonology of German cf. Wiese 1996). Similarly, Standard German umlaut vowels, which are regarded as typologically highly marked, tend to be represented by their delabialised equivalents, as in (2). The Standard German reduction vowels [ə] and [ɐ] in unstressed syllables are also absent and replaced usually by [ɛ], as in (3).

- |   |   |               |
|---|---|---------------|
| (1) a. SG <i>groß</i> [gro:s] ‘big’           | → | UD [gros]     |
| b. SG <i>lieben</i> [li:bən] ‘love’           | → | UD [libən]    |
| c. SG <i>stehlen</i> [ʃte:lən] ‘to steal’     | → | UD [ʃtɛlən]   |
| (2) a. SG <i>Hügel</i> [hy:gəl] ‘hill’        | → | UD [higɛl]    |
| b. SG <i>Frühstück</i> [fry:ʃtyk] ‘breakfast’ | → | UD [frijʃtik] |
| c. SG <i>hören</i> [hø:rən] ‘hear’            | → | UD [hɛrən]    |
| (3) a. SG <i>aber</i> [a:bɐ] ‘but’            | → | UD [abɛ]      |
| b. SG <i>alle</i> [alə] ‘all’                 | → | UD [alɛ]      |
| c. SG <i>Teller</i> [tɛlɐ] ‘plate’            | → | UD [tɛlɛr]    |

This five-unit vowel system is significantly smaller than the one previously described by Volker (1982). The difference relates to Volker assuming two rows of short vowels with distinct degrees of opening, thus resulting in nine vocal phonemes. However, in the light of the data, his description seems to be untenable. Admittedly, vowels may be realised with a differing degree of opening, but this variation does not seem to be phonologically distinctive; the variants appear in the same distribution. The correction in this matter is of major relevance for our investigation, especially since nine-unit vowel systems are counted among the most complex and rare vowel systems in creole languages worldwide (cf. Haspelmath & APiCS Consortium 2013a; Klein 2006). A five-unit vowel system with three vowel heights, on the other hand, clearly classifies Unserdeutsch as an average creole language in that regard (cf. Haspelmath & APiCs Consortium 2013a).<sup>7</sup>

Tendencies similar to the vowel system can be observed in the consonant system of Unserdeutsch, which is apparently based on the phoneme system of Tok Pisin. The parallels result from the depletion of the marked consonants of the lexifier language and a reduced phoneme inventory in contrast to the lexifier language (for a more detailed account cf. Maitz & Volker forthcoming). In Unserdeutsch, only three consonant phonemes of the lexifier language are systematically preserved that are not part of the core phoneme inventory of Tok Pisin: the unvoiced fricatives /f/ and /f/, as well as the affricate /tʃ/, the latter only playing a marginal role in Standard German as well as in Unserdeutsch. All other consonant phonemes and allophones, which are considered to be marked from a cross-linguistic perspective, present in Standard German, but absent in Tok Pisin, are completely or at least partially depleted or substituted in Unserdeutsch. This applies to [ç], [χ], [pf], [ts], [ʀ]/[ʁ]<sup>8</sup> and [z]:

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<sup>7</sup> The correction of Volker's phonological interpretation is important, not least because his results have found their way into creole and typological literature (cf. Velupillai 2015: 125–126; Klein 2006) and have been used as evidence against the postulate of the phonological simplicity of creole languages. For example in Klein's sample of 23 creole languages (cf. Klein 2006), the nine-unit vowel system described by Volker (1982) is ranked as the most complex one, whereas the five-unit vowel system described here would sort Unserdeutsch into the group of creole languages with the smallest vowel inventory in Klein's sample.

<sup>8</sup> In Standard German, three main free-variant allophones of /r/ are predominantly distributed on a regional level. There is strong linguistic and extralinguistic evidence for assuming that the superstrate language of Unserdeutsch was a predominantly Westphalian-Rhenisch coined spoken Standard German, thus originating from the northwest or central-west region of Germany (cf. Maitz & Lindenfesler forthcoming).

SG [ç]	→ UD [h] / Ø	SG <i>Kirche</i> ‘church’	→ UD [kirhɛ]
SG [χ]	→ UD [h] / Ø	SG <i>lachen</i> ‘to laugh’	→ UD [lahɛn]
SG [pf]	→ UD [f]	SG <i>Pflanzung</i> ‘plantation’	→ UD [flansuŋ]
SG [ts]	→ UD [s]	SG <i>zusammen</i> ‘together’	→ UD [susamɛn]
SG [ʀ]/[ʁ]	→ UD [r]	SG <i>trinken</i> ‘to drink’	→ UD [triŋkɛn]
SG [z]	→ UD [s]	SG <i>diese/dieser/dieses</i> ‘this’	→ UD [disɛ]

To summarise, Unserdeutsch shows a profile typical for creoles with regard to the size and type of its phoneme inventory.

#### 4.1.2 Syllable structure

If we look at the complexity of syllable onsets, we see that creole languages hardly seem to differ from non-creoles, so that most pidgin and creole languages in the world show complex syllable onsets (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013a). Unserdeutsch belongs to this group, as it allows complex syllable-initial consonant clusters, like its lexifier and its substrate language. Only in very rare cases are initial consonant clusters simplified in Unserdeutsch (as in 4a–b). By contrast, the complexity of syllable codas seems to be an important criterion of differentiation from a creolistic point of view. It is often argued that creole languages prefer CV structures and thus open syllables (cf. Velupillai 2015: 54; Kaye & Tosco 2001: 76). This strong and general claim has been refuted by cross-linguistic evidence over the last years (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013b; Velupillai 2015: 304). Nevertheless, it can reasonably be concluded that the vast majority of pidgin and creole languages do not tolerate complex syllable codas like those appearing in Standard German (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013b).

Basilectal Unserdeutsch fits into this description, as it displays a marked preference for less complex syllable codas, in contrast to its lexifier language, Standard German, but similar to its substrate language, Tok Pisin. Yet, whilst in Tok Pisin a major role is given to vocal epentheses (cf. Smith 2008: 203–204), there seem to be no epenthetic vowels in Unserdeutsch. Instead, Unserdeutsch displays a strong tendency to delete syllable-final consonants, leading to a weakening of syllable codas and a clear tendency towards CVC and CV structures (as in 4). With regard to cluster complexity, Unserdeutsch

clearly falls into the category of less complex pidgin and creole languages (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013b).

- (4) a. SG *bist* [bɪst] / [bɪs] ‘(you) are’ → UD [bis]  
b. SG *nicht* [nɪçt] / [nɪç] ‘not’ → UD [ni]  
c. SG *Tag* [taχ] ‘day’ → UD [ta]  
d. SG *vielleicht* [filæçt] ‘maybe’ → UD [filæ]  
e. SG *Abend* [a:bənt] ‘evening’ → UD [aben]

## 4.2 Inflectional morphological features

Morphological simplicity is considered a structural main characteristic of creole languages (cf. Crowley 2008: 75). Although the amount of simplicity remains a controversial issue, as it varies considerably from case to case, there is at least agreement that earlier postulates of a complete absence of inflectional morphological substance in creoles are untenable (cf. Bartens 2013: 92). Nevertheless, in contrast to its particular lexifier language, the tendency of creoles towards morphological simplicity is apparent. This simplicity manifests itself in the absence of complexifying (redundant or irregular) categories and markers on the one hand, as well as in a general preference for transparent, linear structures on the other hand. The following section is limited to the consideration of inflectional morphology. Three main features that are backed empirically and frequently put forward in the relevant literature shall now be analysed with regard to their occurrence in Unserdeutsch in contrast to Standard German: (1) inflectional poverty, (2) the absence of marked grammatical categories, and (3) minimal allomorphy.

### 4.2.1 Inflectional poverty

Creole languages tend to be isolating languages from a typological perspective (cf. Lefebvre 2004: 217), hence preferring analytical ways to encode grammatical information (if required at all) over synthetic strategies. However, the obvious conclusion that the low level of syntheticity might be balanced out by a high level of analyticity, has been proven wrong. Creole languages are by no means necessarily more analytic than non-creoles and are only significantly less synthetic (cf. Siegel, Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann

2014). As statistical evidence from recent typological research has shown repeatedly, these two indices are not mutually exclusive. In actual fact, the correlation between them may even be positive (cf. Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2009 and Maitz & Németh 2014). A low level of syntheticity, i.e. inflectional poverty in the narrow sense, is one of the creole features cited most prominently. With this in mind, Unserdeutsch is expected to display considerably fewer word-internal grammatical markers than Standard German.

A series of categories marked synthetically in Standard German is either marked analytically in Unserdeutsch or not marked at all, i.e. generally absent.

*a. Absence of synthetic markers on nouns*

In Standard German, nominal plurality is marked by means of suffixation and, partially, an additional change of the stem vowel (umlaut). In Unserdeutsch, however, plurality is generally marked by analytic means through adding the prenominal plural word *alle*, as described earlier by Volker (1982: 31). This is obviously based on the way of marking plurality in Tok Pisin (cf. Tok Pisin *ol haus* ‘houses’):

- (5) *er mal-en<sup>9</sup> alle plan fi bau-en alle haus.*  
 3SG.M draw-V PL plan for build-V PL house  
 SG: ‘Er hat die Pläne für den Bau der Häuser gezeichnet.’  
 EN: ‘He drew the blueprints for the construction of the houses.’

The syntactic position of *alle* may alternatively be filled by another word indicating plurality, such as an indefinite pronoun or an adjective, as in (6):

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<sup>9</sup> Verbs in basilectal Unserdeutsch systematically end on *-en*, except for a small group of high-frequency verbs (see below) and they are not inflected in person and number. Furthermore, these invariant verb forms are temporally unspecified to a large extent, as they may represent past, present and future actions likewise. On these grounds, {-en} seems to be a suffix indicating word class, i.e. a verb marker. Another reason for this analysis is the fact that {-en} is also attached to borrowed verb stems, and only to verb stems, as in *ringen jeman* ‘to call somebody’ (SG *jemanden anrufen*) or *riden fahrrad* ‘to ride a bike’ (SG *Fahrrad fahren*).

- (6) a. *einige von mei cousine war da.*  
some of 1SG.POSS cousin.F COP.PST there  
SG: ‘Einige meiner Cousinen waren da.’  
EN: ‘Some of my cousins were there.’
- b. *du hat drei monat.*  
2SG have three month  
SG: ‘Man hatte drei Monate (Zeit).’  
EN: ‘You had three months.’

Remnants of mostly lexeme-bound synthetic forms, partially linked with an additional analytic marker, are rare. They may be interpreted as irregular plural forms that are stored holistically and have only remained because of their high frequency, as in (7).

- (7) a. *zeit fi die jetzt su hat kind-er.*  
time for 3PL now to have child-PL  
SG: ‘Es ist jetzt Zeit für sie, um Kinder zu kriegen.’  
EN: ‘It is now time for them to have children.’
- b. *alle frau-en muss näh-en alle kleider.*  
PL woman-PL must sew-V PL clothes  
SG: ‘Die Frauen mussten Kleidung nähen.’  
EN: ‘The women had to sew clothes.’

Such remnants are therefore not relevant at this point, as it is obvious that the productive and unmarked way of plural marking in Unserdeutsch is analytic. The use of plural markers, which is rare in European languages, is considered common in creoles (cf. Haspelmath & APiCS Consortium 2013b).

While the marking of number only happens outside the word boundary, case inflection is, apart from single, holistically stored constructions, completely absent; the category as such is omitted (see below). Therefore, it can be noted that in basilectal Unserdeutsch the rich synthetic noun inflection of its lexifier language has, apart from single occasional, fossilized forms, largely been depleted.

*b. Absence of synthetic markers on verbs*

In Standard German, person and number are generally marked directly on the verb by means of suffixation and, partially, additional stem inflection (umlaut), regardless of the presence of further analytic markers. In basilectal Unserdeutsch, the synthetic marker is generally omitted, so that the verb remains uninflected. The marking of person and number is shifted to the subject, usually a pronoun or a noun phrase, as in (8).

- (8) *ich sag-en sie: du wart-en fi wenn du hat*  
 1SG say-V 3SG.F 2SG wait-V for when 2SG AUX.PST  
*de kin son ge-krie!*  
 ART.DEF child already PTCP-get  
 SG: 'Ich sagte ihr: Warte, bis du das Kind bekommen hast!'  
 EN: 'I told her: Wait until you gave birth to the child!'

The only exception is the auxiliary and copula *sein* 'to be', which is usually inflected (cf. Volker 1982: 36); however, among some basilectal speakers, even this highest-frequency verb remains uninflected with *bis* (obviously derived from the Standard German 2SG form *bist*) used across all persons and numbers, as in (9).

- (9) a. *mama du hör-en i bis deutsch am spreh-en!*  
 mum 2SG hear-V 1SG COP German PROG speak-V  
 SG: 'Mama, hörst du, ich spreche Deutsch!'  
 EN: 'Mum, do you hear me, I am speaking German!'
- b. *die bis von vunapope.*  
 3PL COP from Vunapope  
 SG: 'Sie sind von Vunapope.'  
 EN: 'They are from Vunapope.'

Hence, the verbal paradigm of Unserdeutsch consists of only a single invariant form. This basic form is normally identical to the Standard German infinitive form; the only exception to this rule are high- and very high-frequency verbs such as *geht* 'go', *komm(t)* 'come', *muss* 'must', *will* 'want',

*weiss* ‘know’, and *hat* ‘have’, as in (10), which are formed based on the Standard German third person singular indicative present form. In respect to these general and exception rules, Unserdeutsch exactly matches the pattern of Portuguese and Spanish based creoles (cf. Bartens 2013: 100).

Regarding the marking of infinite participles, Unserdeutsch does not have a present participle. The past participle, which is formed by means of a variable circumfix (depending on the inflectional class) and partially through an additional change of the stem vowel (ablaut) in Standard German, is present in Unserdeutsch. The simplified formation rule in Unserdeutsch is [*ge-* + basic form], the result of a reanalysis: *gemahen* ‘made’ (SG *gemacht*), *gekrie* ‘gotten’ (SG *gekriegt*), *geligen* ‘lied’ (SG *gelogen*), etc. The formation of the participle does in large parts correspond to general tendencies in Black Namibian German (Küchendeutsch) and other L2 varieties of German (cf. Deumert 2003: 584–587). In Unserdeutsch, the morphological structure of the participle can be described as the basic verb form plus the prefix *ge-*, whereby the basic form consists of the verb stem and the verb marker *-en*.<sup>10</sup> The absence of the category mood and the loss of the preterite contribute to the far-reaching loss of syntheticity in Unserdeutsch, as the synthetic mood and preterite markers of the lexifier language are omitted entirely (see below).

*c. Absence of synthetic markers on adjectives*

Adjectival comparison in Standard German is generally achieved by adding a suffix, whereby the stem vowel may change additionally in some cases (umlaut). In Unserdeutsch, the comparative is usually formed in an analytic way, except for high-frequent, lexicalised forms:

- (10) a. *wi hat ferti mehr snell.*  
 1PL have finished more fast  
 SG: ‘Wir werden schneller fertig.’  
 EN: ‘We get finished more quickly.’

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<sup>10</sup> An interpretation of the suffix *-en* as an infinitive suffix is out of the question here, since the verb in Unserdeutsch does not inflect for person and number (see footnote 5).

- b. *er wid arbeit mehr stark fi uns.*  
 3SG.M AUX.FUT work more hard for 1PL.ACC  
 SG: ‘Er wird härter für uns arbeiten.’  
 EN: ‘He will work harder for us.’

The formation of the superlative appears less straightforward. While especially high frequent adjectives follow the Standard German synthetic pattern in this respect (*de älteste brudä* ‘the oldest brother’, *sein jüngste sohn* ‘his youngest son’), the synthetic form tends to be avoided with other adjectives. It is mostly replaced by a periphrastic construction with the intensifier particle *ganz* ‘very’, functionally resembling the relative: *Peter laufen ganz schnell* (direct translation from the English stimulus *Peter runs fastest*).

Compared to its lexifier language, the synthetic conjugation of the adjective is also largely omitted or simplified in Unserdeutsch. In accordance with the clear tendency of creole languages to cope without agreement within the nominal phrase (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013d), Unserdeutsch adjectives indicate neither gender, number nor case. Only one adjectival inflectional suffix is retained in Unserdeutsch: {-e}. It has been reanalysed as a uniform and invariant attributive marker, however. In attributive use it obligatorily accompanies the stem of the adjective (such as the suffix {-pela} in Tok Pisin, cf. Volker 1982: 41), whereas it is omitted in predicative and adverbial use:

- (11) *du ni fihl-en kalt, du hat ein gut-e leben;*  
 2SG NEG feel-V cold 2SG have ART.INDF good-ATTR life  
*heiß-e zeit du kann immer geht in salzwasser.*  
 hot-ATTR period 2SG can always go in sea  
 SG: ‘Man friert nicht, man hat ein gutes Leben; wenn es heiß ist, kann man immer ins Meer gehen.’  
 EN: ‘You don’t feel cold, you have a good life; when it is cold, you can always go into the ocean.’

*d. Absence of synthetic markers on pronouns*

The forms of the indefinite, demonstrative and possessive pronouns, which are inflected in Standard German, always remain uninflected in basilectal Unserdeutsch. Here, either the Standard German form without an ending is used across the entire paradigm (*alle mein sahen* ‘(all) my stuff’; *dein frau* ‘your wife’; *alle sein kinder* ‘(all) his children’, *ganz viel cousine* ‘quite a lot of cousins’) or with the pronouns *ihre* ‘her’ and *diese* ‘this’, the Standard German form with the suffix {-e} (*das war ihre leben* ‘that was her life’; *heiraten diese mensch* ‘marry this man’). As the form is stable for every single pronoun and across speakers to the greatest extent, there is no doubt that the pronominal ending *-e* cannot be a suffix in Unserdeutsch.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the syntheticity of Unserdeutsch is drastically reduced in comparison with Standard German: With only a few exceptions, there are no synthetic markers across word classes. Since the presence of some individual synthetic elements is not at all uncommon even for creole languages (cf. Velupillai 2015: 328–329), it can definitely be stated that Unserdeutsch fits the structural typological design of creole languages with regard to the criterion of inflectional poverty.

*4.2.2 Absence of marked grammatical categories*

The reason for the inflectional poverty of most creole languages cannot be ascribed only to the increased use of analytic means, but also to the complete omission of the grammatical categories of its lexifier language. This relates in particular to such categories considered as marked from a cross-linguistic perspective, especially categories ‘conditioned by syntax and devoid of ‘meaning’’ (McWhorter 2014: 95), such as case and gender.

In basilectal Unserdeutsch, a number of these categories of the lexifier language are dropped. Only in one subsystem of its language system can an increase in categorical complexity be observed: in the system of personal pronouns, which shows reflections of the highly complex pronominal system of Tok Pisin. In general, the pronominal system of Unserdeutsch is based on the system of Standard German. However, with regard to personal pronouns, the system is extended by an exclusive-inclusive distinction of the first person plural pronoun, which can be traced back to substrate transfer from

Tok Pisin (cf. Verhaar 1995: 354–355 and Mühlhäusler 1985: 343). The pronoun *uns* expresses the inclusive function, as in (12), while *wi* represents the exclusive meaning, as in (13).

- (12) *uns beide am spreh-en so schön, uns zwei*  
 1PL.INCL both PROG talk-V so lovely 1PL.INCL both  
*am spreh-en unserdeutsch.*  
 PROG talk-V Unserdeutsch  
 SG: ‘Wir beide unterhalten uns so schön, wir beide sprechen  
 Unserdeutsch.’  
 EN: ‘The two of us are talking so lovely, we both speak  
 Unserdeutsch.’
- (13) *wi tanz-en wenn wi hat musik; wi alle*  
 1PL.EXCL dance-V when 1PL.EXCL have music 1PL.EXCL all  
*tanz-en, sauf-en, dann nächst-e ta wi kaputt.*  
 dance-V tipple-V then next-ATTR day 1PL.EXCL exhausted  
 SG: ‘Wir tanzen, wenn wir Musik haben; wir tanzen alle, wir saufen  
 und am nächsten Tag sind wir dann erschöpft.’  
 EN: ‘We dance, when we have music; we all dance, drink (tipple), and  
 the next day we are all exhausted.’

The description of Volker (1989a: 31–32) concerning this matter suggests a systematically distinct use of both forms. The analysis of the recent data, however, indicates a rather unsystematic and inconsistent use of both forms, which might be attributable to an erosion of the system. A relatively consistent use of the inclusive pronoun *uns* seems to be restricted to the use in dual contexts, as in (12).

Apart from this phenomenon, basilectal Unserdeutsch displays a clear and strong tendency towards the omission of the grammatical categories of its lexifier language. Beyond the complete loss of the Standard German inflectional classes, this can be seen particularly in the absence of several further grammatical distinctions of Standard German.

*a. Absence of gender marking*

For a creole language, the presence of the gender category, like all kinds of nominal classifier systems, would be highly unusual (cf. Holm 2000: 216). In line with this, the tripartite gender system of Standard German is completely eliminated in Unserdeutsch. The Standard German definite articles *der* (masculine), *die* (feminine), and *das* (neuter) are therefore, as in English, merged into a single standard article *de*, as in (14):

- (14) a. *whether de mensch lieb-en de frau.*  
 whether ART.DEF man love-V ART.DEF woman  
 SG: ‘ob der Mann die Frau liebt.’  
 EN: ‘whether the man loves the woman.’

- b. *de tüür war weg von de klein-e haus.*  
 ART.DEF door was away from ART.DEF small-ATTR house  
 SG: ‘Die Tür der Toilette hat gefehlt.’  
 EN: ‘The toilet door was missing.’

With regard to the indefinite article and the pronominal system, Unserdeutsch has likewise retained only one gender-invariant form of the Standard German paradigm. This form may be identical with the Standard German basic form, as with the indefinite article and most pronouns, or with a suffixed form, as mentioned above. Example (15) shows how not only is grammatical gender absent in Unserdeutsch, but also the congruency of natural gender between articles and pronouns and their antecedents, marked in Standard German, is missing:

- (15) *ein frau un ihre herrgemahl.*  
 ART.INDF woman and 3SG.F.POSS husband  
 SG: ‘Eine Frau und ihr Ehemann ...’  
 EN: ‘A woman and her husband ...’

*b. Absence of case marking*

The four-part case system of Standard German is basically not retained in Unserdeutsch (cf. 16). Apart from some few lexicalised phrases (*guten aben* ‘good evening’), sporadic remnants of the case system are, similar to other contact varieties of German (cf. Boas 2009: 204–210), present only within the paradigm of personal pronouns, as in (17).

- (16) *de schwester wokabaut herum mit ein groß-e*  
 ART.DEF sister walk around with ART.INDF big-ATTR  
*kanda in ihre hand.*  
 cane in 3SG.F.POSS hand  
 SG: ‘Die Missionsschwestern sind mit einem großen Bambusstock in der Hand herumgegangen.’  
 EN: ‘The missionary sisters walked around with a big cane in their hands.’

- (17) *die hat ge-mah-en ihm ein chief.*  
 3PL AUX.PST PTCP-make-V 3SG.DAT ART.INDF chief  
 SG: ‘Sie haben ihn zum Anführer gemacht.’  
 EN: ‘They appointed (made) him chief.’

However, even for personal pronouns, case differentiation does not exist to a great extent at the basilectal level of Unserdeutsch, as in (18).

- (18) *wenn du zahl-en i de zahlung du geb-en*  
 if 2SG pay-V 1SG ART.DEF payment 2SG give-V  
*de weiße, orait, i arbeit fi du.*  
 ART.DEF whites all\_right 1SG work for 2SG  
 SG: ‘Wenn du mir den (gleichen) Lohn bezahlst, den du den Weißen gibst, in Ordnung, dann arbeite ich für dich.’  
 EN: ‘When you give me the (same) payment you give the whites, all right, then I’ll work for you.’

*c. Reduced tense system*

In the verbal phrase, the marking of categories is a bit more sophisticated. Most relevant here is the TMA system and grammatical voice. Firstly, the complex Standard German tense system is substantially reduced in Unserdeutsch. Secondly, the category tense generally seems to be less grammaticalised, since it is obvious that the marking of tense is optional in the basilect (cf. Volker 1982: 43). The temporally unspecified basic form does formally correspond to the Standard German infinitive (see above). Usually, these basic forms are used, and temporal meaning is solely transferred to the verb by context. The occurrence of preterite forms is restricted to a small, closed class of high-frequency verbs (modal verbs and auxiliaries): *war* ‘was’, *wollte* ‘wanted’, *musste* ‘had to’, *konnte* ‘could’, *wusste* ‘knew’. There is, however, an analytical past tense form in basilectal Unserdeutsch, formed by the rule [*hat* + past participle], as in (19):

- (19) *meine vatä hat ge-sterb-en neunzehnunseksi.*  
 1SG.POSS father AUX.PST PTCP-die-V nineteen\_and\_sixty  
 SG: ‘Mein Vater ist Neunzehnhundertsechzig gestorben.’  
 EN: ‘My father died nineteen-sixty.’

Remnants of the Standard German past perfect tense with [*war* + past participle] are apparently restricted to a small, closed class of main verbs such as *war gekommen* ‘had come’, *war geboren* ‘was born’, *war gestorben* ‘had died’. However, past tense meaning is typically either not indicated at all (as in 20), or it is marked by lexical means, e.g., by using temporal adverbs, as in (21):

- (20) *dann i geht zurück arbeit, dann i heirat-en, hat*  
 then 1SG go back work then 1SG marry-V have  
*ein tochter ...*  
 ART.INDF daughter  
 SG: ‘Danach bin ich wieder in die Arbeit gegangen, habe dann geheiratet, hatte eine Tochter ...’  
 EN: ‘Then I went back to work, then I married, had a daughter ...’

- (21) *sie flieg heraus gestern abend.*  
 3SG.F fly out yesterday evening  
 SG: ‘Sie ist gestern Abend weggefliegen.’  
 EN: ‘She flew away yesterday evening.’

All in all, it can be noted that the past tense forms of Standard German are present in Unserdeutsch only either in a weakly grammaticalised manner or in a few remnants, which can be understood as holistically stored and partially reanalysed constructions.

The two future tenses of Standard German are merged into one single form in Unserdeutsch, which, in being formed by the rule [*wid* + basic form], is based on the pattern of the Standard German Future I, as in (22). Similar to Standard German, the marking of future tense is not obligatory, as in (23):

- (22) *diese jahr die wid hat ni ein tanz.*  
 DEM year 3PL AUX.FUT have NEG ART.INDF dance  
 SG: ‘Dieses Jahr werden sie keinen Tanz veranstalten.’  
 EN: ‘This year they won’t have a dance.’

- (23) *morgen sie flie su kokopo.*  
 tomorrow 3SG.F fly to Kokopo  
 SG: ‘Morgen fliegt sie nach Kokopo.’  
 EN: ‘Tomorrow she flies to Kokopo.’

#### *d. Reduced mood system*

The verbal paradigm of Unserdeutsch has no imperative. The verb forms of imperative clauses are formally identical to the verb forms of declarative clauses. The same applies to word order, which is identical in imperative and declarative clauses, in contrast to Standard German, as in (24):

- (24) *du ni denk-en dass i war ni angs!*  
 2SG NEG think-V that 1SG COP.PST NEG afraid  
 SG: ‘Denk nicht, dass ich nicht Angst hatte!’  
 EN: ‘Don’t think I wasn’t afraid!’

There is nothing left of the Standard German subjunctive mood in Unserdeutsch. The synthetic forms (present subjunctive and past subjunctive) do not occur in basilectal Unserdeutsch, apart from single, separate lexicalised constructions. The Standard German periphrasis with *würde* ‘would’ is not used either. The only grammaticalised way to indicate the irrealis exists in the use of the *wid*-construction, which can appear in temporal (see above) as well as in aspectual (see below) and modal function, as in (25). This polyfunctional use of irrealis markers is considered typical for creole languages (cf. Holm & Patrick 2007, Feature 6). In Unserdeutsch, the construction is optional in its modal meaning, too.

- (25) *du wid sa was?*  
 2SG AUX.IRR say what  
 SG: ‘Was würdest du sagen?’  
 EN: ‘What would you say?’

*e. Grammaticalised aspect system*

Almost all creole languages indicate verbal aspect (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013e). The assumption of Bickerton (1981) that creole languages are limited to one single aspect marker (indicating progressive or a related kind of aspect), has turned out wrong from an empirical perspective since then, as many creole languages (additionally) indicate further kinds of aspect (cf. Velupillai 2015: 398), especially habitual and perfective aspect (cf. Bartens 2013: 101ff.). With regard to the so-called *am*-progressive in Standard German, one can assume the existence of a grammaticalised aspect in the spoken domain (cf. Gárgyán 2013: 196), even though there is still a lack of agreement regarding the classification of this phenomenon in the grammar books. From a typological point of view, Standard German is considered a non-aspect language by tradition (cf. Dahl & Velupillai 2013); with leading grammars (still) avoiding a description of German as an aspect language (cf. Gárgyán 2013: 151–156).

The marking of grammatical aspect in Unserdeutsch is obligatory to a large extent. Assuming that Standard German may not (yet) be described as an aspect language, this means the formation of a new category and thus grammatical complexification. At first glance, this seems to contradict the

creole feature formulated above, as it conversely postulates the absence of certain categories. We should, however, consider, that cross-linguistically the presence of the category aspect is regarded as unmarked, especially with respect to creole languages. By way of exception, Unserdeutsch has in fact come closer to the pattern of an ‘average creole’ by *adding*, or at least *expanding* a category in this case.

Unserdeutsch has two different constructions to indicate aspect grammatically. The first construction does formally correspond to the Standard German *am*-progressive; it indicates either progressive, as in (26), or habitual meaning, as in (27):

- (26) *de ganz-e tach sein mun is so voll*  
 ART.DEF whole-ATTR day 3SG.M.POSS mouth COP.3SG so full  
*wenn er is am aufpass-en alle swarz-e labour.*  
 when 3SG.M COP.3SG PROGtake\_care-V PL black-ATTR labour  
 SG: ‘Er hatte den ganzen Tag den Mund voll [mit Betelnuss],  
 wenn (während) er auf die schwarzen Arbeiter aufpasste.’  
 EN: ‘Every day his mouth was full [with betelnut] when he  
 was looking after the black labourers.’

- (27) *jeden tach fi drei wohe i war am spreh-en*  
 every day for three week 1SG COP.PST HAB talk-V  
*mit sie.*  
 with 3SG.F  
 SG: ‘Drei Wochen lang habe ich jeden Tag mit ihr gesprochen.’  
 EN: ‘For three weeks I was talking to her every day.’

In these constructions, the copula *sein* ‘to be’ may be dropped, as shown in (28) and (12); see also section 4.3.3.

- (28) *i weiss ni whether de zwei brudä am leb-en*  
 1SG know NEG whether ART.DEF two brother PROG live-V  
*zusammen or die beide zank-en ...*  
 together or 3PL both argue-V

SG: ‘I weiß nicht, ob die beiden Brüder zusammenleben oder ob sie gestritten haben ...’

EN: ‘I don’t know whether the two brothers are living together or they had a quarrel ...’

The consistent marking of progressive and habitual aspect that can be observed in the data, is not atypical for creole languages (cf. Bartens 2013: 103).

The second construction is the *wid*-construction mentioned above, which widely corresponds to the past habitual use of *would* in English, as in (29).

(29) *sie wid bleib bis sonne will geht unten dann sie geht*  
3SG.F AUX.HAB stay till sun will go down then 3SG.F go  
*zurück zuhause un koh-en.*  
back home and cook-V

SG: ‘Sie ist (jeden Tag) bis zur Dämmerung geblieben, dann ist sie nach Hause zurückgegangen und hat gekocht.’

EN: ‘She would stay till dawn, then she went back home and cooked.’

Tense, mood and aspect markers in Unserdeutsch are placed preverbally in adjacent position. Around 80 percent of the pidgin and creole languages in the world follow this pattern (cf. Maurer & APiCS Consortium 2013f).

#### *f. Marginal voice marking*

Typically, there are no overtly marked passive constructions in creole languages (cf. Crowley 2008: 82). In the Unserdeutsch data, passive constructions appear extremely rarely, and if they do, it is mainly in the more elaborated varieties beyond the basilect. Hence, passive voice shows a very low degree of grammaticalisation in Unserdeutsch. In contrast to its lexifier language, the data displays only one type of construction, consisting of the inflected auxiliary *sein* ‘to be’ together with the past participle of the main verb, as in (30). An agent role may be attached optionally by using the preposition *von*.

(30) a. *die war ge-lern-t wie zu koh-en.*  
 DEM.3PL AUX.PST.PASS PTCP-learn-PTCP how to cook-V  
 SG: ‘Ihnen wurde beigebracht, wie man kocht.’  
 EN: ‘They were taught how to cook.’

b. *vor fünfzehn jahr-e ein buch war*  
 before fifteen year-PL ART.INDF book AUX.PST.PASS  
*ge-schrieb-en von mein mama-s vater.*  
 PTCP-write\PST-V by 1SG.POSS mother-GEN father  
 SG: ‘Vor fünfzehn Jahren wurde vom Vater meiner Mutter ein  
 Buch geschrieben.’  
 EN: ‘Fifteen years ago, a book was written by my mother’s  
 father.’

This passive construction shows great similarity to the passive voice in English. It thus may be traced back to secondary adstrate influence, explaining its very low degree of grammaticalisation in Unserdeutsch.

Altogether, it can be noted that Unserdeutsch matches the typological mainstream of creole languages in respect of its category inventory as well as its elaborateness compared to its lexifier language. A number of Standard German categories that are marked from a cross-linguistic perspective have either been omitted in Unserdeutsch or only play a marginal role, i.e. are marked optionally. Even the categories that are not dropped as a whole do not distort the overall picture, as ‘weakly obligatory’ inflectional categories are considered typical for creoles as well (cf. McWhorter 1998: 792).

#### 4.3.2 Minimal allomorphy

A very small amount of allomorphy, i.e. the broad absence of morphological irregularity and suppletion, is considered to be typical for creole languages (cf. Crowley 2008: 77; Bartens 2013: 92). Such a tendency towards an increased transparency compared to its lexifier language (cf. Leufkens 2013) can similarly be observed in the case of Unserdeutsch.

Regarding nominal inflection, the loss of the complex Standard German plural allomorphy – with its lexeme-dependent nine different ways of plural marking, including  $\emptyset$  (cf. Werner 1969: 93) – is especially striking (see

above). Apart from a few remnant forms of high-frequent lexemes and in mesolectal or acrolectal varieties, the system of Unserdeutsch only shows one unified, analytic way of plural marking by means of the prenominal plural word *alle* ‘all’.

In the area of verbal inflection, the dropping of verbal categories as well together with the transfer of grammatical information to analytic markers (see above) leads to the almost entire loss of stem alternation (ablaut, umlaut). In participles such as *gesprehen* (SG *gesprochen* ‘spoken’), *gegeht* (SG *gegangen* ‘gone’), and *gesterben* (SG *gestorben* ‘died’), the regularisation of strong and irregular Standard German verbs can be seen. Only the verb *sein* ‘to be’ displays suppletion.

Since the comparison of the adjective tends to be done analytically in Unserdeutsch, the vowel alternations of the synthetic Standard German forms has been lost. However, the suppletive forms of some high-frequency adjectives have been retained: *gut* ‘good’, *besser* ‘better’, *beste* ‘best’, *viel* ‘much’, *mehr* ‘more’, *meiste* ‘most’.

Another tendency towards the reduction of allomorphy can be observed in word formation: The Standard German umlaut, sometimes evoked by derivation, is not applied in such cases in Unserdeutsch: SG *Brüderchen* ‘brother (diminutive form)’ > UD *bruderhen*; SG *jüdisch* ‘Jewish’ > UD *judisch*. There is a clear trend in Unserdeutsch to eliminate or regularise irregular and otherwise intransparent forms to unify paradigms.

In the light of what has been said about the morphosyntactic characteristics of Unserdeutsch, we can summarise by saying that the inflectional morphological profile of Unserdeutsch is marked by the presence of features and trends that have been identified as typically creole structural traits in the literature.

#### 4.3 Syntactic features

On the syntactic level, as well, creole languages are said to display reduced overt complexity compared to their lexifier language by tending towards regularisation. The result, a comparatively greater amount of structural homogeneity (cf. Bakker 2008: 140), is represented by an affinity with *fixed SVO word order* and the *adjacency of verbal elements*. This trend towards structural homogeneity merely refers to the basilectal end of a creole

language, as there is naturally a considerable amount of variation across the creole continuum, especially on the syntactic level. Another relevant aspect can be seen in a tendency towards the *dropping of function words*, i.e. the loss of purely grammatical-functional elements “devoid of content”, such as at the level of inflectional morphology, favouring juxtaposition instead. The manifestation of these three features in Unserdeutsch shall be examined below.

#### 4.3.1 Fixed SVO word order

The vast majority of creole languages follow a fixed SVO word order (cf. Huber & APiCS Consortium 2013; Velupillai 2015: 438). The reason for this may be partly due to the fact that the majority of substrate and superstrate languages prefer this syntactic pattern as well (cf. Muysken 1988: 290). Through the renunciation of syntactic permutations in creole languages, the formal marking of sentence types usually does not apply. This applies also to the Standard German distinction between main and subordinate clauses in the surface structure.

In Standard German, SVO word order is restricted to unmarked declarative main clauses and unintroduced subordinate clauses, whereas even here only verb-second is obligatory, and the preverbal position may be filled by other constituents than the subject. Standard German can therefore not be categorised as a purely SVO language (cf. Roelcke 2011: 57–60). This is why, for example, the *World Atlas of Language Structures* does not ascribe a dominant word order to German (cf. Dryer 2013). In Unserdeutsch, however, SVO order is obligatory, independent of the sentence type. The fixed SVO word order in Unserdeutsch corresponds to the typological positioning of its substrate language Tok Pisin, which is described as exclusively SVO (cf. Michaelis et al. 2013: 3).

Regarding the *declarative main clause*, SVO word order is firmly established in Unserdeutsch to the point that it persists when topicalising an adjunct (as in 31). This is similar to the syntactic pattern of English, but in sharp contrast to Standard German, which does not allow verbs in the third position of a sentence.

- (31) a. *einige mal sie arbeit in garten.*  
 few times 3SG.F work in garden  
 SG: ‘Einige Male hat sie im Garten gearbeitet.’  
 EN: ‘A few times she has worked in the garden.’
- b. *wenn du will, du kann geht.*  
 If 2SG want 2SG can go  
 SG: ‘Wenn man wollte, konnte man gehen.’  
 EN: ‘If you wanted (to go), you could go.’

*Imperative sentences* in Unserdeutsch usually retain the SVO surface structure, contrary to both the Standard German and the English verb-first pro-drop construction, as in (32). This word order aligns with the common imperative pattern in Tok Pisin.

- (32) a. *du komm sitz-en in mein office!*  
 2SG come sit-V in 1SG.POSS office  
 SG: ‘Komm, setz dich in mein Büro!’  
 EN: ‘Come, have a seat in my office!’
- b. *du wart-en, i frag-en [Name] ers!*  
 2SG wait-V 1SG ask-V PN first  
 SG: ‘Warte, ich frage erst [Name]!’  
 EN: ‘Wait, I ask [name] first!’

*Interrogative sentences* are formed in a less uniform way. Polar questions, showing VSO word order in Standard German, remain in unmarked SVO word order in Unserdeutsch, as in (33):

- (33) a. *du hat schon ge-spreh-en zu [Name]?*  
 2SG have already PTCP-speak-V to PN  
 SG: ‘Hast du schon mit [Name] gesprochen?’  
 EN: ‘Have you already spoken to [name]?’
- b. *du hat ge-hör-en von [Name]?*  
 2SG have PTCP-hear-V of PN

SG: ‘Hast du von [Name] gehört?’

EN: ‘Have you heard about [name]?’

For WH-questions, there are two possibilities in basilectal Unserdeutsch: basically, one with and one without *wh*-movement. The latter, with the interrogative in clause-final position, seems to be restricted to speakers at the very basilectal end of Unserdeutsch. As metalinguistic comments show, this construction is regarded as a salient feature of basilectal Unserdeutsch – with the emic name *falsche Deutsch* ‘wrong German’, thus evaluated as ‘bad German’ among the speakers. Hence, this word order can be considered as stigmatised, and apparently, it is consciously avoided. This clause type follows the SVO principle, as in (34).

- (34) a. *du wid geht wo?*  
 2SG AUX.IRR go where  
 SG: ‘Wohin willst (würdest) du gehen?’  
 EN: ‘Where would you go?’
- b. *i hat ge-mah-en was?*  
 1SG have PTCP-do-V what  
 SG: ‘Was habe ich gemacht?’  
 EN: ‘What have I done?’

The second possibility to form WH-questions occurs more frequently and corresponds to the Standard German pattern: the interrogative is moved to the clause-initial position (*wh*-movement). In contrast to Standard German, however, the sequence SV is retained, even in cases of object topicalisation, again resulting in the verb in the third position of the clause, as in (35). All these formative patterns are also found in Tok Pisin (cf. Mühlhäusler 1985: 397).

- (35) a. *fi was du muss sterb-en?*  
 for what 2SG must die-V  
 SG: ‘Warum musst du sterben?’  
 EN: ‘Why do you have to die?’

- b. *was du mein-en?*  
 what 2SG mean-V  
 SG: ‘Was meinst du?’  
 EN: ‘What do you mean?’
- c. *was du kann sa?*  
 what 2SG can say  
 SG: ‘Wie kann man sagen?’  
 EN: ‘How (what) can you say?’

Since a formal distinction between main and subordinate clauses is absent in Unserdeutsch, *subordinate clauses*, in contrast to Standard German, follow the same canonic SVO word order. This applies irrespectively of the type of subordinate clause, be it an unIntroduced subordinate clause, a conjunctive clause, as in (36), or a pronominal clause, as in (37).

- (36) *viellei jetz wi ni geht messe fi was wi war schon*  
 maybe now 1PL NEG go mass for what 1PL COP.PST already  
*satt von.*  
 fed\_up by  
 SG: ‘Vielleicht gehen wir jetzt nicht mehr zur Messe, weil wir schon  
 genug davon hatten.’  
 EN: ‘Maybe now we don’t go to mass, because we we’re already fed  
 up (already had enough).’

- (37) *ein mensch wo kann spreh-en englisch ...*  
 ART.INDF person REL can speak-V english  
 SG: ‘Ein Mensch, der Englisch sprechen kann ...’  
 EN: ‘A person, who can speak English ...’

All in all, basilectal Unserdeutsch clearly shows a fixed SVO word order and therefore can be classified as a typical creole language in this respect. On this point, the profile of Unserdeutsch displays a great typological distance from its lexifier language, whereas the structural closeness to its substrate language Tok Pisin is all the more obvious. The observation suggests a profound syntactic substrate transfer here.

### 4.3.2 Adjacency of verbal elements

Verbal elements enclosing other constituents in a clause, so-called ‘bracket constructions’, are a special typological feature of (Standard) German syntax (cf. Roelcke 2011: 65–67). In Standard German subordinate clauses, the clause-initial dependent word and the mostly clause-final finite verb constitute the so-called sentence bracket around all other constituents.

Since there is no sentence bracketing left in Unserdeutsch (as a consequence of all sentence types displaying a strict SVO word order), we shall focus on the so-called grammatical bracket and the lexical bracket in the following section (for bracket types in German cf. Weinrich 2007: 41–60). As corresponding research has shown, such bracket constructions are frequently eliminated in intense language contact settings (cf. Riehl 2004: 106). The adjacency of relating elements, such as parts of the verbal complex, is favoured, since their distant positioning would mean discontinuity and thus a loss of transparency (cf. Leufkens 2013: 341).

#### a. Depletion of the lexical bracket

The term ‘lexical bracket’ refers to the fact that the constituents of phrasal verbs are separated syntactically in certain clause types in Standard German. This happens when the verb functions as a finite verb in V1 or V2 position, dividing the constituents of the phrasal verb between the left and the right sentence bracket.

In basilectal Unserdeutsch the lexical bracket tends to be depleted. Thus, both constituents shift towards each other, albeit retaining a transposed order, as in (38):

- (38) a. *dann wi ma weg alle schale.*  
 then 1PL take off PL peel  
 SG: ‘Dann machten wir die Schalen weg.’  
 EN: ‘Then we took off the peels.’

- b. *er geht zurick zu de kinesese wo sack-im<sup>11</sup>i.*  
 3SG.M go back to ART.DEF chinese REL sack-TR 1SG  
 SG: ‘Er ging zu dem Chinesen zurück, der mich rausgeworfen  
 hatte.’  
 EN: ‘He went back to the Chinese who sacked me.’

Some Standard German phrasal verbs, such as *aufpicken* ‘to fetch, collect, pick up’ or *aufpassen* ‘to take care, watch’, have been reanalysed as inseparable prefix verbs in Unserdeutsch and consequently do not form any kind of bracket, as in (39):

- (39) *de selbe zeit er aufpass-en alle halbweiß-e*  
 ART.DEF same time 3SG.M look\_after-V PL half\_white-ATTR  
*kind-ü am aben.*  
 child-PL PREP evening  
 SG: ‘Gleichzeitig passte er am Abend auf die halbweißen Kinder auf.’  
 EN: ‘At the same time he took care of the half-white children in the evening.’

Remnants of the Standard German lexical bracket are retained rather infrequently in Unserdeutsch. In such cases, the typological middle-field (cf. Zifonun et al. 1997/2: 1498–1505 for a field typology of German syntax) is typically restricted to one single constituent; all other constituents, if existent, move to post-field position, as in (40):

- (40) *i bring-en de schlüssel zurick zu de pflanzung*  
 1SG bring-V ART.DEF key back to ART.DEF plantation  
*herr.*  
 master  
 SG: ‘Ich brachte den Schlüssel zum Plantagenbesitzer zurück.’  
 EN: ‘I brought the key back to the plantation master.’

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<sup>11</sup> The verb form *sackim* represents a hybrid construction, consisting of the English verb stem (*to sack*) and the Tok Pisin transitive marker {-im}.

*b. Depletion of the grammatical bracket*

The grammatical bracket in Standard German consists of at least two verbs, whereby the finite V1 or V2 position is taken by a modal verb (modal bracket) or an auxiliary (tense or passive bracket). The main verb shifts to clause final position in that case, the verbal complex thus embracing the clause constituents following the finite verb.

Since passive constructions are extremely rare in basilectal Unserdeutsch (see above), we confine ourselves to modal and tense brackets. Both bracket types are depleted in the majority of cases, thus finite and infinite verbs are placed in contact position, as in (41):

- (41) a. *darum wi muss-te geht zu kirhe bevor mitterna.*  
 therefore 1PL must-PST go to church before midnight  
 SG: ‘Deswegen mussten wir vor Mitternacht zur Kirche gehen.’  
 EN: ‘Therefore we had to go to church before midnight.’
- b. *die hat bleib in cairns.*  
 3PL AUX.PST stay in Cairns  
 SG: ‘Sie sind in Cairns geblieben.’  
 EN: ‘They have stayed in Cairns.’

To some extent, more often than in case of lexical brackets, a reduced bracket is retained from Standard German. In this case, the middle-field is again restricted to one clause constituent, as in (42). The negation particle *ni* is always placed between the verbal elements, as with *not* in English sentences. Only in more elaborated varieties nearby the acrolectal end of the creole continuum, may two and more elements regularly occupy the middle-field.

- (42) a. *i hat kein brief ge-krie fi er.*  
 1SG AUX.PST no letter PTCP-get from 3SG.M  
 SG: ‘Ich habe keinen Brief von ihm gekriegt.’  
 EN: ‘I didn’t receive a letter from him.’
- b. *die wid viellei tet-en i.*  
 3PL AUX.IRR perhaps kill-V 1SG

SG: ‘Die würden mich vielleicht töten.’

EN: ‘They would maybe kill me.’

As measured by its basic tendencies, basilectal Unserdeutsch can at most be regarded as forming brackets on a very limited basis. Complex bracket constructions from its lexifier language do appear strongly in a restricted or a simplified manner. We may thus conclude that the creole feature discussed above does apply to Unserdeutsch at least to a large extent.

#### *4.3.3 Dropping of function words*

It is known that classes of function words in creole languages are restricted to relatively few lexemes in comparison to their superstrate languages (cf. Hurford 2012: 433). The available grammatical elements accordingly feature a greater semantic extension. The use of function words in creole languages differs from their use in (European) non-creoles on the syntactic level as well. On the one hand, a higher number of constructions, for example possessive constructions or specific clause connections, seem to be formed without using a function word at all in creole languages, thereby showing a trend towards juxtaposition (cf. Sutcliffe 2015: 239). The quite common use of serial verb constructions in creole languages likewise fits into this picture (cf. Aikhenvald 2006: 1). On the other hand, the use of function words in creole languages seems not uncommonly to be less obligatory than in their superstrate language. In the following section, we will discuss the possibility of dropping different function words in Unserdeutsch that are obligatory in Standard German.

##### *a. Partial pro-drop status*

A feature ascribed to many creole languages is their partial pro-drop status (cf. Nicolis 2008: 279–290). While referential pronominal subjects usually cannot be dropped, expletives do rarely appear; thus, formal subjects (and formal objects as well) are uncommon in creole language (cf. Haspelmath & APiCS Consortium 2013c).

Referential pronominal subjects are generally used in Unserdeutsch on (cf., e.g., 38, 39, 40). The occasional occurrence of referential zero subjects

in elliptical constructions, particularly in compound sentences, is roughly comparable with their occurrence in spoken Standard German, as in (43):

- (43) *i heirat-en, hat ein tochter, dann ferti von*  
 1SG marry-V have ART.INDF daughter then done with  
*de mensch, dann fund-en ein andre mensch ...*  
 ART.DE man then find\PST-V ART.INDF other man  
 SG: 'Ich habe geheiratet, hatte eine Tochter, hatte dann genug von dem Mann, habe dann einen anderen Mann gefunden ...'  
 EN: 'I got married, had a daughter, then I was done with the (this) man, then found another man ...'

There are neither marked subject nor marked objects forms in Unserdeutsch. This is mainly due to the fact that the third person singular neuter pronoun *es* 'it', serving as expletive in Standard German, is completely absent in basilectal Unserdeutsch (as well as the pronoun *man* 'one, you' and largely the passive, thus Unserdeutsch basically has no grammaticalised means to express something impersonal without naming the agent). In constructions where the expletive *es* is obligatory in Standard German, it is consequently omitted in Unserdeutsch, partially by using alternative constructions, as in (44):

- (44) a.  $\emptyset$  *is etwas spät.*  
 COP.3SG bit late  
 SG: 'Es ist etwas spät.'  
 EN: 'It's a bit late.'
- b. *heute is regen.*  
 today COP.3SG rain  
 SG: 'Heute regnet es.'  
 EN: 'Today it rains.'

*b. Partial omission of the copula*

There is some controversy over the status of the copula in creole languages. Predicative adjectives tend to be connected via zero copula (cf. Bartens 2013:

100). Predicative noun phrases, however, appear approximately equally frequent with or without an overt copula (cf. Michaelis & APiCS Consortium 2013 and Velupillai 2015: 409–410).

Copula constructions with an overt copula are used in Unserdeutsch on a regular basis, as in (45), though the occurrence of the copula is far less obligatory than in Standard German: see, for example, (12) and (28).

- (45) a. *otherwise du bis hungri.*  
 otherwise 2SG COP.2SG hungry  
 SG: ‘Sonst bist du hungrig.’  
 EN: ‘Otherwise you are hungry.’
- b. *du bis riti ein lüchner.*  
 2SG COP.2SG really ART.INDF liar  
 SG: ‘Du bist wirklich (richtig) ein Lügner.’  
 EN: ‘You are truly (really) a liar.’

However, copulas tend to be dropped in conjunction with predicative nominal phrases, as in (46), as well as with predicative adjectives, as in (13) and (47), at the basilectal end.

- (46) a. *wegen du Ø ein gut-e manager fi uns.*  
 because 2SG ART.INDF good-ATTR manager POSS 1PL.ACC  
 SG: ‘weil du ein guter Manager für uns warst.’  
 EN: ‘because you have been a good manager for us.’
- b. *alle Ø ein gruppe und alle Ø mission, ja, alle familie da Ø ein familie da.*  
 all ART.INDF group and all mission yes, all family there one family there  
 SG: ‘Alle waren eine Gruppe und alle von der Mission, ja, alle Familien dort waren eine Familie.’  
 EN: ‘Everybody was part of the group and all were from the mission, yes, all families there were one family.’

- (47) a. *i wart-en bis die Ø etwas groß.*  
 1SG wait-V till 3PL a\_bit big  
 SG: ‘Ich habe gewartet, bis sie etwas größer sind ...’  
 EN: ‘I waited till they grew up a bit ...’
- b. *die arbeit bis Ø dunkel.*  
 3PL work till dark  
 SG: ‘Sie haben gearbeitet, bis es dunkel war (wurde).’  
 EN: ‘They worked till it got dark.’

*c. Partial omission of articles*

The vast majority of creole languages feature a definite as well as an indefinite article (cf. Haspelmath & APiCS Consortium 2013d–e; Velupillai 2015: 365–366). Articles and the category of definiteness are therefore rarely deleted in creoles.

Unserdeutsch functions likewise, since a (gender-neutral) definite and indefinite article is retained, as in (48):

- (48) *de mutter hat ein stroke.*  
 ART.DEF mother have ART.INDF stroke  
 SG: ‘Die Mutter hatte einen Schlaganfall.’  
 EN: ‘The mother had a stroke.’

The article seems to be more obligatory in comparison to the copula in Unserdeutsch, although it may also be dropped in certain cases, as in (49):

- (49) a. *is Ø gut-e familie.*  
 COP.3SG good-ATTR family  
 SG: ‘Es ist eine gute Familie.’  
 EN: ‘It’s a good family.’
- b. *er war Ø jung-e kerl.*  
 3SG.M COP.PST young-ATTR guy  
 SG: ‘Er war ein junger Kerl.’  
 EN: ‘He was a young guy.’

*d. Partial omission of adpositions and junctions*

Typically, only very few adpositions from its superstrate language are retained in a creole language (cf. Bartens 2013: 122 and Boretzky 1983: 194). In the partially creolised Tok Pisin, only three prepositions are in use, and in older language forms it was sometimes actually only one (*bilong*, cf. Mühlhäusler 1985: 366). Many creole languages, for example, do not require a preposition between a verb of motion and the location in directional constructions (cf. Holm & Patrick 2007, Feature 19.2).

There are no postpositions (cf. Volker 1982: 52) and no circumpositions from Standard German retained in Unserdeutsch. From the numerous prepositions of its lexifier language, basilectal Unserdeutsch has only retained those that are frequent in spoken German; these are used in a similar manner. The dropping of prepositions occurs rarely and is clearly marked, as in (50):

- (50) a. *i will geht Ø rabaul.*  
 1SG want go Rabaul  
 SG: 'Ich will nach Rabaul gehen.'  
 EN: 'I want to go to Rabaul.'
- b. *i hol-en alle kind-ä geht Ø ufer odä geht Ø*  
 1SG fetch-V PL child-PL go coast or go  
*andre platz mit ein jeep.*  
 other place with ART.INDF jeep  
 SG: 'Ich habe die Kinder mit einem Jeep zur Küste oder zu einem anderen Ort gebracht.'  
 EN: 'I brought the children with a jeep to the coast or to some other place.'

Subordinate structures are believed to be rather atypical for creole languages as well, with paratactic structures preferred instead (cf. Bartens 2013: 129). Their propensity for syntactic coordination, using asyndetic connections to some extent, results in the omission of junctions in many cases (cf. Boretzky 1983: 208).

The junction inventory of Unserdeutsch is noticeably reduced in comparison to its superstrate language. Its size grows only with increasing distance from the basilectal end. The use of junctions is relatively obligatory in Unserdeutsch as well. Nevertheless, they may be dropped, following certain structures from the substrate or adstrate language, as in (51):

- (51) a. *i will du aufpass-en de flanzung.*  
 1SG want 2SG look\_after-V ART.DEF plantation  
 SG: ‘Ich will, dass du auf die Plantage aufpasst.’  
 EN: ‘I want you to look after the plantation.’
- b. *de letzte mal i war in rabaul ...*  
 ART.DEF last time 1SG COP.PST in Rabaul  
 SG: ‘Das letzte Mal, als ich in Rabaul war ...’  
 EN: ‘The last time I was in Rabaul ...’

In summary, it has been shown that various function words are anchored in the grammatical system of basilectal Unserdeutsch. However, their use is – in some cases quite considerably – less obligatory than in Standard German. Especially the partial pro-drop status quite obviously fits this creole characteristic as postulated in the literature. Like most creole languages, Unserdeutsch distinguishes an invariant definite as well as indefinite article. The significantly lower obligatorisation of the copula and the dropping of other function words, which is at least possible to a limited extent, also fits into the overall picture of an increased optionality in comparison to its lexifier language when it comes to the realisation of function words. This increased optionality is not surprising in the case of creole languages: It can be observed in numerous language contact settings as a consequence or reflection of the rise and loss of grammatical categories (cf. Tamm 2012: 151). In addition, it is characteristic for scenarios of language acquisition (cf. Parodi & Tsimpli 2005). Both aspects play a considerable role in the genesis of creole languages, so it is not surprising that they leave their traces in terms of typological tendencies in the systems of these languages.

In the present case, a wide range of structural-typological characteristics supports a remarkable finding: Apparently, Unserdeutsch largely corresponds to the postulated pattern of an ‘average creole’.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the end of our analyses on the structural-typological design of Unserdeutsch, let us return to the initial question. In section 2 we noted that Unserdeutsch, on the one hand, complies with the key characteristics of creole languages and is thus undoubtedly to be classified as such, but on the other hand shows several characteristics in its genesis that are considered as atypical in creolistic theory. Moreover, all these characteristics give reason to expect a structural convergence towards the lexifier language and thus greater structural complexity.

However, the analyses have shown that when it comes to the structural-typological design of its basilect, Unserdeutsch can be qualified as a largely typical representative of the creole languages around the world. These findings seem to run contrary to the results of Mühlhäusler (1984: 38–40 and 1997: 200–202), showing that Unserdeutsch does not in any way correspond to the twelve creole features postulated by Bickerton (1981). However, this apparent contradiction can be easily resolved by recognising two aspects. First, Bickerton's approach is to be regarded as problematic in itself (for a critical evaluation with further references cf. Veenstra 2008), while the APiCS data are grounded on a large-scale database. Second, Mühlhäusler's analyses are based on the data and description of Volker (1982), which is not in all aspects consistent with the present results on the basis of new data by speakers who are no longer competent in Standard German.

Unserdeutsch matches the pattern of an 'average creole' despite its extended language functions, unlimited access to its lexifier language, and competence in the lexifier, as well as close-knit social networks within a largely closed, small community. How can this apparent discrepancy be explained?

In search of a reasonable explanation, two factors seem to be of central significance. First, there is the primary function of Unserdeutsch as a marker of solidarity and identity, which helped to strengthen group identity and cohesion and to draw a line against the (hostile) environment (cf. Volker 1989b). This function was crucial, as Unserdeutsch developed within a small group of uprooted and socially isolated mixed-race children who were caught between two stools, neither really belonging to the white colonialists nor to the indigenous people (cf. Maitz 2017 and Maitz & Volker forthcoming). With this in mind, the genesis and stabilisation of Unserdeutsch was an act

of identity, whereby a certain distance towards the target language, i.e. the Standard German of the missionaries, was obviously intended. In this way, an intragroup language and thereby social exclusiveness could be created. It is indeed a common strategy in the context of pidgin and creole languages to shape and underline an in-group identity by using salient structures deviating from the target language (i.e. the lexifier language) on purpose (cf. Higgins 2015).

Along these lines, the adolescent speakers of the first generation consciously *avoided* structural proximity towards the target language when using Unserdeutsch. We have to assume that this was even more the case, given that the older children and young adults had by all accounts gained an elaborated target language competence (cf. Maitz 2017) and thus could have done better – if they had wanted to.

The intended structural distance was, as the structure of Unserdeutsch shows, primarily achieved by following the substrate Tok Pisin, which was already spoken as L1 by most children when they entered the mission (cf. Janssen 1932). In this way, the evolution of Unserdeutsch represents one of the rare cases, in which a pidgin, i.e. an early version of Tok Pisin, served as the substrate language for an emerging creole language. This might be the second factor that could explain the structural-typological creole typicality of Unserdeutsch, despite the conditions mentioned above.

With all this in mind, the emergence of Unserdeutsch may be regarded as an act of linguistic dissociation and of subtle linguistic subversion. As in hardly any other case, the words, by which Hofmann (2003: 282) summarised a position of Glissant (1997), apply to Unserdeutsch: “*Creole is not the result of restricted input, but the product of strategies of resistance*” (quoted by Siegel 2007: 191).

### ABBREVIATIONS

1SG	first person singular	INCL	inclusive
1PL	first person plural	INDF	indefinite
2SG	first person singular	IRR	irrealis
3PL	third person plural	M	masculine
3SG	third person singular	NEG	negation

ACC	accusative	PASS	passive voice
ART	article	PL	plural
ATTR	attributive	PN	proper noun
AUX	auxiliary	POSS	possessive
COP	copula	PREP	preposition
DAT	dative	PROG	progressive
DEF	definite	PST	past
DEM	demonstrative	PTCP	participle
EN	English	REL	relative
EXCL	exclusive	SG	Standard German
F	feminine	TP	Tok Pisin
FUT	future	TR	transitive
GEN	genitive	UD	Unserdeutsch
HAB	habitual	V	verb

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