

Pidgin: An Admixture of Different Elements

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Like dialects, standard language register, pidgin is also a variety of language. Pidgins have evolved due to political, social, and economic interactions among people. So it is interesting to study pidgins and its wider scope

Pidgin:

It is a language composed of or containing elements taken from different languages. So pidgin is made up of different elements taken from different languages. It is a kind of mixed or hybrid language. It a mixture of elements taken from different languages. It is used as a contact language.

A Pidgin is a language with no native speakers. It is no one's first language or mother tongue. But it is a contact language. It is the product of a multilingual situation. It has simplified grammar & vocabulary of that language.

i) Origin of the term Pidgin:

The term Pidgin is thought to be derived from the English word 'business.' It was developed in China as Pidgin English. It was also called as business English or Pidgin English.

ii) Use of Pidgin in the World:

There are a large number of Pidgins spread in the world. In Europe the migrant workers in Germany have developed Pidgin varieties based on local national language. Each Pidgin specifically constructed to suit the needs of its users. Nigerian Pidgin English is a kind of bad English imperfectly learned. Hence those who speak a Pidgin are likely to be regarded as deficient in some ways. They are thought to be deficient socially, culturally and even sometimes cognitively or intellectually weak.

Pidgins have their own special rules. Pidgins are even used for self government in countries like Papua New Guinea. They are highly functional or useful for the user and important for them.

Pidgins are used in some parts of South-west Asia. Chinese Pidgin is the combination of items from Chinese and English language. It is used for limited purpose of trade. It is a well known example of Pidgin.

iii) Pidginization:

Varieties of languages get mixed up with each other in different ways such as borrowing. Sometimes in getting mixed up they create a new variety out of two or more existing languages. This process is known as variety synthesis or mixture of different languages. The mixture of different language or variety synthesis takes place at different levels and in different forms. This variety synthesis or the process by which two or more languages give birth to a new language or variety is called as pidginization. The process by which a new language is created by mixture of two or more languages is called as pidginization.

Such Pidgin or Pidgins are used for practical purpose of communication between people where there is no common language.

iv) **Vocabulary of Pidgin:**

A pidgin is a simple form of language for the benefit of the users. Its vocabulary is based on the vocabulary of two or more languages. In former, European colonies a large number of Pidgins are based on the vocabularies of English, Dutch, French and Portuguese.

v) **Syntax & Phonology of Pidgin:**

The syntax and phonology of pidgin can be similar to the dominant languages from which the Pidgin develops. Hence the Pidgin is made easier for other communities to learn than the dominant languages.

vi) **Tok Pidgin:**

Pidgins are developed as trade languages. They are used for trade and administration. An example of such a Pidgin is Neo-Melanesian Pidgin or Tok Pidgin. This is an English based Pidgin used in New Guinea and various islands nearby. This Tok Pidgin was developed during the twentieth century. It was developed for communication between the English speaking administrators and the local population. The following sentences from Tok Pidgin or Pision give an idea of its relationship to English language. The words in brackets show the English source for the Tok Pision words e.g.

e.g. - "Sick he – down – im (him) me"

The meaning of sentence is – I am sick.

"Me like im sauce pan belong cook – im bread" –

The meaning of this sentence from Tok Pision is – I want a pan for cooking bread.

Like a number of other pisions, Tok Pidgin has developed very effectively. It has been accepted as the medium of communication in so many situations in New Guinea. Hence it has been now adopted as the standard language in New Guinea.

vii) **Characteristics of Pidgins:**

Some of the characteristics of pidgin can be stated as follows:

a) **Pidgin: - A variety of language**

Pidgin is a variety of language. It is used by a community of speakers who pass it on from one generation to the next. It has its own history. It has been suggested that many pidgins have a common origin in the Portuguese based Pidgins. Many Pidgins which have developed in Far East & West Africa during 16th century were under the influence of Portuguese sailors.

b) **Pidgin – Not a result of large scale borrowing:**

A pidgin is not simply the result of heavy borrowing from one variety into another e.g. an English based Pidgin is not a variety of English as it has borrowed a lot of syntactic constructions and phonological features from other languages also. Its syntax, phonology & morphology can be different from English or any other dominant language.

c) **Absence of native speakers:**

A pidgin has no native speakers because it is used only for communication between members of different communities where no ordinary variety is available as a link language or language of communication. So pidgin has no native speakers.

d) **Lack of Morphology:**

There is a lack of morphology in a pidgin. Differences in tenses, numbers, case etc. are indicated or shown by the addition of separate particles e.g prepositions, articles, adverbs, conjunctions, etc. Indeed one of the most characteristic features of pidgin is the lack of morphology.

Thus we find that pidgin is a variety of language which is developed from elements taken from different languages.

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