

Language Contact

Linguistics 220: "Language and Society"

22 May 2003

Readings

- Required
 - Mesthrie et al. (2000), Chapters 8,9
- Other
 - Wardaugh (1992), Chapter 3

Main Points

- Important Terms: *language shift, language death, pidgin, creole, New English*
- In social contexts where there is language contact, a variety of linguistic phenomena may take place
 - a non-dominant language may undergo shift or death
 - pidgins, creoles, or New Englishes may arise

Language Contact

- Often leads to borrowing
- If languages are not on equal status, may lead to maintenance, shift, or death of non-dominant language
- may result in development of pidgins and creoles

Borrowing

- Languages often borrow lexical items from other languages
 - English
 - * from French: rendezvous, bourgeois, escargot
 - * from NA Indian: wigwam, many place names
 - * from Japanese: sushi, bonsai
 - Japanese
 - * from English: terebi (television), pasokon (computer)
 - * from German: (aru)baito (part-time job)
 - * from Dutch: randoseru (school-bag)
- While borrowing is common between languages it is rarely linked to the death of a language

Language Shift

- Causes
 - economic factors - local vernaculars compete with lingual francas in the marketplace
 - demographic factors - size, density, and location of a speech community
 - institutional support - is the language taught in schools? used as an official language?
 - status - social importance of language

Reversing Language Shift (Fishman, 1991)

- Fishman (1991)
 - Establish language as high-status variety in a diglossic social context
 - Establish language as having official status
 - Establish language as everyday language of communication
- past/current efforts
 - Hebrew in Israel
 - Cornish in England
 - Indian groups (e.g., Huron) in Canada

Pidgins

- motivated by need for rapid development of means of communication
- structurally simplified language
 - small sound inventory
 - simple, shallow syntax
 - simple or no morphology

Tok Pisin Exercise

- see *tokpisin.pdf*
- overview of Tok Pisin
- try to translate *I am a crocodile* into English
- check translation

1 Hairdresser hello ah-John-ah long time no see.
 how can I hepch you?
2 John okay I want to cut my hair
3 Hairdresser sorry lah cannot sit here.
4 after i kena scolding.
5 another client chope the seat already.
6 so how do you wan me to cut your hair?
7 John chin chye but dowan botak okay?
8 also keen keen I got a meeting soon
9 Hairdresser so long never see you.
10 you frequent another hairdressers ah?
11 John yah lah you so expensive since you move here to Da Jia Qu Mai Ya.
12 Hairdresser alamak don so kiasu lah.
13 I give you hup-ply discoun.
14 you go to another stylist sure kenna ketok.

hepch *help*

kena Malay for *receive* or *get*

chope *reserve*; also used to indicate *it* in game of tag; derived from
Chinese word for name seal or stamp, *chop*

chin chye Hokkien Chinese for *it doesn't matter*

dowan reduced from *I don't want*

botak Malay for *bald*; also refers to crew-cut hairstyle

keen Hokkien Chinese for *quick*

alamak an exclamation, from the mild Malay curse, 'mother of Allah'

kiasu someone who does not want to lose out

hup-ply *half-price*

kenna ketok Malay for *to get a knock* (i.e., *to get cheated*)

New Englishes

- develops in area where there are few English speakers
- develops through education system
- used for a range of functions (lingua franca, official communication, media)
- becomes indigenized by adopting 'local' words and nativized by stabilizing structural features

Singapore English: "Singlish"

- see handout, *singlish.pdf*
- analyze conversation

Papua, New Guinea has over 800 known languages with three common contact languages

English used in writing and business communication

Hiri Motu used and spread by police force around Port Moresby

Tok Pisin used in speech and writing; in process of standardization and codification

Features of Tok Pisin

- consonant assimilation: no distinction between /p/f/, /g/k/, or /s/sh/ch/
- simplified consonant clusters: 'sol'=salt, 'kol'=cold, 'sikis'=six
- few vowel categories: /a e i o u/
- reduplication: 'look'=look, 'looklook'=stare
- 2 forms of *we*: 'mipela'=I and others no here, 'yumi'=I and others here
- plural suffix: '-pela'
- English-based lexicon: 'bagarap'=break/destroy, 'hangre'=hungry
- local borrowings in lexicon: Polynesian 'kaikai'=food, Malay 'susu'=milk
- compounding in word-formation: 'plantihan'=plenty hands (centipede), 'pikini, pik'=piglet
- metaphor in word-formation: 'haus pepa'=housepaper (office), 'haus bilong spaida'=spider's house (web)
- circumlocution: 'singsing bilong haus lotu'=hymn
- 3 basic prepositions: 'long'=to, for, from, 'bilong'=of, 'wantaim'=with
- tense markers by auxiliary: 'bin' (past), 'baimbai'/'bai' (future)

Translate the following Tok Pisin short story into English

I am a crocodile

by Steve Simpson

Mi wanpela pukpuk.

Mi hangre nogut tru.

Ooo, mi laik kaikai pis. Swit moa!

Mi laik kaikai kuka.

Em tu swit moa.

Narapela samting mi laik kaikai, em pik!

Mi laik gris bilong pik tumas. Em swit moa!

Rokrok, i namba wan! Mik laik kaikai rokrok nau tasol.

Na em swit moa yet!

Olaman! Mi laik kaikai trausel ya! I gutpela tumas. Na em
swit moa yet!

Dok tu em i gutpela tru. Mi laik kaikai dok tude! Swit moa
ya!

Na, wanem samting moa mi laik kaikai?

YU YET!

I am a crocodile

by Steven Simpson

I am a crocodile.

I am very, very hungry.

I like to eat fish. Mmm ... good (very sweet)!

I like crabs.

They are yummy (very sweet)!

Another thing I like eating is pig!

I like the flavor (grease) a lot. It is very sweet!

Frogs are excellent! I like eating frogs right now!

They are even sweeter!

Wow! I like eating turtles! They are wonderful. They are
even sweeter!

Dogs are good too. I would like to eat a dog today!
Mmmm...!

And what else would I like to eat?

YOU!

References

Mesthrie, R., Swann, J., Deumert, A., and Leap, W., editors (2000). *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Wardhaugh, R. (1992). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Second Edition*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK.