Dutch, Swedish, and English Elements in the Development of Pidgin Delaware

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This paper investigates the influence of Dutch, Swedish, and English on the syntax of Pidgin Delaware, a contact language used in the Middle Atlantic region in the seventeenth century. Arguments are presented against Thomason's (1980) view that the pidgin predated European contact; instead, the structures of the pidgin are viewed from the perspective of Dutch speakers attempting to learn the Delaware language. The theoretical framework of Van Coetsem 1988 is used to explain which Algonquian features were successfully acquired by the Dutch and where the Dutch imposed features from their native language in the early, formational stage of the pidgin. In addition, subsequent changes in Pidgin Delaware are attributed to its use by Swedish and English speakers.

1. Introduction. Pidgin Delaware was a contact language that is attested in a number of documents primarily from the seventeenth century by Dutch, Swedish, English, and German authors, listed under table 1 below. From these attestations and from further indirect evidence found in Dutch colonial documents, it is clear that Pidgin Delaware was a fairly widely used means of communication between European traders and

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* I wish to thank Amy Dahlstrom for her comments on many of the points in this article. The discussion in section 4 on the syntax of hatta is based on Buccini and Dahlstrom (to appear). I am also grateful for comments provided by an anonymous reviewer of this article for AJGLL. Responsibility for any omissions or errors is solely my own.

1 The following abbreviations are used in this paper: DL = De Laet; C = Campanius; L = Lindeström; I = Indian Interpreter; T = Thomas; Du. = Dutch; NND = New Netherland Dutch; Sw. = Swedish; Eng. = English; Un. = Unami; PD = Pidgin Delaware. N.B. <8> is used in place of Campanius's omega.

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colonists and Native Americans in much of the Middle Atlantic region, specifically, in the lower Hudson Valley, throughout much or all of present-day New Jersey and in parts of present-day Pennsylvania and Delaware, that is, the region occupied by the ‘Lenape’ or Delaware Indians.

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N.B. A number of isolated words, place-names and a few short phrases undoubtedly of Pidgin Delaware origin occur in various Dutch colonial documents.

Table 1. Sources for Pidgin Delaware

That some of the early recordings of the Indians’ language from this region were not in fact genuine samples of a native language but rather attestations of a highly simplified contact language was already recognized by Daniel Brinton (1885), who refers to the materials presented by Gabriel Thomas and William Penn as a “trader’s jargon which scorned etymology, syntax and prosody, and was about as near pure Lenape as pigeon English is to the periods of Macauley” (75). Similarly, J. Dyneley Prince (1912), in an article on the “Indian Interpreter,” describes the language of that text as “a Traders’ Jargon, used between the Delaware River whites and the Indians, almost grammarless and based chiefly on English construction, like the Chinook and Eskimo traders’ idioms of the North” (508).

In more recent scholarship, Goddard (1971) briefly discusses the language in the broader context of the ethnohistorical implications of early Delaware linguistic materials and there is the first to give the language a more precise and linguistically informed label and to consider
its time and place of origin; he writes that "this jargon was a pidginized form of Southern Unami which came into use between the Indians and Dutch on the lower Delaware River after the first Dutch settlement there in early 1624" (1971:15). More recently, Goddard (1995, 1997) has provided more detailed discussions of the structure and history of Pidgin Delaware, to which reference will be made below. Another linguist who has dealt with Pidgin Delaware is Thomason, whose article of 1980 was the first extended consideration of the language; the central claim of her study is that Pidgin Delaware must have arisen outside and before the context of the European colonial presence in the Middle Atlantic region as a means of communication between speakers of Iroquoian languages and the Algonquian Delaware Indians. Thomason reaches these conclusions primarily on the basis of an examination of the syntax of Pidgin Delaware. It is this writer's contention that Thomason's claims for a pre-European contact development of Pidgin Delaware are unconvincing and further that her analysis of the syntax of the language is flawed from both a theoretical and factual standpoint. A better informed and reasoned analysis of the Pidgin Delaware material and its colonial sociohistorical setting points strongly to the origin of the language being directly linked to early Dutch/Delaware contacts and provides us, moreover, with an interesting and relatively rare case of a contact language developed in a European colony but based on the language of the indigenous peoples.

2. The Structure of Pidgin Delaware. As a starting point for the discussion of the origins of Pidgin Delaware syntax, we should first briefly examine some of the outstanding structural characteristics of the language.

Implicit in the very name of the language is the notion that the lexicon of Pidgin Delaware is principally derived from Delaware, but the term "Delaware" is itself a cover term for two closely related but very distinct Algonquian languages, Munsee, formerly spoken in parts of northern New Jersey and southern New York, (Southern) Unami, formerly spoken in southern New Jersey and adjacent areas of Pennsylvania and Delaware, and a third, transitional variety, which has been called Northern Unami but is perhaps to be identified with the name "Unalachtigo," originally spoken across central New Jersey from the coastal area around the Raritan and Sandy Hook Bays to the area around
the Falls at Trenton and beyond into east central and northeastern Pennsylvania.² Given that the language was used across such a broad area, it is not surprising that we find lexical elements from all three varieties of Delaware in the pidgin, but, as Goddard (1997:50) has demonstrated, Munsee elements are relatively few.

With regard to non-Delaware lexical material attested in the pidgin, we can say that no words from any Iroquoian languages can be found in the extant materials. A limited number of words of Dutch and/or Swedish origin can, however, be found; these words are all nouns denoting objects and animals introduced by the Europeans to the region, as illustrated in table 2 below. Thomason seems to wish to mitigate the possible significance of the presence of such lexical items in the pidgin when she says that “these words may well have been current in Delaware itself, and so not strictly Jargon words” (1980:189), but her reasoning here seems at best obscure. In this writer’s view, it seems virtually certain that the immediate source for most and possibly all Dutch and Swedish loanwords in Delaware as well as for the Delaware loanwords in the colonial Dutch and Swedish dialects was in fact the pidgin, given that there were extremely few if any accomplished Dutch/Delaware or Swedish/Delaware bilinguals.

(a) I <gull> from Du. (or Sw.) gulden ‘guilder’.
(b) I <steepa> from Du. stuiver ‘stiver’ (probably reflecting dialectal Du. pronunciation stuver or Sw. styver).
(c) I <brandywyne> from Eng. brandywine or Du. brandewijn ‘distilled liquor’.
(d) I <copy>, T <kabay> ‘horse’, ultimately from Spanish caballo but probably from Du. sailor/trader slang.

² Goddard (1978:72–3) maintains that the east central part of present-day New Jersey around the lower Raritan Valley and the coastal area around Raritan Bay, Sandy Hook and Staten Island was inhabited by Munsee-speaking bands from the time of the earliest contact with the Dutch. Buccini (1996b) has argued that during the earliest period of contact this area was inhabited by Northern Unami- or Unalachtigo-speaking bands and that in the course of the 1640s and 1650s, as a result of hostilities between these groups and both the Dutch and the Munsee of Northern New Jersey and the New York City area, they were forced to move west; Munsee bands moved into the area in their wake.
(e) I <pisbi> ‘small beer’, probably from Du. pishbier ‘piss-beer, watery or weak beer’ with second element apparently assimilated to (PD reflex of) Un. mbi ‘water’, cf. I <abij, bee> ‘water’.


(g) C <Hart8> ‘Hiort/deer, stag, buck’, cf. DL <atto>, I <atto>– ‘buck’, Un. (Brinton & Anthony) acht’; Campanius’s form appears to be a blend of the Unami form and Du. hert, dialectal Du. hart (rather than the Sw. hjort).

Table 2. Dutch/Swedish words attested in Pidgin Delaware.

While the lexicon of the pidgin is overwhelmingly Delaware in origin, virtually none of the rich inflectional morphology typical of an Algonquian language is found in the contact language. For nouns, no distinctions of number, obviation, or locative case are made, and verbs are wholly uninflexed for subject, object, secondary object, and verbal mode; the Delaware opposition of animate-inanimate gender is likewise absent; see table 3 below. In 3a, a verb stem that can only be used with inanimate objects in Delaware is here used with an animate object. In 3b, the Delaware locative case suffix has become part of the frozen form for ‘ground’. Similarly, in 3c the first person possessive prefix has been analyzed as part of the noun for ‘father’. In 3d, the special negative suffix required on Delaware verbs is missing from the negated pidgin form.

(a) I <atto> attonamen > ‘going to look for a buck’ (transitive inanimate verb form with animate object).

(b) I <hocking> ‘the ground(s)’ (hākri + loc. suffix nk, used with and without locative function).

(c) I <noeck>, C <Nwk> ‘father’ (1st sg. prefix + -ux ‘father’).

(d) I <olet> ‘it is good’/<matta olet> ‘it is bad’, cf. Un. wālōt /kō- wālōtōwi (Goddard p.c. cited in Thomason 1980), (lack of negative suffix on verb).

Table 3.
Examples of morphological reduction (from Thomason 1980:171).
The Pidgin Delaware pronominal system is also quite rudimentary and differs from that of Delaware in a number of important ways. In Delaware, ordinary pronominal reference is expressed by means of inflectional affixes for subject and object on the verb or for possessor on a possessed noun. There is, in addition, a series of emphatic independent personal pronouns used to express discourse functions such as topic or focus. In both the pronominal inflection on verbs and possessed nouns and in the series of independent emphatic pronouns, we find distinction of number and, moreover, an inclusive-exclusive distinction in first person plural. In the pidgin, on the other hand, the first person pronoun, *ni* or *nirona*, and the second person pronoun, *ki* or *kirona*, are not marked for number and function also as possessive adjectives; in the first person plural, the inclusive-exclusive distinction, as well as the singular-plural distinction, is absent. Turning now to third person categories, Delaware, like all other Algonquian languages, distinguishes in the pronominal affixes number, gender and the discourse-based opposition of proximate-obviative.\(^3\) There are emphatic independent personal pronouns for third person proximate animate singular and third person proximate animate plural. Obviative and inanimate third persons cannot be expressed by emphatic personal pronouns. In Pidgin Delaware, there is a third person pronoun, *joni*, which is unmarked for number and gender, and can also serve as either a possessive adjective or a demonstrative pronoun or adjective.\(^4\) There is additionally a pronoun, *kekko*, which serves as an all purpose interrogative, indefinite, and relative pronoun. The examples in table 4 below illustrate several properties of pronouns in the pidgin: 4a shows that the second person pronoun *ki* can be used both as subject and possessor; in 4b an expected object pronoun is omitted; in 4c there is no subject pronoun; and 4d shows that the first person pronoun may be used with a plural reading. The examples under points 4e through 4g demonstrate that these pronouns are independent words and not affixes, *pace* Thomason (1980:170–71). Not only do Pidgin Delaware *ni, ki*, etc. fail to undergo or trigger the morphophonemic alterations found in

\(^3\) The third person that is most central to the discourse is expressed by unmarked “proximate” forms, while more peripheral third persons are expressed by marked “obviative” forms. See, for example, Dahlstrom (1991:91–119) on obviation in Cree.

\(^4\) PD *joni* is derived from the inanimate singular form of ‘this’ in Delaware.
Delaware, as noted by Goddard (p.c., cited by Thomason 1980:170), but they are treated independently in the syntax of Pidgin Delaware.\footnote{From a theoretical perspective, we would expect the pronominal forms in a reduced contact language such as Pidgin Delaware to reflect independent or emphatic forms of the lexifier, especially in utterances by native speakers of languages other than the lexifier; the Pidgin Delaware facts are consistent with this expectation. For a discussion of the theoretical position with reference to pronominal transfer in language contact, see Buccini (1992:16–21).}

(a) T <keco kee hatah kee weekin?> (what you have your house) ‘What hast thou got in thy house?’
(b) I <nee meelee> (I give) ‘I will give thee’.
(c) I <kacko pata> (what bring) ‘what hast thou brought?’
(d) I <ne olocko toon> (I/we hole go) ‘we run into holes’
(e) C <Chéck8 taîman> (what get/have) ‘Hwad wil tu hafwa/What will you have?’ (subject pronoun omitted)
(f) C <Pomúttanen chijr> (shoot you) ‘Wil tu skiuta/do you want to shoot?’ (postposed subject pronoun)
(g) T <Kee squa og enychan hatah?> (you woman and child have) ‘Hast thou a Wife and Children?’ (subject pronoun and verb with intervening complex object)

Table 4. Examples of reduction in Pidgin Delaware pronominal system.

The Pidgin Delaware lexicon can be legitimately characterized as impoverished, even when we take into account the small number of attestations; and given the lack of inflectional and derivational morphology, the range of expression in the language was also strongly limited, a fact that can be clearly seen in the attempt by the Swedish minister Campanius to translate the Lutheran catechism into the pidgin; see point 5a in the table below, where Campanius uses ‘I am not sick’ to translate ‘I am healthy and sound’ and especially his rendition of the phrase ‘generous authority’ as ‘chief not dirty ass’. The limitations of the morpholexical inventory of the language were to a degree compensated through syntactic means, specifically through the relatively free use of Delaware forms as both nouns and verbs and further the creation of a class of adjectives reflecting Delaware verbal forms. In addition, the apparently very limited inventory of verbs was compensated through the
creation of phrasal expressions combining nouns and adjectives with a few basic verbs such as hatta ‘to have’ and marenit ‘to do’; see point 5b below.

(a) Apparent lack of basic vocabulary items:
- C <minamærso> ‘siuk/sick’
- C <nijr minamasso> [misprint of minamarso?] ‘Jag är siuker/I am sick’
- C <mata nijr minamærso> (not I sick) ‘jag är frisk och sund/I am healthy and sound’
- C <Sacheeman mätta nisKetij> (chief not dirty-ass) ‘Gifmild Öfwerhet/generous authority’ (PD nisketij apparently meaning ‘stingy’; see Goddard 1997:80.)

(b) Compensation of lexical lacunæ through creation of phrasal verbs:
- C <mochijrick sevarænda hatte> (big sadness have) ‘wara myckit bekymrad/to be very troubled’
- C <maranijto taënda> (do fire) ‘gör en eld/to make a fire’
- C <maranijto tackhan> (do wood) ‘hugga hwed/to cut wood’

Table 5. Examples of lexical impoverishment of Pidgin Delaware.

For the phonology and further details of the morphological aspects of Pidgin Delaware, see Goddard 1997; the syntax of the language will be discussed further below.

3. The Origins of Pidgin Delaware. As mentioned above, Goddard proposed already in 1971 that Pidgin Delaware first arose in the context of the contacts between the Dutch and Delaware in the 1620s, a view which is rejected in Thomason’s (1980) study. While Goddard has restated his own position with further supporting evidence in his articles of 1995 and 1997, he does not explicitly deal with Thomason’s central syntactic arguments in favour of a pre-European contact origin. Meanwhile, Thomason’s view on the development of Pidgin Delaware has been again suggested as a possibility in Thomason & Kaufman 1988:175, 196, while the essence of her syntactic analysis of the language is reported as valid by Campbell (1997) in his recent survey of
the history of Native American languages. For these reasons, a detailed examination of Pidgin Delaware syntax is in order.

Thomason’s discussion takes as its starting point a theoretical position, namely, that “the structure of any given pidgin is a function of the structures of the languages whose native speakers developed it. Typologically marked features not shared by all input languages will tend to be absent, though a relatively large and/or important group of speakers from any one input language may cause marked features from that language to turn up” (1980:168). Given the relatively exceptional status of Pidgin Delaware as a contact language allegedly formed in the context of European colonization but lexically based on an indigenous language, she quite reasonably questions the degree to which the sociohistorical setting for this language’s development corresponds to the settings that produced the better known contact varieties based on European colonial languages. She does not, however, consider the possibility of special circumstances obtaining in the Dutch colony but rather assumes that conditions in New Netherland were identical to those in New England, where, in her view, a pidginized variety of English rapidly developed that had a function analogous to that of Pidgin Delaware in New Netherland (1980:184). Consequently, she feels justified in seeking a possible scenario for the development of Pidgin Delaware prior to the arrival of Europeans in New Netherland. Thomason thus proposes that this pidgin arose as a means of communication between the Delaware and the Iroquoian speaking nations of central New York (1980:185–86).7

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6 Campbell (1997:20): “[Pidgin Delaware’s] grammar is simplified as is typical of pidgins, but exhibits no European influence, and some of its features are at odds with the Dutch, English and Swedish then spoken in the area; for example, OV (object-verb) basic word order and a native Delaware-based negative construction.” It should be noted, however, that Thomason has recently described Pidgin Delaware as a pidgin that “apparently arose” in a two-language contact situation, stating simply, with no reference to her 1980 article, that “Goddard suggests that Pidgin Delaware originated in communication between Delawares and Dutchmen” (1997b:5).

7 Thomason discusses only the Iroquoian Five Nations of New York in this context and fails to mention contacts between the Delaware and their immediate neighbors to the west in the seventeenth century, namely, the Iroquoian Susquehannock.
The core of Thomason’s argument is linguistic in nature. In short, she claims that there is no single structural feature of Pidgin Delaware that can be attributed to the influence of speakers of English, Dutch, or Swedish. Bearing in mind the theoretical position stated above, she argues further that two basic syntactic structures of the language—structures that she claims are shared by both Iroquoian and Algonquian languages—are not only completely unknown in the relevant European languages but also cross-linguistically highly marked and therefore can neither be attributed to universal tendencies nor, according to her theoretical position, be expected to have been taken up in a pidgin, in whose formation English, Dutch, or Swedish speakers had a hand.

The first of these features is clause-initial negation. As illustrated under point 6a below, most examples of negated sentences in the pidgin have the negative word *matta* at the left edge of the clause, a typical position for negation in both Algonquian and Iroquoian. As Thomason observes, “in English (Dutch, Swedish) the surface order NEG-SUBJECT-VERB is impossible” (1980:175). The second of Thomason’s arguments concerns the relative order of verbs and objects. The pidgin attests examples of both OV and VO order, as seen above in point 5b. According to Thomason, the OV order is analogous to the Delaware strategy of putting focussed or indefinite NPs to the left of the verb and to the Iroquoian noun incorporation construction in which an incorporated noun root appears to the left of a verb root; see point 6b. The common occurrence of OV order in Pidgin Delaware is for Thomason strong evidence against the participation of Europeans in the language’s formation.

(a) Clause initial negation:
- I <matta ne kamuta> (not I steal) ‘no, I did not steal it’
- Unami: tá kó nne’mówən (neg I+see+not+it) ‘I did not see it’ (Goddard 1997:49)
(b) OV word order:
- C <j8ni tænda mochijrick uranda pætton> (that fire big heat bring) ‘Thenna elden gifwer myckin warma ifran sig/that fire gives off alot of heat’
- Unami: màxko tá nhile· ná lónu (bear+obv. Pred he+kills[him] that man) ‘the man killed a bear/bears’ (Goddard 1997:50)
- Iroquoian noun incorporation, Oneida: la + nást + ayáthos (he+corn+plants) ‘he is planting corn’ (Lounsbury 1953:75, cited in Thomason 1980:179)

Table 6. Thomason’s syntactic arguments for a pre-European contact development of Pidgin Delaware.

Thomason herself concedes that there is no ethnohistorical evidence in direct support of her theory and therefore her arguments rest solely upon the syntactic analysis of the pidgin. In recent papers, Goddard (1995:142–43 and 1997:83) and Buccini (1996b and in press) have adduced historical evidence from colonial documents against her conjecture that Pidgin Delaware was known to the Iroquoians.8 But the present author believes that both Thomason’s sociohistorical and linguistic analyses are led astray by the strongly anglocentric approach she takes to the problem.

First, while Thomason claims that the only European languages that plausibly were involved in the formation of Pidgin Delaware were English and Dutch (1980:170), there is no shred of historical evidence to support the notion that the English had anything to do with the process of the pidgin’s genesis; the Dutch were unquestionably the first Europeans to have regular contacts with the Delaware starting in the 1610s or early 1620s, and the Swedes, who illegally took over the southern part of New Netherland around the lower Delaware River in 1638, relied heavily upon renegade Dutch interpreters, traders, soldiers, and colonists in the

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8 For example, historical evidence that Europeans (the Dutch of New Netherland and the English of Virginia), even when accompanied by native, Algonquian-speaking interpreters, were largely unable to communicate with the Susquehannock strongly suggests that Pidgin Delaware was unfamiliar to the Susquehannock (Buccini, in press). For a brief discussion of the historical evidence indicating that Pidgin Delaware was not used by the Dutch in their dealings with the Five Nations, see Goddard 1997:83.
establishment of their colony. Apart from occasional attempts to penetrate their competitors' colonies, the English established a presence in the region only after 1664, with the conquest of New Netherland. Given the existence of Dutch and Swedish attestations of the pidgin well before that date, it is clear that the English had no hand in the language's original development.

A more serious problem is Thomason's assertion that word order in Dutch, Swedish and English is all the same. In this regard, she states: "Like the [clause-initial] negative constructions, the OV word order is as foreign to the best-known pidgins (and creoles) as it is to English, Dutch, and Swedish" (1980:179). In the case of Dutch, OV order is as or more frequent at the surface level than VO order and there are good reasons to view OV as the basic order in the language (Webelhuth 1992:74–81, inter alia); see table 7.9

- VO Hij drinkt bier. 'He drinks beer.'
- OV Ik geloof dat hij bier drinkt. 'I believe that he drinks beer.'
- OV Hij zal bier drinken. 'He will drink beer.'
- OV Hij heeft bier gedronken. 'He has drunk beer.'
- OV Hij gaat naar het café om bier te drinken. 'He goes to the café to drink beer.'
- VO Geef mij een pint! 'Give me a pint!'
- OV Geen ruzie maken! (no quarrel make (inf.)) 'Don’t quarrel!'

Table 7. Dutch word order.

It is true that Modern Swedish has only VO, but in the seventeenth century, OV order in subordinate clauses was a part of the language at least in high style (Bergman 1984:92), and—perhaps more importantly—we should remember that many of the colonists of New Sweden knew Dutch or Low German, and a good number of them were in fact native Dutch speakers. Beyond this, we must remember that the Dutch were active in the area a full fifteen or twenty years before the arrival of the Swedes; the English arrived only some forty years after the Dutch and

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9 Note that the notion of the basic word order of Dutch (and not just that of surface word order) is conceivably directly relevant to the present discussion, insofar as one envisions a contact situation in which the Dutch speakers are active participants in the original genesis of the contact language.
some twenty-five years after the Swedes. In other words, the European language that unquestionably could have been relevant for the formation of Pidgin Delaware—namely, Dutch—was a language in which both SVO and SOV word orders were completely native and natural.

Finally, Thomason’s anglocentric approach to the problem of the origins of Pidgin Delaware leads her away from any consideration of the sociohistorical conditions in New Netherland. Buccini (1996a, in press) argues that the conditions in New Netherland were quite different from those prevailing in other European colonies in general and New England and Virginia in particular. Especially in the colony’s early period, the goal of the Dutch in New Netherland was to conduct a profitable fur trade and not to establish a permanent settlement. Consequently, a relatively very small number of Dutchmen had very wide and sporadic contacts with the Delaware. Given this situation and the very practical approach of the Dutch to matters of business, the only way for them to conduct their trade efficiently was to acquire some ability to speak the language of their colony’s inhabitants. In my view, it is out of Dutch attempts to learn Delaware that Pidgin Delaware has its ultimate origins.

4. Early Dutch/Delaware Contacts and the Syntax of Pidgin Delaware. Viewed from the perspective of Dutch attempts to acquire Delaware, the syntactic structures of the pidgin find ready explanation and can be sorted into four classes: (i) Delaware constructions successfully acquired by the Dutch; (ii) Dutch structures imposed on the Delaware target language; (iii) reduction of inflectional morphology; (iv) reduction through selection. The discussion here assumes the theoretical model of transfer in language contact presented in Van Coetsem 1988.

The first category is that of Delaware structures which the Dutch by and large acquired successfully. Here we find clause-initial negation, a feature very foreign to Dutch speakers but, given its pragmatic importance and frequency, one that would have been extremely salient to language learners; see point 8a below. Another unfamiliar structure apparently acquired by the Dutch is the typically Algonquian order of new information preceding given in equational sentences; see 8.b.
(a) Clause initial negation:
- I <matta ne hatta> (not I have) ‘I have nothing’ (cf. Du. ik heb niet 'I have nothing')
- I <matta ne kamuta> (not I steal) ‘no, I did not steal it’
- C <mata njir minamærsø> (not I sick) ‘jag är frisk och sund/I am healthy and sound’

(b) New information precedes given in equational sentences:
- L <Nittappe kire> (friend you) ‘du äst min gode vän/you are my good friend’
- L <orit kira> (good you) ‘du äst skön och vacker/you are beautiful and pretty’

Table 8. Delaware constructions successfully acquired by the Dutch.

With regard to the salience of the Delaware negative construction to Europeans, consider Penn’s statement in his brief discussion of the Indians’ language (Myers 1912:231): “If one ask them for anything they have not, they will answer, mattá ne hattá, which to translate is, not I have, instead of I have not.” It should be further noted here that Penn clearly believed Pidgin Delaware to be the actual native language of the Delaware Indians, and we can therefore conclude that he had in fact not acquired the actual Delaware language to any degree; nevertheless, he clearly was struck by the negative construction in the pidgin and presumably was able to acquire it.

The second category is that of Dutch features imposed upon the Delaware target language. Examples here include the creation of new lexical categories—namely, adjectives and prepositions—shown in 9a and 9b, and the extension of the indefinite-interrogative pronoun kecko to introduce relative clauses and indirect questions, shown in 9b and 9c. The corresponding strategies in Delaware are all morphological and must have been opaque to the Dutch speakers trying to acquire Delaware. Here, too, one may mention the extension of the verb hatta, an existential verb in Delaware, to express a variety of possessive relations; clearly, the Dutch identified hatta with their own verb hebben, New Netherland Dutch hae (Buccini 1995:241). A sample of the uses of hatta is given under 9d. Note that hatta is used for possession of concrete objects, such as gunpowder, to identify kinship relations that are more typically expressed by verbs in Delaware, and even in the phrase ‘I am warm’.
(a) Adjectives:
- T <Kee namen neskec kabay og marchkec moos etka opeg megis> (you see black horse and red cow with white sheep) ‘Did’st thou see black Horses and red Cows, with white Sheep?’

(b) Prepositions, relative pronouns (cf. Goddard 1997:61, 73):
- C <thaan j8ni cháko tahóttamen nijr> (to those who love me) ‘på them som mig älska/upon (to) those who love me’
- C <chéko paéwo taan j8ni> (who come to him) ‘som kommer til honom/who come to him’

(c) kecko in indirect questions (cf. Goddard 1997:61):
- I <kec-loe keckoe kee wingenum> [initial <kec> miscopied for kee] (you say what you want) ‘say what thou hast a mind to’

(d) Extension of hatte (< Un. háte ‘it is (there)’, Goddard 1997:92):
- T <Nee hata orit poonk…> (I have good powder) ‘I have good Powder…’
- T <Kee squa og enychan hatah?> (you woman and child have) ‘Hast thou a Wife and Children?’ (cf. Munsee wuniicháanuw ‘he/she has a child, children’ (O’Meara 1996:368).)
- C <Nijr uránda hatte> (I heat/hot have) ‘Jag är warmer/I am warm’

Table 9. Dutch structures imposed on the Delaware target language.

The third category is that of massive reduction of inflectional morphology, as illustrated above in tables 3 and 4 and discussed in detail in Goddard 1997. It should be noted here too that Goddard (1997:79) has adduced good evidence for active Delaware participation in this process, in other words, an instance of accommodation by Delaware speakers who simplified their speech for the benefit of their European interlocutors.

Finally, we return to the question of Pidgin Delaware word order, where we see the results of the fourth process mentioned above, namely, reduction through selection. In Delaware and Algonquian in general, subject, object, and verb may occur in any order (Goddard 1997:50, Dahlstrom 1995). The word order of the pidgin is primarily SOV and
SVO. We have already seen several examples of both orders in previously cited data; further examples are provided under table 10.10

- All permutations of S, V, O possible in Delaware.
- Both SVO and SOV are frequent in Dutch (cf. table 7 above).
- C <nijr ock j8ni móchórick tahóttamen> (I/we and them greatly love) ‘wij skole myckit hålla af them/we should love them alot’
- C <Nijr pææt chijre j8ni rankunti> (I bring you this freely) ‘jag geer tig thetta för intet/I give you this for nothing’
- T <nee namen neskek kabay undogwa tekeny> (I see black horse yonder woods) ‘I did see black Horses yonder in the woods’

Table 10. Reduction through selection: Pidgin Delaware word order.

In my view, the presence of these two orders in the pidgin is the result of reduction through selection, by which Dutch speakers employed only the two word orders familiar to them from their own language.

5. Stages in the History of Pidgin Delaware. In the discussion thus far I have argued that while there is no direct support for a theory of pre-European contact origins for Pidgin Delaware, the structures of the language can be explained in a straightforward fashion, if we give serious consideration to the sociohistorical setting of New Netherland and the linguistic facts of Dutch, and further bear in mind that this pidgin most likely first arose not in a multilingual context but rather in one in which speakers of one language were attempting to acquire a structurally complex and very alien language. In my view then, Pidgin Delaware first developed and took on a stable grammatical and lexical shape in the course of contacts between the Dutch and the indigenous Delaware-speaking groups in New Netherland in the course of the 1620s. Yet, while the pidgin did achieve a stabilized form, it clearly also displayed a certain degree of variation over time and space and furthermore seems to have begun to undergo grammatical and lexical change in its later stages.

With regard to the issue of geographical variation, I need in the context of the present discussion only call attention to a few general

10 OV examples are found in tables 3a, 4g, 5b, 6b, and 9d. VO examples are found in 5b, 9a, 9b, 9c, and 9d.
observations. First, as noted above, Pidgin Delaware was used in contacts between the Dutch and speakers of both the Munsee and Unami languages, and it is therefore not surprising that some lexical differences between the two indigenous languages are reflected in the occasional attestations of the pidgin found in Dutch colonial documents. I should add here that especially in the early years of Dutch activity in America, the selfsame traders and colonial officials often had contacts not only with the speakers of the two distinct branches of Delaware but also with speakers of other, more distantly related Eastern Algonquian languages, including Mahican in the upper Hudson Valley and several others in southern New England and on Long Island. In one instance, a trader, Pieter Barentsz, is said to have been able to speak well the languages of a wide array of Algonquian groups and the Iroquoian Mohawk to boot (Wassenaer 1626, in Jameson 1909:87). While Barentsz may well have been a relatively gifted language learner, the truth of the matter is more likely to have been that he could speak a pidginized variety of Mohawk and a pidginized variety of some Algonquian language, presumably Pidgin Delaware, and that in speaking with the Mahican and various Algonquian groups of Long Island and Connecticut, he perhaps could substitute appropriate local words for unfamiliar lexical items from Delaware. Given the similarity of all these Algonquian languages at the level of basic rules for word order and the fact that the only grammatical structures of Pidgin Delaware involved word order, such extended use of Pidgin Delaware was surely quite possible and probably fairly common.

Attestations of pidgin utterances between the Dutch, on the one hand and the Mahicans and Indians of Long Island and Connecticut, on the other are, to my knowledge, extremely limited, and it is therefore possible that there existed lexically distinct varieties that could properly be called, for example, Pidgin Mahican or Pidgin Niantic. Yet, there is good evidence from the attestations from Delaware territory that by the 1630s, Pidgin Delaware was lexically actually quite stable. More specifically, it appears that some lexical items, native to Unami but foreign to Munsee, and others, native to Munsee but foreign to Unami, were used between Indians and Dutchmen, regardless of the Indians’ native language. This evidence, together with the fact that all attestations of Pidgin Delaware from the Dutch and Swedish colonies show essentially the same rudimentary grammatical structure, indicates that the process of acquisition of Delaware had been broken off and that for
newcomers the useful local language to be learned was the now stable and widely-used pidgin. The primary reasons for the end of the process of acquiring the indigenous languages were surely practical: opportunities to master the complexities of actual Delaware grammar within the prevailing social and economic contexts of colonial life were nonexistent, and—perhaps more importantly, given the limited interests the Dutch and the Indians had in each other—the pidgin proved sufficient for most of their interactions. In addition, there was an attitudinal aspect to the cessation of acquisition and the stabilization of the pidgin: there is good anecdotal evidence that many of the Dutchmen who could speak the pidgin actually believed they were speaking the Indians’ native language (for details, see Buccini, in press). Finally, we must also take into account the Indians’ own participation in the process and, more specifically, bear in mind the strong possibility that the Delaware consciously simplified their language when dealing with the Dutch, be it for purely communicative reasons or, as some colonists suspected, to prevent Dutchmen gaining full access to their language (see Goddard 1997:179–80, Buccini, in press).

In discussing the historical development of Pidgin Delaware, we must also address the question of possible influences on the language exerted by the two other European groups who employed it, namely, the Swedes and the English. As mentioned above, the Swedes seized the southern portion of New Netherlands along the Delaware Bay and lower Delaware River in 1638, where they maintained a small colony until the Dutch recaptured the area in 1655; many of the Swedish colonists, however, remained in the area and continued to speak Swedish for several generations. From the historical evidence it is clear that a portion of the Swedish colonists were, in fact, Dutch, and in particular it is known that they employed Dutch interpreters and traders who were already familiar with the land and its inhabitants. Interestingly, some traces of Dutch influence can be seen in the Pidgin Delaware attestations from the two main Swedish sources, evidence that lends support both to the idea that the pidgin first arose and stabilized in the course of Dutch-Indian contacts and to the idea that to some degree at least the Swedes learned their Pidgin Delaware from Dutchmen. For example, Campanius presents a few pidgin words, such as <kwskus> for ‘pig’ (point 2f above) which without doubt have ultimately a Dutch source, as well as a form <Hart8> for ‘deer’ (shown under point 2g) a form which appears to be a
cross between Unami *ahto* and Dutch *hert* or *hart* rather than Swedish *hjort*. In addition, I call attention to a pidgin phrase, shown under 9d above, which appears to be a calque on the Dutch *ik heb 't warm*.

What is perhaps most interesting about the Pidgin Delaware found in the two Swedish sources is the fact that OV word order occurs so frequently there, given that OV order was certainly not common and possibly wholly absent in the colloquial Swedish of the seventeenth century. It appears then that at least our two authors, Campanius and Lindeström, acquired the mixed OV-VO order of Pidgin Delaware. Their ability to do so may possibly have been a function of their educational background; they clearly were able to write high-style Swedish, in which OV order was admissible though not frequent; in this connection I call attention to the example of OV order in Campanius’s Swedish shown under 9b above (‘på them som mig älska/upon (to) those who love me’). In addition, it is very likely that they had a reasonable knowledge of Dutch and/or High and Low German. Whether other, less educated Swedish colonists also acquired the OV order of Pidgin Delaware is something we will likely never know.

After the conquest of New Netherland by the English in 1664, Pidgin Delaware continued to be widely used, especially in those areas where the European population was relatively small and the Indians were able to maintain their own social order. Of the Pidgin Delaware sources from the English colonial period, two are sufficiently voluminous to give us good information on the syntax of the language, namely, the “Indian Interpreter” of 1684 and Thomas’s wordlist and dialogue from 1698. The language of these and the minor late sources by and large is in agreement with that which we find in the earlier Dutch and Swedish sources, but there are indications of some new developments.

First, there are signs of some relexification under English influence. Among the more interesting examples are some words to be ultimately traced back to Algonquian languages of New England, words that presumably had been borrowed into colonial English and were felt by the English to be appropriate in their attempts to communicate with any Indians. Examples are *papouse*, attested in the “Indian Interpreter,” and *squaw*, attested in both the “Indian Interpreter” and Thomas; the first of these is peculiar to the New England Algonquian languages and the Delaware cognates of ‘squaw’ (cf. Narragansett *skwɔ, skwa* [Aubin 1972:60]) are Munsee *oxkwéew* (O’Meara 1996:211), Northern Unami
ochqueu (Brinton and Anthony 1888:103), and Southern Unami xkwé(w) (Goddard 1997:94, n. 144); note that earlier attested PD forms in Dutch and Swedish sources were clearly from Delaware, i.e., DL <orquoywe>, C <àquæo>.

Of greater interest is the pidgin’s syntax in the two main English sources. In these texts, there appears to be an increasing tendency to select VO order rather than OV. Of the examples with OV order, moreover, a significant number contain the verb of possession hatta illustrated above in 8.2d. In Thomas, the latest substantial source, there are only two OV examples, both with hatta. In the “Indian Interpreter,” there are four OV examples, two of which contain hatta. Instances of clauses containing verbs other than hatta, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly VO.

The question naturally arises as to why clauses containing the verb hatta should retain the OV pattern longer than other constructions in the language. The answer may lie in part in the two different argument structures associated with the form hatta. One use of hatta was illustrated above in 9d: here hatta is a transitive verb of possession. But, as mentioned above, the source for the pidgin verb hatta is the intransitive existential verb ḫatte in Unami Delaware. In examining the Pidgin Delaware sources, one finds that there is also an occasional existential use of hatta in the pidgin. For example, the verbs in 11a and 11b below can only be interpreted as existential verbs, not as verbs of possession.

(a) C <Wicking hatte> (house have/exist) ‘Hemme i mitt huus/at home in my house’ (response to the question: <Taan Atáppi> (where bow) ‘Hwar är bågan/where is the bow?’)
(b) C <Mochijrick Sakhang Bij hátte> (big wind water have/exist) ‘Thet är stor storm på siön/there is a great storm on the sea’ [If hatta is transitive, then this sentence has the otherwise unattested OSV order.]
(c) C <Matta àquijvan hatte> (not cloth have/exist) ‘Jag har intet kläde/I have no cloth’ [Also interpretable as ‘there is no cloth’.

Table 11. The syntax of PD hatta.

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11 The remainder of this section is based on Buccini and Dahlstroom (to appear).
Now consider 11c, which Campanius glosses ‘I have no cloth’. On this reading, *hatta* is a transitive verb of possession, ‘cloth’ is the object, and the subject pronoun has been deleted, as we have seen above in examples 4c and 4e. But notice that there is another interpretation possible for 11c, one in which *hatta* is understood as an existential verb, and where ‘cloth’ is the subject. On this reading, 11c could be glossed ‘There is no cloth’. Semantically, there is not too great a difference between the existential reading and the possessive reading for this example: there would be many situations in which either interpretation could be appropriate.

Buccini and Dahlstrom (to appear) suggest that the existential construction with *hatta* may provide a key to understanding the apparent late retention of OV order with the possessive use of *hatta*. That is, suppose a speaker produces a sentence like 11c, intending the existential reading ‘not cloth exist’. Since ‘cloth’ would be the subject, it would automatically appear to the left of the verb. An addressee, on the other hand, might hear 11c and interpret it as a transitive, possessive construction where the object is appearing in a marked, preverbal position ‘not [I] cloth have’. In other words, the continued use of an intransitive existential construction with *hatta* may have reinforced the OV pattern with transitive *hatta* after the rest of the language moved toward VO syntax under English influence. Even so, it is interesting to note that two of Thomas’s four sentences with possessive *hatta* exhibit VO order. The evidence seems then to indicate that Pidgin Delaware word order was undergoing a second process of reduction through selection, with English speakers rejecting the unfamiliar OV order and employing instead VO order, that is, the one order familiar to them from their own native language.

6. Conclusion. One of the most interesting aspects of the development of Pidgin Delaware is its maintenance of the Algonquian pattern of clause-initial negation, a feature that Thomason takes as being so alien to the Germanic languages as to stand as strong evidence against the participation of Dutch, Swedish, and English speakers in the pidgin’s formation. From the present author’s perspective, what is most interesting in this regard is the apparent ease with which Dutchmen first acquired this construction in attempting to learn Delaware and the subsequent ease with which later colonists learned it when acquiring the
stabilized pidgin. Clearly, the extreme pragmatic importance of negation, together with the salience of clause-initial negation for Dutch, Swedish, and English speakers, rendered acquisition of the structure both necessary and possible. In addition, we should note that the negation strategy of Pidgin Delaware was, while perhaps at first unnatural for the Europeans, extremely simple.

Also noteworthy is the role played by selection in the development of Pidgin Delaware syntax. As argued above, it appears that in the initial stage of the pidgin’s development, Dutch speakers selected the two orders of SVO and SOV out of all the possible permutations of these constituents with which they were likely confronted in the speech of the native Delaware. In the later history of the pidgin, the process appears to have been repeated, with English speakers further reducing the possible number of orders to the one employed in English, surely a further instance of economy of effort but also perhaps a reflection of the deeply ingrained positioning of the object after the verb in English. In other words, I suggest that it was probably easier for English speakers to learn clause-initial negation than to accept placement of a direct object before its verb.

Thomason was certainly correct in her recognition of Pidgin Delaware as an especially interesting contact language, though not, as she claims, because it represents a native North American contact language, developed before the arrival of Europeans in this hemisphere; rather, it stands out as one of the very few contact varieties developed in a European colonial setting that was based on the indigenous peoples’ language. The value of this pidgin, however, goes beyond the lessons to be learned from the study of the particular sociohistorical setting in which it arose. Given the enormous typological differences between the Algonquian Delaware and the Germanic Dutch, Swedish, and English, Pidgin Delaware provides us with an unusual perspective on the mechanisms of transfer in language contact and more particularly on the mechanisms involved in the transfer of syntactic structures; approaching this subject from the theoretical perspective of Van Coetsem’s (1988) typology of transfer types, the development of Pidgin Delaware provides us with useful data for the further consideration of a possible stability gradient within the syntactic domain.
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The Development of Pidgin Delaware


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