LANGUAGE CONTACT: THE EMERGENCE OF PIDGINS AND CREOLE ENGLISHES

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Abstract

Pidgins and creoles (P/Cs) languages are generally emerged from the practical situation of interlinguistic communication. Thus, for the sake of communication some people may unconsciously create a new language which has simpler structure than the normal language. Concerning that issue, this paper focuses to describe pidgins and creoles (P/Cs) languages including its characteristics. Further, this paper tries to explore the developmental stages of pidgin and creoles languages, and to find out some factors which might cause them to emerge. However, the scope of this paper is limited under the discussion of pidgin and creoles based English or known as pidgin and creoles Englishes.

Keywords: *Pidgin and Creole (P/Cs), interlinguistic communication, sociolinguistic aspect, pidgin and creoles Englishes.*

Introduction

The term language contact is defined as the circumstance where two or more languages meet within interlinguistic communication. Thus, under this condition people with different languages may switch their language from one language to another language, mix different languages during conversation, and even borrow lexical items of the new language to their language. However, Jendra (2010) in 'Language Contact' mentions that language contact is divided into two. The first is direct contacts, it occurs when the speakers of the languages directly meet in person, for instance the colonialization in the past. The second is distant contacts; it refers indirectly through the mass media (magazines, TV, internet, etc.).

What is the relation of pidgin and creoles language with language contact? Based on the above concepts, pidgin and creoles languages are the language changes that emerge as the result of language contact especially *direct contact*. However, it is important to note that not all language contacts result in pidgin and creoles. Pidgins and creoles are normally developed by the communities who speak different languages. At this point, in order to facilitate the communication, the communities purposively change their languages by using new codes that are regarded to have simpler grammar and vocabulary. In the meantime, the grammar of a language may be possibly developed and simplified over the time.

However, there is misleading assumption that pidgin and creoles are usually drawn upon one specific language; English based pidgin, Creole French, and so on. In fact, one could say that there is not just one English based pidgin in the world since there are several different pidgins spread all over the world.

To define, Sebba (1997) assumes that pidgins are language without native speakers learnt by bilingual people. Thus, the words 'without native speakers' there implies that it is naturally evolved under special conditions. It likely occurs when people with different languages are communicating where the third language emerges, that is the *pidgin language.* Furthermore, Holm (1980) defines pidgin as:

> "a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common; it evolves when they need some means of verbal communication, perhaps for trade, but no group learns the native language of any other group for social reasons that may include lack of trust or of close contact" (P 4).

Initially, pidgin develops purposively. To illustrate, take a look at the case in South China where an English based pidgin emerged as the result of trading contacts among Chinese speakers and English speaking traders. In order to communicate with each other, they developed pidgins based on the language of the English traders as well as their own languages. Another example is seen in Holmes (1992) that during the colonial time in the nineteenth century, people on slave plantation area pidgins emerged as the mixed up language based between the plantation bosses' language as well as the indigenous ones.

To sum up shortly, pidgins are developed from the reduced and simplified form of a language spoken by people with different languages. To illustrate, let us see the comparison between English into its new form namely Papua New Guinea Pidgin, the word *supposes* in English simplified into *sapos*, *start* as in *stat, catch him* becomes *kisim* (Culperer et all, 2009: 394). However, each different language normally contributes to the grammatical features, vocabulary, sounds, and the other features to make up the new variety of a language.

When a pidgin is learned by the children as their first language and is officially used in a wide range of domains, it then turns out to be called a *creole.* It is, by definition, a pidgin which has been acquired by the native speakers. In fact, there have been many pidgins, in most cases, become a new officially established language or simply called *creole* within community. For instance, Tok Piksin now becomes the official language of Papua New Guniea. This 'Tok Piksin' actually begins with the pidgins of Papua New Guinea before it becomes a creole language. It is developed as the creole language since it has been largely learned as the first language by most of speakers, and has developed to meet their linguistic needs that is to speak.

Unlike pidgins, a Creole has expanded its structure and vocabulary to a wide range of meanings and facilitates the range of functions required of a first language. Still in contrast to pidgins, Creole languages develop more specific, and systematic to mention the meaning, for instance verb and tenses which might develop into inflections or affixes over time. To describe, let's see Holmes's Australian Roper River Creole:

> *Im megim ginu* refers to *he makes a canoe* (present tense), *im bin* megim ginu* refers to the past tense of *he made a canoe, im begimbad* ginu* which refers to the present continuous of *he is making a canoe* (Homes, 1992: 95).

As seen above that Creole language develops into the complexity that might be more than just pidgins with its simplified and reduced forms. The example above shows how the additional *bin** may signal the past tense. Meanwhile the suffix *bad** added to the verb which may signal the continuous aspects. Therefore, it is shown that a Creole is more than a pidgin, it develops a systematic way of concisely expressing additional meanings.

Discussion

English-lexicon pidgins and creoles around the world

As what mentioned earlier that pidgins and creoles languages result from interlinguistic communications where people with different language and even no language in common try to create a medium communication. For instance, in China English based pidgin emerged as the result of trading contacts between native speakers of Chinese and English speaking traders. This pidgin was language with its simplified and limited vocabulary, suited to its limited functions. Further, in Papua New Guinea, there is also English based pidgin (New Guinea Pidgin) which now develops as creoles language. It means that it has become first and official language of Papua New Guinea, and later is known by its given name *Tok Piksin*. As somewhat found in English based pidgin in Chinese, *Tok Piksin* is also known as a language with its limited vocabulary and simplified structure. Here is some example of Tok Piksin language

Table 2.1. Tok Piksin Language

Tok Piksin Pidgin	Tok Piksin Creole	Standard English
Mi no save. Ol I wokim dispela haus	*Mi no save oslem* Ol I wokim dispela haus*	I didn't know that they built this house

*(source: Mc.Mahon as cited by Jendra in *Sociolinguistics; The Study of Society's Languages*, 2010:152)

As what illustrated above, pidgin language tends to reduce grammatical structure to a minimum of a language origin and it has a very limited vocabulary. In the Tok Piksin pidgin there is even an omission process of the word *that*. Meanwhile, when it develops into creoles, it has more stable grammar, even it is simplified one. One might find that the word *oslem** in the Tok Piksin Creole indicates the subordinating

conjunction *that* which may not exist while it is still a pidgin.

In another case, in Africa many English-lexicon creoles normally developed from the system of slavery and slave plantation which was practiced by European and American colonies. However, in western part of Africa, English based pidgins are still spoken and even it may develop as the creoles language. To illustrate, Krio is the first language which was initially considered as the English based pidgin. And, now it turns to be the first language for most people in Sierra Leone.

In the other English colonies of Caribbean, creoles languages emerged during the slavery period and become the first language for the majority of population. Going further, English-lexicon creoles are spoken as the vernacular language in Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, and some smaller islands.

Meanwhile, pidgins and creoles spoken in Europe emerged as the result of migration from former colonies of Europe countries. It has created and brought creoles to many cities in Europe. For instance, one may hear Jamaican or other Carribean creoles spoken in London, Birmingham, and other cities in England. Jamaican Creole are normally used as the language if Reggae lyric (one of the newborn music genres) and 'hip-hop.' Therefore, it may sound familiar to people in many countries even though it is not commonly used as everyday language.

1.1. Developmental stages of pidgins and creole languages

Pidgins and Creole languages (P/Cs) may emerge through several developmental stages. Sebba (1997) as cited in Culpeper mentions at least two 'transitional stages' of pidgins and creole languages namely 'territory hybridization stage' and 'creolization' (P 391).

Table 2.2 Stages of Pidgin and Creole Development

| Stage	Characteristics	Example

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Rudimentary Pidgin	Unstable grammar and vocabulary, very limited function, used in occasional or casual contact between two groups; no native speakers	Russenorsk (extinct Russian-Norwegian seasonal fisherman's pidgin)
Tertiary Hybridization		
Stable Pidgin	Regularized, stable grammar and vocabulary, somewhat larger range of functions, in widespread use; no native speakers	Early New Guinea Pidgin
Extended/Expanded Pidgin	Regularized, stable grammar and vocabulary, wide range functions, possibly used for literature, education and administration, may be main language (but usually not **only** language) in a community; may have some native speakers; may be developing different stylistic registers for different functions	Tok Piksin, West African Pidgin English.
Creolization		
Creole	Has grammar which is stable and has stylistic registers like any other language; wide range of functions; vocabulary sufficient for all the functions for which the language is used; has a community of speakers for whom it is a first (possibly only) language.	*Jamaican Creole, Krio, Sranan Tongo, many others*

*(Source: Culpeper's *English Language; Description, Variation, and Context*, 2009: 302)

In 'tertiary hybridization' the emergence of early pidgin is marked when speakers of different indigenous language attempt to speak by using a version of the lexifier language with the native speakers of the lexifier, then it becomes the medium for native speaker-non-native speaker communication (Culpeper, 2009:391). When speakers of indigenous language use pidgin to speak among themselves, they consequently use pidgin as a lingua franca, and therefore speakers of the lexifier are no longer involved. It means, the lexifier is neither serving as a model of a conversation because pidgin has taken its place within communication.

On the other hand, the second transition process 'creolization' emerges when a pidgin turns out to be a creole. Admittedly, Appel and Muysken (1987) in 'Language Contact and Bilingualism' define a Creole as a language which is actually derived from pidgin acquiring by native speakers. As for this reason, a creolization is a process when pidgin is acquired by the native speakers, and this pidgin is then changing to be more and more developed. A Creole will develop as the changing of pidgin made to the base of language, and however this process may occur within one generation or two which is considerably a very short time in a language development. One might say that Creole naturally emerges as a new language passed down from generation to the next generation, spoken as the first language within new born community. One best example to illustrate is the 'Tok Piksin' language which is now established as the first language and official language in Papua New Guinea.

In addition to that, Muhlhausler (1986), proposes the following model to outline the developmental process from pidgin to creole.
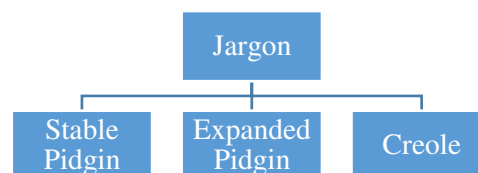
(Jendra, 2010:151)

Muhlhausler puts jargon as the base of stable pidgin before it becomes the expanded pidgin and turns out to be a creole. Even so, not all of the creoles emerge with the similar process as Tok Piksin for there are some of them have not been fully documented. Culpeper (2009) illustrates that it is quite questionable whether a creole emerges very rapidly as well. For instance, it may be because English planters settled in Surinam that may cause the emergence of English-lexicon creole. However, after that the Ducth came and replaced the English, the plantation slaves were found to speak Sranan which is very much English rather than Ducth lexicon-crole. Hence, it is not really clear to say that all creoles may emerge through the gradual process as Tok Piksin. To make it through, Thomason and Kaufman (1988) as cited by Culpeper propose what so called 'abrupt creolization,' it is the process where the community who speak creole arises before a stable pidgin has had time to emerge (P 392).

Controversial issues and theories of the origins

Pidgins and Creoles (P/Cs) around different parts of the world may have remarkable similarities grammatically; even they come from different standard languages they are associated to. Further, the idea that pidgins arise because of imperfect language learning or lack ability to learn the standard languages may sometimes be associated with another one. Perhaps, it becomes the underlying reason for the controversial terms '*foreigner-talk'* or *'baby-talk'* which seems to underestimate people with indigenous language as they are likely associated to be 'inferior' and that Western language is 'better' than others because many people speak 'primitive language' (See Wardhaugh, 2002: 73).

On the contrary, there is no valid evidence for the terms '*foreigner-talk'* or *'baby-talk'* theory as the origin of pidgins and creoles which assumes that the simplified forms, emerged as the result that Europeans simplify their languages to communicate with others, serve to provide pidgins with their basic structures and vocabularies. In fact, it seems to be the other way around that many Westerners must deal regularly with pidginized varieties of their languages and speak them very badly. Thus, they likely fail to understand some basic structural characteristics of the pidgin itself. One thing that is quite important here to underline is that pidgins, according to Wardhaugh, are not resulted as the imperfection of learning standard languages, but rather because it emerges as the speakers lack of either the ability or the opportunity to learn the standard varieties thoroughly.

In spite of such underestimating theory, there are two theories for the origins of pidgins and creoles that are quite sufficient. They are namely *polygenetic* and *monogenetic theory* (see Wardhaugh, 2002: 73). 'Polygenetic theory' outlines that pidgins and creoles may have a variety of origins; and if there are any similarities among them, it merely because there are the shared circumstances of their origins. For instance, the English based pidgins may have certain simplified forms that have developed independently in a number of places. It formerly because the speakers of English attempt to make themselves understood by simplifying their language for certain purposes, so that they could be understood.

Unlike *polygenetic theory*, 'monogenetic theory' attempts to examine the very beginnings of the pidginization process. This theory also suggests that the monogenetic theory suggests that the similarities may be found in the pidgins and therefore all pidgins have a common origin. McWhorter (1995) as cited in Wardhaugh illustrates how the beginnings of the slave trade and the existence of English and French slave forts on the West African Coast where the language contact developed. This contact language then provided the bases for most of the pidgins and creoles languages.

In addition to what mentioned earlier, creolization may involve some significant changes; word-formation, sentence structures, regularization of the speech sounds, and stabilization of vocabulary enrichment. Therefore, such changes may require the term 'relexification' to explain. 'Relexification' is the theory that provides an explanation to the fact that pidgins and creoles associated with

different standard languages may have a certain common structural features; even to some degree they are quite different in vocabularies.

Linguistic characteristics of pidgins and creoles

Two key terms while trying to describe characteristics of pidgins and creoles are 'simplification' and 'reduction' compared to the lexifier and substrate languages. Formerly, it emerges as the result when communities attempt to communicate one another. Perhaps the communities change their language into a new code that has simpler grammar and vocabulary.

Phonological simplification.

Culpeper (2009) describes some typical forms of simplification in the sound system. They are presented as follows.

    a.) Avoidance of multi-syllable words (preference will be given to the words of three syllables or less.)
    b.) Avoidance consonant clusters by dropping consonants or inserting vowels (e.g. *tan* to refer 'stand' in Sranan)
    c.) Avoidance of the 'difficult' sound (i.e. English <th> (=/ð/,/θ/) often becomes /d/,/t/.

Grammatical simplification

It may be the very clearer changing in pidgins language as it often simplifies the grammar and structure of the lexifier. Some characteristics of grammatical simplifications are described as follows:

    a.) Lack of inflections (the past tense marker –*ed* and plural marker –*s* are often omitted in pidgin and creole languages.
    b.) Use separate words to indicate tenses (e.g. in Tok Piksin the word *baimbai* indicates the future, whereas the word *bin* (derived from English been) is used to mark past tense.)

    c.) Lack of some 'less essential' word classes (the absence of the article –*a* and *the* and even the copula or to be in some circumstances.
    d.) Lack of some grammatical constructions (i.e. 'passive voice').
    e.) It normally stands in only one word order, therefore the word order will not require any change as it does in English (e.g. in Tok Piksin *Yu kukim wanem?* Means 'what are you cooking?').

Lexical simplification and reduction

It has been previously mentioned that vocabulary pidgins and creoles are normally reduced compared to its lexifier. Thus, to make it so, one speaker of pidgin or creole language may get to have synonyms in a sentence. For instance, in the Tok Piksin, the word *stret has the very various meanings; 'straight, flat, exactly, honest, and correct.' Even so, to some degree, it may require 'semantic simplicity' and 'transpaperncy' To illustrate, there are some basic prepositions, for example in Tok Piksin the word *long* ('in, on, at…').

However, there are also some that might deal with 'morphology.' Derivational morphology as in he building of more complex nouns and verb from the basic parts are very limited and perhaps more transparent in terms of its meaning than in English (Culpeper, 2009: 393).

To further illustrate, I shall give you an example how a pidgin may be both like and very different from its lexifier. The table below will present the simplified and reduction emerged.

Some multiple differences between Tok Piksin and English are presented as follows:
    → **Phonological**: Simplification, e.g. kisim, sak
    → **Grammatical**: the suffix –*im* is required on the verb when it has an object
    → **Semantic**: *belong* is reinterpreted as a preposition

meaning 'of'. *Devil*, which in western theology is a very specific kind of (evil) spirit, is reinterpreted with a more general meaning, which is not necessarily negative.

The origins of pidgin and creole characteristic

Although it is not really clear that the fundamental issue has never been observed before, but there are some sufficient guesses by linguist that are not really objective because they are based on the historical facts on how pidgins and creoles emerge and develop overtime. However there are some factors noted here how pidgins and creoles occur.

Imperfect second language learning

It is common that all pidgins and creoles derive most of their vocabularies from one language that is called 'lexifier'. The lexifier mentioned here is commonly what so called 'superior language' that is the language which has the domination over the indigenous language, or the language which colonizes the indigenous language. For instance, in China English based pidgins emerge when there is interaction between Chinese and English speaking traders, or the plantation owners who were exactly English in the Caribbean islands and the slave traders in parts of West Africa.

What mentioned as the imperfect second language learning is that the indigenous people try to learn the language of colonizers (e.g. English, French, Ducth, etc), in circumstances where they do not seem to speak it perfectly (Culpeper, 2009:394). However, to say that it is 'imperfect second language learning' is quite debatable because it emerges as the speakers lack of either the ability or the opportunity to learn the standard varieties thoroughly.

Foreigner Talk

The term 'foreigner talk' refers to the name of the 'talk' given to 'foreign hearer'. However, it is the talk when 'foreign hearer' is confronted to communicate with a person who has limited command in their language ─ for example ─ English which may dominate the language contact over African language. Hence, there is the emergence of pidgin based English. The characteristics of 'foreign talk' are mentioned as follows (Culpeper, 2009: 395):

- Use of a limited vocabulary; replacing with the simpler ones
- Use of simple grammar, e.g., omitting tense markers, the verb *to be* and other less essential items such as the inflections *–ed* in past tense or *–s/-es* for plural nouns
- Using short phrases and doing frequent understanding checks.

Linguistic universals

It is about the idea that has been widely accepted within linguistic that all languages must have certain common properties. Therefore, human children may possibly learn any language that they have to. Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to see how those common properties are manifested in language. Even so, there is one way to see some features of language through phonological, morphological, and syntactic as well. By doing so, perhaps it makes as 'easier' to learn those shared common properties.

Layers of lexical development

Pidgins and creoles (P/Cs) may have complex histories since they develop over the time, let us say that they might develop or change along with contact with different colonizers. This problem may be found in the lexicon of the P/Cs itself. Even if you might see that everyday use of language is typically derived from just one language or called 'lexifier', there are such mixed up or contributions from other language as well which can be linked to specific historical times when a pidgin or creole develops. I take only some data in Tok Piksin Language to illustrate:

English I: The word 'older' layer of English words in Tok Piksin tend to be short, common and have been adapted to thesound patterns of indigenous languages,.e.g., *han* 'hand', *het* 'head', *kis(im)* 'get' (from English catch)

English II: More recent words of English origin are similar to loan words in other languages, having less adaptation and usually having meaning related to new concepts or technology: *teprikoda* 'tape recorder', *aubotmota* 'out board motor', *edukeit(im)* 'educate'.
(Culpeper, 2009:396)

A 'layered' model of pidgin and creole development

When talking about 'layered' model in pidgin and creole development, frequently we may associate it with the terms 'substrate' and 'superstrate' that are used in studying P/Cs. The term substrate refers or 'bottom layer' refers to the indigenous language or an inferior language whose speakers are the dominated people. They mostly make up the majority of language. Meanwhile, the 'superstrate' or 'top layer' is the same as 'lexifier' and it refers to the language of colonizers or dominant group.

Superstrate contribution

Supperstrate is where the most vocabularies derived from. It is the source of vocabularies, and some of the grammar. It is important to emphasize here that English which formed its superstrate is different from modern standard English in at least three important ways:

(i) **Historical**
The forms of English date from an earlier period of the language
(ii) **Social**
The speakers of English who are most likely to have influenced a developing pidgin were sailors or labourers, who wouldn't have had acess to 'educated' vocabulary and prescribed forms of grammar. Evidence of non-standard (stigmatized) form is common
(iii) **Regional**

Here, there is such evidence of dialectical forms which appear in particular pidgins or creoles.

To illustrate, it is better to take a look at the table 2.6.1 below that shows vocabulary items from Tok Piksin (New Guinea Pidgin), their meanings and English sources.

Tok Piksin word	*Meaning*	*Source*
Bagarap	Spoil, ruin	Bugger up
As	Buttock, base, cause, origin	Arse
Kok	Penis	cock
Pispis	Urinate	Piss
baimbai	Future tense marker (grammatical)	By and by
stap	Stay, continue to do something	stop

(Culpeper (2009:397)

Substrate contribution

'Substrate' means the language other than lexifier, and are normally an indigenous language spoken in the region where pidgin originates or becomes lingua franca. Take the case of New Guinea Pidgin (Tok Piksin) the substrate is formed by the languages of New Guinea which is quite numerous. However, it's needless to say that the first language os speakers have some great influence as well on the pidgin as it emerges.

Conclusions

To sum up, there is such a mistake in viewing P/Cs languages, that the speakers of indigenous language are assumed trying to speak the lexifier language but then they fail very badly. If we take it into account from this standpoint, a pidgin may be associated as 'bad English'. In fact, a pidgin is perfectly grammatical in its own terms and thus it is only 'wrong' when one tries to compare it

with something that it is not meant to be. Another case is when it sounds to hearers who know the lexifier language to have simplified grammar like grammar of a child.

There the term 'baby talk' originates. However, it is rather unfair to label these languages (P/Cs) as the 'baby talk' since it has its own rules or grammars, and the speakers fail to follow the lexifier because they only attempt to communicate without having enough time to learn it. They speak because they are forced with the need to communicate, in fact they have different tongues with the hearers. The term 'baby talk' exist withing colonial periods and it may occur as the result of racist attitude towards indigenous people who were the speakers of pidgins and creole.

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