

Pidgins and Creoles

Multilingualism

Week 6

Pidgins and Creoles

- Pidgins and Creoles are technical terms used by linguists to describe **two stages** of language growth.
- Pidgins - first stage
- “A major driver for the development of pidgin languages has been economic. Groups of people who speak different languages yet need to engage in economic exchange with each other must find a way of communicating.”
(Deckert & Vickers, 2011, p. 46)
- No one is a first language speaker of a pidgin.

Cameroonian Pidgin English - Cameroon in 1908

Sailors from
England



Cameroonian
locals

The birth of CPE is often traced as far back as the 18th century when English **traders** and **missionaries** set foot on the coast of West Africa. Pidgin English developed to guarantee effective communication in the area of **trade and evangelization**.

Superstratum and substratum

- A superstratum-substratum relationship describes the linguistic makeup of a pidgin.
- **Superstratum** provides the lexicon/vocabulary.
- **Substratum** provides the syntax, morphology, and phonology to the pidgin.
- *Jargon phase* - beginning stage with simplified structure and reduced vocabulary
- *Stable pidgin phase* - less individual variation, more standard grammar, phonological, and lexical features.
- *Expanded pidgin phase* - pidgins are used to meet various communicative needs.
- When next generation begins to use it as their first language, a pidgin becomes a creole.

Pidgins in West Africa

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-09-01/why-west-africas-pidgins-deserve-full-recognition-official-languages>

Jamaican Creole - Patois

Linton Kwesi Johnson "Time Come"

Wi feel bad
Wi look sad
Wi smoke weed
An if yu eye sharp
Read de violance inna wi eye
Wi goin smash de sky wid wi bad bad blood



It soon come
It soon come
Is de shadow walkin behind yu
Is I stannup rite before yu

Look out!
But it too late now
I did warn yu

- Creole languages have million of speakers. They have grammar books, dictionaries, and written literatures.
- We need to change the way we think about labels:

Broken English

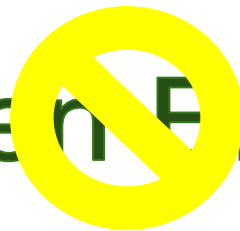


Table 5.1 Pidgins and creoles by lexifier language

<i>Lexifier Language</i>	<i>Number Listed</i>	<i>Examples</i>
English	35	Hawaiian Creole, Gullah or Sea Islands Creole (spoken on the islands off the coasts of northern Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina), Jamaican Creole, Guyana Creole, Krio (spoken in Sierra Leone), Sranan and Djuka (spoken in Suriname), Cameroon Pidgin English, Tok Pisin, and Chinese Pidgin English (now virtually extinct)
French	15	Louisiana Creole, Haitian Creole, Seychelles Creole, and Mauritian Creole
Portuguese	14	Papiamentu (used in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao), Guiné Creole, Senegal Creole, and Saramaccan (spoken in Suriname)
Spanish	7	Cocoliche (spoken by Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires)
Dutch	5	US Virgin Islands Dutch Creole (or Negerhollands), now virtually extinct, and Afrikaans (here said to have been creolized in the seventeenth century)
Italian	3	Asmara Pidgin (spoken in parts of Ethiopia)
German	5	Yiddish and whatever still remains of Gastarbeiter Deutsch

Source: based on information from Hancock (1977)

Haitian Creole

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmYLdIW_KKI

Pay attention to:

1. The history and development of Haitian Creole
2. The differences between Haitian Creole and French

Language Choice in Multilingual Communities

P. 21 Exercise 1

- (a) List all languages/varieties that you use. Consider how well you know a language other than your mother tongue.
How would you rate your knowledge? What factors are relevant to your assessment? Do these include social factors?
- (b) Based on the reading, which varieties do you think Kalala will use to:
- (i) talk to his younger brother at home? **Shi**
 - (ii) plan the morning's activities with his best friend? **Indoubil**
 - (iii) greet a stranger from a different tribe whom he met in the street?
Kingwala
 - (iv) submit paperwork to government offices? **Swahili**

Social factors affect code choice in multilingual communities

Domain	Addressee	Setting	Topic	Variety/Code
Family	Parent	Home	Planning a family party	
Family	Siblings/Cousins	Home	Talking about your weekend	
Religion	Priest	Church	Choosing the Sunday service	
Education	Teacher	School	Solving a Math problem	
Education	Classmate	School	Working on a group presentation	
Employment	Employer	Workplace	Applying for a promotion	

Definition of Diglossia

(p. 27)

1. Two distinct varieties of the same language OR two languages are used in the community, with one regarded as a high (or H) variety and the other a low (or L) variety.
2. Each variety is used for distinct functions; H and L complement each other.
3. No one uses the H variety in everyday conversation.

Differences between H & L in diglossic communities

Exercise 7

- (i) How are H & L variety related linguistically? Are they distinct languages or varieties of the same language?
- (ii) How are they used in the community?
- (iii) Which is used for conversation with family and friends?
- (iv) How is each variety learned?
- (v) Which one has more prestige?

Classical Arabic vs. Colloquial Arabic

(p. 28-29)

“A friend of mine went to Morocco having learned classical Arabic at university in England. When he arrived and used his classical variety, some people were very impressed. People generally respect and admire those who have mastered classical Arabic. But most of them couldn’t understand what he was saying. His colleagues warned him that he would be laughed at or regarded as sacrilegious if he went about trying to buy food in classical Arabic. It would be a bit like asking for steaks at the butcher’s using Shakespearan English.”

Diglossia - A Linguistic Division of Labor

Domain	Oi Lin Lan (Singapore)	Silvia (Aargau canton of Switzerland)	Haitians
Conversations with Family	Cantonese / English	Swiss German	
Conversations with Friends	Singaporean English	Swiss German	
Religious activities	N/A	Standard German	
Education	Mandarin Chinese / English	Standard German	
Media/Broadcast	Mandarin Chinese	Standard German & Swiss German	

Domains and diglossia

- Jamaica is a classic bilingual/diglossic society.
- In Jamaica, the standard Jamaican English is the official language. It is used by the government and in schools.
- Jamaicans use Patois to communicate with family and friends.

Diglossia - two
languages are spoken
in a society



In official
occasions or
schools

One is highly valued
One is lowly valued

Between family
and friends



One is highly valued
One is lowly valued

Jettka (2010)

Table 3: Sample Distribution of Languages Spoken (N=1,000)			
What Languages do you Speak?		Frequency	(%)
<i>English</i>		109	(89.3%)
<i>Patwa</i>		105	(88.9%)
<i>Both</i>		784	(78.4%)
To whom do you Speak?		Frequency	(%)
English	<i>Friends/Family only</i>	79	7.9%
	<i>Strangers/Co-workers</i>	571	57.1%
	<i>Everyone</i>	262	26.2%
	<i>No One</i>	88	8.8%
Patwa	<i>Friends/Family only</i>	629	62.9%
	<i>Strangers/Co-workers</i>	32	3.2%
	<i>Everyone</i>	285	28.5%
	<i>No One</i>	54	5.4%

Figure 4: Language Awareness (JLU, 2005, p. 8)

Social values reflected in language choice

Table 9: Sample Distribution of Stereotypes (N=1,000)			
Which Speaker do you think:		Frequency	(%)
Is more Intelligent	Patwa	73	7.7%
	English	550	57.8%
	Neither/Both	329	34.6%
Is more Honest	Patwa	283	31%
	English	278	30.4%
	Neither/Both	353	38.6%
Is more Educated	Patwa	59	6.2%
	English	591	61.7%
	Neither/Both	308	32.2%
Is more Friendly	Patwa	379	39.8%
	English	240	25.2%
	Neither/Both	333	35%
Has more Money	Patwa	77	8.8%
	English	390	44.7%
	Neither/Both	406	46.5%
Is more Helpful	Patwa	300	31.9%
	English	292	31.1%
	Neither/Both	348	37%

*Figure 5: Language Use and Social Stereotypes
(JLU, 2005, p. 19)*

An few important note:

1. A H variety can overtake the L variety and become the dominant language, and vice versa. At one point in time, after Norman invasion, England became a diglossic society where French was the H variety and Old English/Anglo Saxon was the L variety.

NPR's blogger on code-switching

- “We're looking at code-switching a little *more broadly*: many of us subtly, reflexively change *the way we express ourselves* all the time. We're hop-scotching between different cultural and linguistic spaces and different parts of our own *identities* — sometimes within a single interaction.” (NPR)
- Language is a proxy for identity, and so code-switching is an apt metaphor for *handling more than one identity*. (The Economist)