Pidgins

A presentation by Julia Fette, Kristine Trenkenschu, Henning Dammberg and Julian Hölscher
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2. General approaches to Pidgins
3. Examples of Pidgin English
   a) Pidgin English in Cameroon
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4. Contextualisation
Pidgins: A definition

“A pidgin is a language with no native speakers: it is no one's first language but is a contact language. That is, it is the product of a multilingual situation in which those who wish to communicate must find or improvise a simple language system that will enable them to do so.”

(Wardhaugh 2002: 60-1)
Definition

- Linguistic point of view:
  - non-native languages
  - grow out of contact situations
  - pidgins are less elaborated
  - used in limited set of circumstances
  - stylistically less varied than first languages
Examples

1 Reduced vocabulary leads to extensive use of paraphrase and metaphor to supply lexical units, for example in Tok Pisin: /skru bílɔŋ arm/ ‘screw of the arm’ is the word for elbow, just as /gras bílɔŋ hɛd/ ‘grass of the head’ means hair (Hall 1966: 90f).

2 As compared with StE there is a simplified and changed phoneme inventory: often missing are, for example, /ð/ and /θ/, cf. Hawaiian PE /tʰri ijá/ ‘three years’ (Carr 1972: 20). Often mentioned also is the lack of consonant clusters and the resultant sequences of consonant–vowel–consonant–vowel.

3 Inflections are rare as compared with StE; for example, there is no plural {-S} in Hawaiian PE /tʰri ijá/ ‘three years’.
Definition

- Historical point of view:
  - emerged in trade situations (e.g. West Africa) and
  - in plantations, esp. in the Caribbean
Definition

- **Social point of view:**
  - limited needs and circumstances in trading posts
  - developed registers which were limited
  - marginal languages
  - some pidgins developed beyond the stage of a trade jargon
Where does the term “pidgin” come from?

- a Chinese corruption of the English word 'business' as in 'gospidgin man'
- a Chinese corruption of the Portuguese word 'ocupacão'
- from the Hebrew word 'pidjom'
- from the word 'pidian' in Yago
- from the two Chinese characters 'pei' and 'ts'in
Theories of origin

- **Monogenetic hypothesis:**
  - pidgin languages share a common source
  - historical background: slave trade, colonial trade
  - process of relexification

  ex.: Portuguese word “saber“ meaning to know found in every English pidgin (e.g. “savi“, “sabi“)
Theories of origin

- The parallel development hypothesis:
  - languages share similar historical conditions => developed in a similar way
  - e.g. similar processes of simplification
  - combination of non-linguistic and linguistic features
Theories of origin

- The hypothesis of universal processes of language acquisition:
  - same principles of reduction and simplification
  => universal and innate processes
- e.g. simplified phonology, leaving out inflectional endings
Examples

- All children from all L1s go through the same stages in the mastery of speech (babble → intonational patterns of the speech community → individual words → short combinations of words).
- Children produce regular patterns across L1s which are not the same as adult norms, e.g. negator + sentence as in ‘No I sit’
- This type of simplified language is used in all speech communities by proficient to less proficient speakers, e.g. by parents to children, native speakers to non-fluent non-native speakers.
Theories of origin

- The nautical jargon theory:
  - sailors from European countries with different language backgrounds

=> developed common language for communication

- sailors' lingua franca became part of the various pidgins
Pidgin English in Cameroon

(oral introduction to Anne Schröder’s article)
Map of Cameroon
Research locations

- Bamenda
- Dschang
- Buea
- Douala
- Yaounde
- Bertoua
- Maroua
- Ebolowa
Cameroon

- Official languages: English and French
# Linguistic situation in Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Languages and Codes</th>
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</table>
| local level        | indigenous languages (ILs)  
|                    | CamP (in urban areas)   |
| regional level     | CamP                
|                    | other Languages of Wider Communication (LWCs) e.g.:  
|                    | Duala, Bulu, Ewondo, Populaire, Mungaka, Fulfulde  
|                    | (English and French)   |
| national level     | French              
|                    | English             
|                    | CamP                |
| international level| English             
|                    | French              |
What languages do you know?
Cameroon Pidgin English

Kamtok (from 'Cameroon-talk')

• Grafi Kamtok,
• liturgical Kamtok.
• francophone Kamtok.
• Limbe Kamtok.
• Bororo Kamtok.
Can you greet in Pidgin?

Anglophone

Francophone
Can you buy in the market in Pidgin?
Can you carry on an ordinary conversation in Pidgin?

Anglophone

Francophone
Can you give a speech in Pidgin?
Cameron Pidgin (CamP) hypothesis

• could bridge anglophone-francophone gap
• intergroup communication
• educated speakers use either French or English to communicate with each other
University student, anglophone (Dschang) (307/315)
AS: Do you ever speak Pidgin to francophones?
I: No.
AS: Never?
I: Never.
AS: What language do you use when you speak to francophones?
I: No, with my colleagues, those who are doing languages, when I meet them either I speak French or English.

Teacher, francophone 1 (Dschang) (64/68)
I: Avec mes amis qui ne partagent pas ma langue maternelle, s’ils sont francophone, nous causons en français. S’ils sont anglophones, on se débrouille, là on parle un peu anglais, là où je suis un peu coincé, je reprends en français et on se comprend.
What language(s) do you speak with your close friends?
CamP use with anglophone and/or francophone friends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>in general</th>
<th>by anglophones</th>
<th>by francophones</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
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<td>mass media</td>
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<td>trade</td>
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<td>literature and performing arts</td>
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<td>science and technology</td>
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<td>secrets</td>
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<td>national and cultural identity</td>
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*very high frequency, high frequency, medium frequency, low frequency, very low frequency use*
What language do you speak in the market?
Language use at the market

French
English
CamP
IL 1
CamP as a national language
Tok Pisin

• Where did it derive from?
  - the Melanesian area > Papua New Guinea
  - New Guineans worked on plantations Queensland, Samoa, Fiji, and later on New Guinea itself. They acquired the language and brought it back to their home villages.

• Where is it spoken?
  - in the Melanesian area > Papua New Guinea
Melanesia
Papua New Guinea
Papua New Guinea

• Some Facts

• - PNG is located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, in a region defined as Melanesia

• - Capital = Port Moresby

• - official languages: Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu, Englisch

• - total speakers of Tok Pisin: 5-6 million; approximately one million native speakers
Papua New Guinea

- Independent State of Papua New Guinea
- Independen Stet bilong Papua Niugini
Linguistic Features

• In General

• Tok Pisin has about 16 consonants and 5 vowels
• the phonology is less differentiated: [p] and [f] are not distinguished (they are in free variation)
• verbs have a suffix, -im (from "him") to indicate transitivity (luk “look”; lukim “see”)
• the reduplication of expressions is very common (liklik “like”)
• the sibilants /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ are not clearly distinguished
Linguistic Features

• sentence structure is SOV

• often one word carries a whole saying; high focus in meaning

• Vocabulary Examples

• gat bel - pregnant (lit. "has belly"; pasin bilong givim bel = fertility)
• kakaruk - chicken (probably onomatopoetic)
• pasim maus - shut up, be quiet, i.e. yu pasim maus, lit: "you close mouth" = "shut up!"
• asples bilong gavman = seat of government (bilong = “belong”)
Linguistic Features

• Example:

(1) Mi laik story long taim mi liklik yet na mi bin statim Tok Pisin.
   I’d like to tell (you) about the time I was still small and I started (to speak) Tok Pisin.

• mi “I, me”
• story “story, tell”
• long “along, to, in, at, about, from, on, for”
• liklik “little, a little”
• yet “yet, still”
• na “and”
• bin < “been” = past
• stat-im “start”-transitive

Smith (2002), p. 1
Linguistic Features

• a 16-year old boy from Vanimo, north coast of PNG

• preposition *long* = highly significant

• reduplication in *liklik*. Marking of transitive verbs through
  • suffix –*im* > English ‘him’

• marking of past-tense through auxiliary verb *bin*
Tok Pisin

A pidgin can also develop into a creole when it expands its vocabulary and when its grammar increases.

The concept of creolization (the development from a pidgin into a creole) can occur at any time in a pidgin's lifespan.

Some varieties of Cameroon pidgin and some varieties of Tok Pisin developed this way.
# Tok Pisin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 1</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Jargon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stabilized Pidgin</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Stabilized Pidgin</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Expanded Pidgin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Creole</td>
<td>Creole</td>
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</table>

West Indian Engl.Creole  Torres Straits Creole  New Guinea Tok Pisin

*Three Types of Creolization (from Romaine 1988a:155)*
I. Pidgins on the global level
English based Pidgins

1 Gambian Creole
2 Sierra Leone Krio
3 Liberian Creole and Kru
4 Ghanaian Pidgin English
5 Togolese Pidgin English
6 Nigerian Pidgin English
7 Cameroon Pidgin English
8 Fernando Po Pidgin English
9 American Indian Pidgin English
10 Black English
11 Gullah
12 Bahamian
13 Belizean
14 Costa Rican
15 Jamaican
16 Leeward Is Creole
17 Windward Is Creole
18 Barbadian
19 Trinibagian
20 Creolese
21 Surinamese Creoles
22 Hawaiian Creole
23 Indian Pidgins
24 China Coast Pidgin
25 Bamboo English
26 Tok Pisin
27 Solomon Is Pidgin
28 Bislama
29 Australian Creoles
30 Pitcairnese and Norfokkese
31 Tristan da Cunha

# Pidgins and new varieties of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kachru:</th>
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<tr>
<td>non-recognition &gt; co-existence of local and imported varieties &gt; recognition</td>
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<tr>
<th>Moag (Fijian English):</th>
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<tr>
<td>transportation &gt; indigenisation &gt; expansion of use &gt; institutionalisation &gt; (decline)</td>
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<th>Schneider:</th>
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<tr>
<td>foundation &gt; exonormative stabilisation &gt; nativisation &gt; endonormative stabilisation &gt; differentiation</td>
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“what happens during this phase (exonormative stab.) may not be unlike the early stages of some routes leading to creolisation.” Schneider 2003, quod. in Kirkpatrick, *Models of World Englishes*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mühlhäuser:</th>
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<tr>
<td>jargon &gt; stabilized Pidgin &gt; expanded pidgin &gt; creole</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
linguistic prejudice as defining criterion?

Kirkpatrick, World Englishes, 2007:

- “around for a long time”
- influence on younger varieties
- linguistic superiority due to age and purity

“A nativised, acculturated or indiginised variety of English is thus one that has been influenced by the local cultures in which it has developed. By this definition all varieties that are spoken by an identifiable speech community are nativised.”
linguistic prejudice as defining criterion?


- **Mufwene on the English language continuum:**

  “One of its [of the English continuum] poles consists of varieties spoken typically by descendents of Europeans and whose legitimacy has hardly ever been disputed. The other pole consists of English pidgins and creoles, which have been stipulated as separate languages, despite their speakers' claim that they too speak English. In the middle range come varieties characterized as 'non-native' or 'indigenized'.”

linguistic prejudice as defining criterion?

Salikoko Mufwene, The legitimate and illegitimate offspring of English:

• categorisation of new Englishes is based on race issues

“The legitimate offspring are roughly those varieties spoken typically by descendants of Europeans [...], whereas the illegitimate ones are those spoken primarily by populations that have not fully descended from Europeans.”

• In native Englishes the role of language-contact is downplayed.
  In non-native Englishes language-contact is highlighted.

• Native and non-native English varieties show the same restructuring processes.

• Mutual intelligibility is relative due to language history.
linguistic prejudice in academic discourse?

Creolist studies:

- 1880s Schuchhard, founding father, publishes Kreolische Studien
- 1959: First International Conference on Creole Language Studies
  DeCamp:
  - > “true birth of the field of creole studies”
    > “pidgin-creole studies have now become a respectable field of studies”

early writings:

- 18th century: early grammarians disregard 'grammarless' languages; Latin and Greek as standards
- (early) writings express contempt or bring pidgins and creoles into ridicule (bastardised versions of civilised European languages)
linguistic prejudice in academic discourse?

early account on Jamaican Creole (1801):

– “This little work was never intended to originally meet the eye of the public; the writer merely prepared it as a source of social amusement to such of his friends as are of literary turn.”

Bertrand-Boconde (1849):

– “It is clear that people used to expressing themselves with a rather simple language cannot easily elevate their intelligence to the genius of a European language [...] the varied expressions acquired during so many centuries of civilisation dropped their perfection, to adapt to ideas being born and to barbarous forms of language of half-savage people.”
linguistic prejudice in academic discourse?

Currentness of linguistic prejudice

– Mühlhäusler (1986): until recently status of “true languages” was denied to a number of linguistic phenomena, e.g. child language, pidgins and creoles and second language learners' systems.

– Jenkins (2006): “Until very recently, pidgins and creoles were regarded, especially by non-linguists, as inferior, 'bad' languages (and often not as 'languages' at all).”

– English Today debate (1990s):
  > Quirk: non-native Englishes are inadequately learnt versions of 'correct' native forms; not valid for teaching
  > Kachru: deficit is difference based on vital sociolinguistic realities of identity, creativity and linguistic and cultural contact.
II. Pidgins on the national level
The national level: Nigerian Pidgin

- population: 152,217,341
- official language: English
- regional languages: Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa
- Nigerian Pidgin
  English
the national level: Nigeria

**English**

- speakers: 20% of population
- domains: mass media, business transactions, politics, advertising, the courts, science, technology, interethnic communication
- language of upper classes

**Nigerian Pidgin**

- speakers: well over 50%, 70-80% by the time today's children's reach adulthood
- domains: originally trade; market places, sports, army and police force, taxi drivers, playgrounds, university campuses
- interethnic communication of lower class and informal contexts
- mass communication: advertising, political campaigning, government propaganda, announcements, mass media
### the national level: Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>attitudes to English</th>
<th>attitudes to Nigerian Pidgin</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• predominantly positive</td>
<td>• predominantly positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ethnically neutral</td>
<td>• stigma of social inferiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• language of modernisation, social advancement, access</td>
<td>• covert prestige: sign of informal, relaxed atmosphere, code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to material gains</td>
<td>of friendliness and proximity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“[…] many Nigerians regard Pidgin English as the informal variety of the English language.” (qtd. from Jowitt 1991)
the national level: Nigeria

stratified bilingual strategy vernacular abandonment

English

nativisation

Pidgin

stratified bilingual strategy vernacular abandonment

expanding

decreolising/ depidginising:
acrolect use by educated

other

expanding
### the national level: Cameroon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cameroon Pidgin</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• speakers: 20%</td>
<td>• speakers: 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high overt prestige; symbol of identity</td>
<td>• covert prestige; overt stigmatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• nativisation and exonormative orientation</td>
<td>• use: informal situations, expression of proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use: administration, education, media, in urban, formal and interethnic domains</td>
<td>• highly influenced by English (depidginisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decolonisation: English remained the language of education and administration</td>
<td>• nurtured by Nigerian Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• by 19th century: well established</td>
<td>• spread into French realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• by 19th century: well established</td>
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Photo Essay: Why Cameroon Shared the Last Place at the 2010 World Cup With North Korea

Dibussi Tande

A million reasons have been given to explain why Cameroon, supposedly one of the greatest football nations in the world, ended up sharing the last spot at the 2010 World Cup with - Oh! The humiliation! - North Korea. While conflicts within the national team and poor coaching may explain Cameroon’s South African debacle, the problem with the country’s football is systemic and structural. Take a hard look at the following pictures; these are some of the stadiums where games for the MTN Elite One league (Cameroon’s premier football championship) are played each week.
the national level: Cameroon

“Today, critics of Pidgin English claim that it is polluting Cameroonian English, and preventing Cameroonian from speaking Standard English correctly. According to a survey carried out by Jean-Paul Kouega on the attitude of educated Cameroonians towards Pidgin, “the respondents commented that the use of Pidgin by pupils interferes with their acquisition of English, the language that guarantees upward social mobility.”

“The fate of Cameroonian Pidgin English is similar to that of other 'Creoles' around the world which also carry the stigma of illiteracy and 'bushness'. For example, 'Despite their rich cultural heritage,' says Morga Dalphinis [...], 'Creoles have been devalued of prestige, in the same way that their speakers have been, for at least five hundred years.'”

“Cameroon's Anglophone elite have failed to appreciate the role of pidgin as a tool for identity formation and protection in the former British Southern Cameroons. Instead they see it as a threat which must be eradicated. The result, among other things [...] is a steady 'depidginization' of Cameroon Pidgin English.”

the national level: Cameroon

Cameroon government:

• schools promote Educated English
• resulting language pattern: EdE > (PE) > (HL); Pidgin and heritage language become optional.
• some children are monolingual in English

Single, graduated mothers:

• secluded lives and use English infrastructure
• future conscious
• promotion of children through English-only schools

New Found Status:

• uneducated but rich background; commune with upper classes
• regarded as particularly dogmatic
• spend heavily on children's education
the national level: Cameroon

development of L1 acquisition from 1977/8 to 1998:

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<th>English</th>
<th>Pidgin English</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bamenda:</td>
<td>1% &gt; 3.5%</td>
<td>22% &gt; 24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mamfe:</td>
<td>0% &gt; 1%</td>
<td>25% &gt; 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kumba:</td>
<td>1% &gt; 3%</td>
<td>19% &gt; 22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buea:</td>
<td>7% &gt; 13%</td>
<td>26% &gt; 28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limbe:</td>
<td>4% &gt; 9%</td>
<td>31% &gt; 30%</td>
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the national level: Cameroon

• Jennifer Jenkins:

“It [the Colonial perspective on the way English is (or should be) used around the world (Pennycook)] has been adopted by the countries once colonised by them. [...] These ex-colonies are in a sense colluding and marginalisation of their own variety of English.”

• William Labov's *linguistic insecurity*

“The anxiety and lack of confidence experienced by speakers and writers who believe that their use of language does not conform to the principles and practises of Standard English.”
“Pidgin is that language that you have taken from the colonizer and you have made it your own.”
(Deuber 2005)

“Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language and turn it to your advantage.”
(Widdowson 1994)