LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics

Announcements

• HW 4 sent to your inboxes. Average score is 45/50.
• Final HW is due today, and then you can celebrate.
• Any questions on your final papers?

Announcements

• I’ll give out course response forms on Wednesday. So, please be there to fill them out!
• Photo today?

Word play!

Ambiguity again!

Today’s agenda

• Discussion of pidgins and creoles.
Language contact

Creating language out of thin air: The case of Pidgins and Creoles

What is a pidgin?
What is a creole?

Origin of Hawaiian Pidgin


A sample of Hawaiian Pidgin


How about we listen to this English-based speech variety?

- **English-based speech variety**

- How much did you understand?

- Maybe we can try reading. Not sure it’ll help, but let’s try.
Emergence of Pidgins and Creoles

- **A pidgin** is a system of communication used by people who do not know each other’s languages but need to communicate with one another for trading or other purposes.
- By definition, then, a pidgin is not a natural language. It’s a made-up “makeshift” language. Notice, crucially, that it does not have native speakers.

The lexicons of Pidgins are typically based on some dominant language

- While a pidgin is used by speakers of different languages, it is typically based on the lexicon of what is called a “dominant” language in the area where it is spoken.
- Dominant languages were typically those of the European colonialists, e.g., French, English, Dutch, etc.
- The dominant language is called the **lexifier**, or the **superstratum** language. The native languages of pidgin users are called **substratum** languages.

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems

- As you should expect, pidgins are very simple in their linguistic properties.
- Lexicon:
  a. Words from lexifier languages
  b. Words belong to open classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives)
  c. No or few closed class words (prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, etc.)

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems

- Since pidgin vocabulary is pretty limited, meanings are extended (remember semantic broadening?)
- So, **stick** is not only used for sticks, but also for trees, in Solomon Islands Pidgin.
- In Korean Bamboo English, **grass** is used in “gras bilong head” to mean “hair”, and in “gras bilong mouth” to mean “moustache”.
- Compounds are also frequent, e.g., **dog baby** for “puppy”, or “**Him cow pig have kittens?**”

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems

- Phonology:
  a. Phoneme inventory: Consonants and vowels that are phonetically easy.
  b. Syllable structure: Typically CV or CVC.
  c. Stress: fixed stress location.
- Morphology:
  - Pretty much none. No plural, tense or aspect marking. No agreement, either.
- Syntax:
  a. Variable word order, influenced by the user’s native language.
  b. Sentences are simple and short with no embedding.
A pidgin example

- Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE), ignoring pronunciation:
  - Honolulu come; plenty more come; too much pineapple there.
  - No can. I try hard get good ones. Before, plenty duck; now, no more.
  - All ‘ight, all ‘ight, I go; all same, by’n bye Honolulu all Japanese.

Creole: The birth of a language

- As it turns out, kids impose structure on the language input they receive, ending up with a language that has prepositions, articles, tense marking, aspect morphology, embedded sentences, etc.
- When a pidgin is acquired as a first language by a generation of children, it becomes a creole. A creole thus, unlike a pidgin, is a natural language.

When a pidgin becomes a creole, ...

- Compare the linguistic properties of Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE) and Hawaiian Creole English (HCE).
- Word order:
  HPE: S is always before O, but position of verb varies.
  HCE: SVO, and allows other orders for pragmatic use.

Kids?

- Suppose you’re a child born in a speech community where a pidgin is spoken (either by your parents or by the other kids in the neighborhood).
- The pidgin utterances are your primary linguistic data (PLD).
- But remember that a pidgin is not a natural language. So, what language are you going to end up learning on the basis of these PLD?

HPE vs. HCE

- Pidgin:
  No, the men, ah-pau [finished] work—they go, make garden. Plant this, ah, cabbage, like that. Plant potato, like that. And then—all that one—all right, sit down. Make lilly bit story.
- Creole:
  When work pau [is finished] da guys they stay go make [are going to make] garden for plant potato an’ cabbage an’ after little while they go sit down talk story ['shoot the breeze'].

When a pidgin becomes a creole, ...

- Articles:
  HPE: definite/indefinite articles, if existent at all, are used fairly randomly.

  HCE: Definite *da* used for all and only known specific references. Indefinite *wan* used for all and only unknown specific references. Other NPs have no article.
When a pidgin becomes a creole, ...

- HCE: *bin* marks tense, *go* marks modality, *stei* marks aspect.
  - Wail wi stei paedl, jaen stei put wata insaid da kanu—hei, da san av a gan haed sink!
    "While we were paddling, John was letting water into the canoe—hey, the son-of-a-gun had sunk it!"
  - As tu bin get had taim reizing dag.
    "The two of us used to have a hard time raising dogs."

When a pidgin becomes a creole, ...

- HCE: complementizers *fo* vs. *go*, where the former is used with hypothetical events, and the latter with events that actually happened. Notice the embedding as well.
  - a. Mo beta a bin go hanalulu fo bai maiself.
    "It would have been better if I’d gone to Honolulu to buy it myself."
  - b. Ai gata go haia wan kapinta go fiks da fom.
    "I had to hire a carpenter to fix the form."

An exercise on Cameroon English Pidgin

- a. Di fos tek fo di and nam fo Jesus Christ God yi Pihan.
- b. Li be sena si di tek fo di tek fo Josiah, God yi nłaabu (‘Prophet’). "Lukum, mi n di sena nłaabu fo bi fo you fen yi go fi fo you nłaabu.

Next class agenda

- Language and thought.
- Course response forms.