

7.4.1.4.6. FUTURE OUTLOOKS AND STANDARDISATION OF PIDGIN

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7.4.1.4.6.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The general questions relating to the future outlooks of New Guinea Pidgin have been dealt with by Mühlhäusler in 7.4.1.4.5. The present writer fully agrees in principle with his suggestion that the future of Pidgin seems bright (but see below in this section and 7.4.1.4.6.6. for some reservations on his part), and it seems to be quite possible that Pidgin will eventually constitute the, or one of the two, national languages of Papua New Guinea, with English as a third language being assigned a special role in connection with higher education and relations with the outside world. The functions and roles of Pidgin, already quite spectacular, will undoubtedly increase and expand rapidly in the near future.

However, for Pidgin to play its envisaged future role satisfactorily, the important and rather vexed question of its standardisation has to be faced and settled (Wurm 1975).

It may not be too far-fetched to suggest that without a good measure of standardisation and associated developments such as enrichment and expansion, Pidgin will fail to fulfil the promises which it clearly holds, and which are the very reasons for its obvious candidature for becoming one, and the more important one, of the possible national languages of Papua New Guinea.

7.4.1.4.6.2. THE QUESTION OF PIDGIN STANDARDISATION IN GENERAL

7.4.1.4.6.2.1. GENERAL REMARKS

The question of the standardisation of Pidgin has a number of ramifications (Wurm 1977). At least two major distinct varieties of Pidgin

have clearly emerged on the sociolectal level, i.e. Rural and Urban Pidgin, the first constituting what may be looked upon as the 'real' Pidgin, the second heavily Anglicised and becoming increasingly similar to English (see chapter 7.4.1.4.3. in this volume). The choice between these two in the search for a standard may be regarded as a central issue, but there are a number of additional points to consider in thinking about the standardisation of Pidgin.

7.4.1.4.6.2.2. DIALECTS

One of these points is the presence of various parallel forms, i.e. dialects in both of the major types. At the present time, these are only to a minor extent regional dialects (see chapter 7.4.1.3.), though minor differences attributable to local variations are still observable. The main diversities are sociolectal differences within the two main sociolects mentioned above in 7.4.1.4.6.2.1., and constitute the direct consequence of English influence, i.e. the greater or lesser contact of the speakers of a given sociolect with English, with expatriate speakers of Pidgin, and of exposure to education, especially through English.

7.4.1.4.6.2.3. WRITTEN PIDGIN

Another important point is the role of written Pidgin. On this level, several quite markedly different forms are observable - they are in part attributable to the use, in writing, of Pidgin by indigenes as opposed to expatriates, and to the amount of English influence to which indigenous writers have been exposed, or which they wish to introduce into their written Pidgin, believing such a process to be prestigious. Also, especially in the case of expatriate writers, the written forms tend to reflect the writers' attitudes towards Pidgin itself, i.e. whether they recognise Pidgin as a full language in its own right, or simply look upon it as a more or less inadequate tool for conveying meaning as best they can, with little regard for the nature and character of the language itself.

7.4.1.4.6.2.4. PRESTIGE

Another point to consider is the question of prestige. A language form which carries some social or other prestige over others clearly has a better chance to be generally accepted as a standard than if this is not the case. With Pidgin, the situation is complex. Rural Pidgin is looked down upon by many urban dwellers as a 'bush' dialect while at the same time, many admit that it is the 'real', 'good' Pidgin.

Urban Pidgin is looked upon by many members of the rural population as 'bad', 'wrong', 'strange' and often unintelligible, while it is, at the same time, recognised that it is closer to English, the highly prestigious élite language.

With regard to written Pidgin, the prestige of the various written forms differs considerably and appears to be in direct proportion to the amount of printed, and generally available, material produced in them, and the consistency of the language use displayed in them. Some forms, in particular the one used in the Pidgin New Testament and the publications put out by Kristen Pres for instance, carry quite widespread prestige, but this appears to be predominantly passive: while they are largely regarded as 'good' forms of written Pidgin, they are not necessarily used actively in writing by Pidgin writers looking upon them as 'good'.

7.4.1.4.6.2.5. CHOICE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES

It seems quite clear that the choice between the available alternatives would have to lie in the direction of un-Anglicised Rural Pidgin if Standard Pidgin is to be a language which should reach the largest possible number of people in the present, and foreseeable future, setting in Papua New Guinea, and if at the same time the language is to be one which is clearly distinct from English and one that can be looked upon as really Papua New Guinean and a local means of expression of the new nationalism of the country. Urban Pidgin, with its multiform and colourful slang expressions, has much to contribute to Standard Pidgin, but for the reasons just stated, its extensive English loan content must not be allowed to become a part of Standard Pidgin. At the same time, it is quite unavoidable that a number of English loanwords will have to be adopted by Rural Pidgin once it becomes Standard Pidgin, but much of the enrichment of the language can and should be through the utilisation of possibilities inherent in Pidgin itself (see below 7.4.1.4.6.4.).

As far as written Pidgin is concerned, it seems that the language form used in the Pidgin New Testament and the Kristen Pres publications, which is based on a form of Rural Pidgin, may be an obvious choice, though the role and influence of the emerging Pidgin literature may also have to be considered in this (see below 7.4.1.4.6.5.).

7.4.1.4.6.2.6. EXTENT OF STANDARDISATION

This raises the question as to how far standardisation of Pidgin should sensibly go, and on which levels it could be most easily

standardised. In this, it must be taken into account that standardisation is very much easier, and can more readily be put into effect, with the written form of a language, than with its spoken form. The standardised European languages, e.g. English, German, Dutch, Italian, etc. provide good evidence of this. In this respect, standardisation of the written language form can, in increasing order of difficulty, be applied to orthography (i.e. spelling systems) (though there is always the possibility of the presence of emotionally based problems in this connection), vocabulary (i.e. the use of words and their meanings), grammar (i.e. morphology and syntax), and discourse patterns (i.e. systems of address and reference to persons, style of expression, composition of written passages and the like). Applying the same standardisation principles to the spoken forms of a language encounters greater difficulties, because the spoken language is more elusive than the written, less subject to conscious control by the speaker, and because as a result of the much more fleeting and transient nature of a spoken passage when compared with a written one, automatic pressures from non-standard forms already accepted and normally used by the speaker, upon the standard forms are much greater. In addition, factors which affect the form and nature of passages, such as emotional attitudes, are much more strongly present in spoken expression than in written. In contrast to the written form in which the external form of the expression, i.e. the writing system and orthography, is easily accessible to control and standardisation, the external form of the spoken expression, i.e. the phonology (or pronunciation) is very difficult to control and standardise: even in highly standardised European languages such as English and German traces of non-standard spoken language - in the form of the 'local accent' of speakers of the standard language who come from different parts of the language area - have persisted tenaciously in spite of all standardisation efforts through the educational systems, and the - not always successful - attempts involving the use of spoken standard language forms by auditory mass media such as radio and television.

In the light of what has been said above, it seems that the standardisation of Pidgin - and incidentally, its enrichment - would predominantly have to concern its written form - a measure of standardisation of its spoken form may be achieved almost as a bi-product of the use of a written standard form in education, by the press and publishing agencies, and the authorities, and as far as possible, the adoption of a standard spoken form by the auditory mass media such as radio, and television when available.

7.4.1.4.6.3. AVAILABLE STANDARD FORMS AND STANDARDISATION PROCEDURES

It now seems appropriate to consider what standard forms, if any, are already available and on what levels of the language, and what steps may be called for to achieve a measure of standardisation.

7.4.1.4.6.3.1. ORTHOGRAPHY

Various efforts aiming at the standardisation of Pidgin orthography have been made to date, with varying degrees of success (Wurm 1976) (see 7.8.3.1.2.). At present, a standardised orthography is employed by the publishing agencies of the Lutheran and Catholic Missions, and is used in the Pidgin New Testament, the publications put out by Kristen Pres, the newspaper *Wantok*, the current edition of Mihalic's Pidgin dictionary and grammar (Mihalic 1971), some other Pidgin dictionaries and vocabularies and also for instance in Dutton's (1973) extensive practical introduction to Pidgin. A standard orthography is therefore utilised in a range of published materials, but its use by writers of Pidgin, both indigenous and expatriate, outside the orbit of the two missions mentioned is still somewhat limited, and the orthography still appears to lack government sanction and is not very frequently met with in written expressions by government departments and instrumentalities and in the House of Assembly - a variety of unsystematic and often inconsistent spellings holds sway.

In the light of what has been set out in the above paragraph, a standard orthography for Pidgin appears to be within reach. It may therefore be appropriate to ask whether this particular orthography is fully adequate.

The answer is that it appears to be the best of all the existing Pidgin orthographies, though it has a few shortcomings and does not fully reflect common indigenous Pidgin pronunciation in a number of instances, but instead shows leanings towards English spellings, e.g. in the word *helpim* = *help*, commonly pronounced ['a]ʷvim]. Also, the use of *ng* for the two distinct Pidgin sounds *ng* and *ngg* may be a disadvantage, though most indigenes do not appear to object to it. At the same time, the use of different letters for rendering the same sound (e.g. *j*, *s*) in different words is a distinct advantage, because this reduces the number of homographs, i.e. makes identically pronounced words look different (and therefore more easily recognisable) in writing, e.g. *sip* = *ship*, *jip* = *jeep* - both pronounced [sip]. Many Pidgin-speakers do not distinguish between *l* and *r*, but use a flap for both: nevertheless, the use of both *l* and *r* in writing is a good feature, because the use of only one letter for both would significantly increase the number of homographs.

For being of real value, standard orthography - be it the one referred to above, or a modified form of it - will have to be accepted universally. In the first place, this can be ensured through its exclusive use in education on all the levels on which Pidgin is to be employed. At the same time, the orthography will have to be officially sanctioned by the government and designated as the only admissible one for use in government departments, instrumentalities and agencies. The press and publishers will have to be encouraged to use that orthography exclusively, with the exception of the sphere of Pidgin creative literature mentioned below in 7.4.1.4.6.5. Special bonuses placed on mastery of that orthography, e.g. the requirement of being able to spell in it as a prerequisite for obtaining government positions, would enhance its spreading considerably.

7.4.1.4.6.3.2. VOCABULARY

A certain measure of standardisation of a core vocabulary is extant through the publication of the present edition of Mihalic's dictionary (Mihalic 1971) and a few other dictionaries such as Steinbauer 1969 for instance, but the vocabulary provided by them is limited, and unsystematic additions to the lexicon of Pidgin occur almost daily in response to a need in the various sociolects, and under the auspices of establishments, organisations and groups such as vocational and other training centres, the House of Assembly, groups of persons engaged in certain trades, etc. At the same time, relatively little notice is taken of the usages and meanings as laid down in Mihalic's and other dictionaries, by Pidgin-speakers whose sociolects or dialects differ from the one on which those dictionaries are based, and diverse sociolectal and local usages are commonplace and the norm.

It is clear that systematic work is needed to collect, record, order and classify the new items in the Pidgin lexicon which were referred to above. An official body or institution, something that could constitute a Pidgin Academy somehow comparable to the institutions concerned with the national languages in European countries, would be the obvious agency to carry out such a task properly, and also to act as the arbiter for the acceptance or rejection of observed new items into the standard vocabulary of Pidgin. The possible nature of its official standing is a matter for the Papua New Guinea authorities to determine and will not be speculated on here - suffice it to say that it would greatly benefit from being broadly based, with the University, the Department and Minister of Education, other interested bodies such as Missions, the Public Service, the Press and publishing institutions, and broadcasting

stations taking a close interest in it and taking full notice of its activities, findings and results. It is absolutely essential that this institution, and its findings and results, receive official government sanction, and that the use of Pidgin forms, lexical items and other features of Pidgin declared by the institution as standard be made obligatory by government decree, and become the sole forms to be admissible for use in education and schooling, by government instrumentalities and agencies in the widest sense, by the press and publishing institutions, and, on the oral level, by the broadcasting and telecasting stations - with the sphere of dialect literature again constituting an exception.

7.4.1.4.6.3.3. GRAMMAR

Again, some measure of the standardisation of some aspects of present-day Pidgin grammar has been laid down by the grammar parts of Mihalic's (1971) dictionary, and more extensively, by those of the present writer's materials (Wurm 1971), Laycock's (1970) materials, and of Dutton's (1973) practical introduction. However, all these grammar descriptions are practically oriented, sketchy and restricted, and are to some extent at variance with each other because of differing interpretations of phenomena, and differing importance attached to purely descriptive, and prescriptive approaches. Even less notice is taken of the grammatical facts described in these and other comparable publications by most speakers of Pidgin - apart from expatriates now studying Pidgin from such publications - than of the vocabulary as laid down in dictionaries, and sociolectal and local usage is rife. At the same time, the extent of the grammatical differences between the various forms and sociolects of Pidgin is relatively insignificant, and certainly much less pronounced than the extent of the lexical differences between them. As with Pidgin lexicon, the task of fully establishing standard Pidgin grammar belongs to the orbit of the activities of an institution as proposed above in 7.4.1.4.5.2.3.2. One very important point has to be kept in mind in this:

It has already been mentioned above that the grammar of Pidgin shows relatively little sociolectal and local variation. However, some local forms, and now largely extinct, but documented, regional dialects display (or displayed) a somewhat greater elaboration of forms than others which adds (or added) to the clarity of expression in them, and to the reduction of possible misunderstandings. Unfortunately, some of these more elaborate forms are (or were) regionally or otherwise quite restricted in occurrence, and therefore not looked upon by many as forming

a part of Pidgin in general. It appears however that the artificial inclusion of such more elaborate forms into standard Pidgin would contribute to the enrichment of the language, and add to the preciseness of expression of which it would be capable. It could therefore well be suggested that it would be within the competence of the institution referred to above to declare such forms as part of standard Pidgin and to prescriptively rule them as norm. Such forms would for instance be the distinction between laik + Verb for intention and desire (e.g. mi laik kaikai = *I shall eat soon*, mi laik i kaikai = *I want to eat*), the use of kirap + Verb for inchoative (beginning) actions (e.g. mi kirap kaikai = *I start eating*), the distinction of laik + Verb for near future, bai + Pronoun + Verb for general future, ken + i + Verb for definite future, and ken + Verb for permission (e.g. mi laik kaikai = *I shall eat soon*, bai mi kaikai = *I shall eat sometime*, mi ken i kaikai = *I shall definitely eat*, mi ken kaikai = *I am allowed to eat*), etc.

The question of the standardisation of discourse patterns also falls loosely under the heading of grammar, and also constitutes a task for the abovementioned institution. Discourse patterns show little sociolectal and local differentiation in Pidgin, and their standardisation may be a comparatively simple task.

7.4.1.4.6.3.4. PRONUNCIATION (PHONOLOGY)

As has been pointed out in 7.4.1.4.6.2.6., the standardisation of the pronunciation of a language poses much greater problems than that relating to other levels in it, and it may be regarded as being of subsidiary importance when compared with that of the standardisation of orthography, vocabulary and grammar, as long as differences in pronunciation do not reach such a degree that they interfere with intelligibility, or some pronunciations reflect ranges of foreign sounds such as English vowel sounds. At the same time, it was also mentioned in 7.4.1.4.6.2.6. that a measure of standardisation of spoken Pidgin, including its pronunciation, may be achieved almost as a bi-product of the use or adoption of a standard spoken form of it by auditory mass media. The pronunciation of the Pidgin used by various sociolectal and local groups varies quite extensively, and apart from the substratum influence of local languages, reflects the varying degrees of direct and indirect influence of English to a very considerable extent. Again, some brief suggestions concerning a possible 'standard' pronunciation of Pidgin have been made in Mihalic 1971, Wurm 1971, and Dutton 1973, but differences of opinion, especially between Mihalic and the other two authors, are strongly in evidence as a result of the differing

degrees of tolerance towards English influence by them. The present writer maintains that the standard pronunciation of Pidgin should be based on the regionally most widespread variety of the pronunciation of Pidgin by indigenes who show as little as possible English influence in their Pidgin so as to ensure that the language remains a language fully in its own right. The institution mentioned above in 7.4.1.4.6.3.2. and 7.4.1.4.6.3.3. could also well constitute the final authority with regard to Pidgin pronunciation.

7.4.1.4.6.4. ENRICHMENT OF PIDGIN VOCABULARY

For Pidgin to be adequate to play its future role as mentioned in 7.4.1.4.6.1., it will however not only need to be subjected to a measure of standardisation, but it will also have to undergo a considerable amount of expansion and enrichment, in particular with regard to its vocabulary. As has been mentioned in 7.4.1.4.6.3.2., this process is taking place quite vigorously, virtually on a day-to-day basis, and it had been suggested that an official institution be concerned with the collection and systematisation of the newly emerging items. However, such an institution ought, in addition to its collecting, assessing and sorting of Pidgin lexical items, to be directly concerned with the active enrichment and enlarging of the vocabulary of Pidgin. It is very important that the process of the enlargement of Pidgin vocabulary, and the introduction of new items into it, be carefully supervised and controlled, because there is a very real danger that there will be a continuation of the present trend in which, in response to the need for new lexical items, the line of least resistance is followed by most Pidgin speakers, and English loanwords are taken over indiscriminately. This may easily lead to the overloading of Pidgin with recent English loans and eventually result in an extensive 'watering down' of its distinctive character as a separate language. Pidgin has quite adequate means for word-formation through composition and affixation, the extension of semantic ranges of bases, the creation of new bases through analogy, etc. to make possible the production of a large number of new lexical items in accordance with the special nature and character of the language, and the institution mentioned ought to play an active creative role in this as one of its major tasks. Recourse to direct loans from English, while of course unavoidable, should be restricted to those instances in which this seems the best approach. Such words should however always be spelt in accordance with Pidgin phonology, and one of the tasks of the institution mentioned above would be the determination of the Pidgin spelling of newly introduced English loanwords.

7.4.1.4.6.5. PIDGIN CREATIVE LITERATURE

A very special and important position in the development of Pidgin is occupied by the newly emerging Pidgin creative literature which is rapidly gaining momentum. In contrast to the fairly extensive Pidgin translation and prescriptive literature such as Mission publications, handbooks issued on health, agricultural and other matters, training handbooks, teaching materials, and others of a similar nature which are largely authored by expatriates and predominantly contain a standardised form of Pidgin, indigenous Pidgin creative literature uses almost exclusively a Pidgin which is non-standard on all levels including orthography. It is vital that the development of this literature is not stifled through the imposition of standardisation principles upon it, because the language is badly in need of creative spirits contributing to its development and enrichment. Only the utilisation of a standard orthography could well be suggested when such literature is published.

A Pidgin institution or academy as referred to in 7.4.1.4.6.3.2.-3. etc. would strongly encourage the further development of creative Pidgin literature, and act as a depository for literary products. At the same time, this creative literature would constitute one of the most important sources on which such an institution would draw for its collection of new Pidgin vocabulary and usage. Of course, not all new words and usages appearing in such literature, or observed in colloquial usage, would be suitable for acceptance by the institution and for incorporation into standardised Pidgin, because the institution's task would be to aim for a considered balance between the observation, collection and utilisation of spoken popular and colloquial Pidgin, and selective and prescriptive attitudes. Only such new items and usages would be suitable for incorporation into standardised Pidgin which would clearly contribute to the badly needed lexical enrichment of Pidgin, add to the semantic range within the scope of the language, and to the clarity and power of expression in it, and which constitute references to new concepts in the language and add to its productivity.

7.4.1.4.6.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

What has been said above constitutes some ideas in connection with the necessary and urgently needed standardisation of Pidgin without which the utilisation of the language for its potential and envisaged functions in education and for wider national purposes would be difficult, and the results unsatisfactory, and without which its now bright future outlook may well become quite dim.

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