



WHEN CULTURES CLASH

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVOLUTION OF PIDGIN LANGUAGES

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A BIT OF CONTEXT...



- This is a west-african/english pidgin known as *Naijá*. Locally, this pidgin is called 'Brokun', or the *Naijá* equivalent of the english word 'Broken'. It is most commonly spoken in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana.
- Can you understand what these ladies are saying? What's the difference between Jargons, Pidgins, and Creoles?

(Binsky)

INTRODUCTION

- Naturally, language evolution is a very slippery concept to grasp, but much of what we know now about contemporary language we have derived from observing protolanguages, pidgins, and creoles (Botha 2).
- A "window on language evolution" (Botha 1).
- Emanuel J Dreschel.

Are factors that tend to define a given culture, such as the power dynamics surrounding it, visible through the lens of language and its evolution?

INFANCY

- *There exists a commonality between certain jargons, often reflecting the context in how they're created.*
- *In the case of Maritime Polynesian Pidgin and similar jargons like Chinook, the vocabulary and syntax much more closely resemble the native tongue than later on (Lamb, 267).*

"Art emulates political and linguistic realities."

- Emanuel Dreschel

GROWING TOGETHER...?

- *As the relationships evolve between two disjoint cultures progresses...*
- *Looking syntactically at many different pidgins, Ludivico Franco found that while there are no particular set of rules even one language tends to follow, the grammatical structure and vocabulary tend to reflect the imperialistic nation more so than the native (Franco 107).*

MATURITY

- *By the time a creole comes to exist, there is a very distinct culture surrounding its speakers, despite its disjointed roots. Without a dedicated base of native pidgin speakers, a creole simply cannot be.*
- *As the relationships evolve between two disjoint cultures...*
- *An example of pride to the point of nationalism in one's creole heritage comes from Indonesia, where a restriction on obtaining citizenship lead Indonesian Creoles to unify (Bosma 658).*

IMPACT OF THIS STUDY

- Currently in the linguistic world, a debate between two opposite theories on the acquisition of language is thus described:
 - Nativists believe children are born with a natural understanding of language.
 - Non-nativists, meanwhile, line up more with a Darwinistic ideology and believe language is something one may only acquire through learning as one would learn a foreign concept.
 - (Jafari & Majid 19)
- Analyzing pidgins gives us a broader understanding of contemporary language, and by extension, human nature.
- The creation of new cultures.

IN CONCLUSION

- *It's important to see language as an ever-evolving lifeform, and one that tends to accurately depict the culture of any given area.*
- *Imperialism not only smudged the boundary between cultures, but birthed new languages and cultures entirely, each with their own history to be told.*

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