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AN ENGLISH-BASED TOURIST JARGON IN THE TURKISH MEDITERRANEAN RESORT OF ALANYA: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Streszczenie:

Artykuł przedstawia preliminaria badawcze dotyczące występowania i użycia żargonu turystycznego powstałego na bazie języka angielskiego w tureckim kurorcie nad Morzem Śródziemnomorskim – w Alanyi. Prezentacja zebranego materiału językowego, które może stanowić potwierdzenie hipotezy o tym, że taki żargon jest rzeczywiście używany w kontaktach turystycznych w Turcji, poprzedzona jest wywodem teoretycznym na temat języków kontaktowych, a w szczególności na temat żargonów, pidżynów i kreoli. Żargon w kreolingwistyce, jak można nazwać dział językoznawstwa, którego przedmiotem badań są języki pidżynowe i kreolskie, jest rozumiany jako bardzo podstawowy, wręcz szczątkowy i rudymentarny pidżyn (z ang. pre-pidgin), którego cykl życiowy (z ang. pidgin/creole life-cycle) jest zazwyczaj krótki i rzadko uchwytny przed badaczy. Jeśli jednak wystąpią odpowiednie warunki do dalszego rozwoju żargonów (pre-pidżynów), przechodzą one proces pidżynizacji, czego efektem jest wytworzenie się stabilnych pidżynów, które w dalszej kolejności mogą ulec kreolizacji. Anglojęzyczny żargon turystyczny, który występuje w Turcji, charakteryzuje się dużym zróżnicowaniem wewnętrznym oraz niestabilnością w zakresie ortografii, słownictwa, gramatyki, wymowy oraz pragmatycznych reguł komunikacji. Praca powinna być potraktowana jako swego rodzaju preliminaria badawcze zjawiska występowania żargonu turystycznego w Turcji i dlatego zaznaczono w niej, że formułowanie kategorycznych sądów (których w artykule nie ma) dotyczących użycia tego języka, jego kierunku ewolucji, roli i możliwości referencyjnych itp. musi być poprzedzone dokładniejszymi badaniami terenowymi.

1. Introduction

This article presents some preliminary observations of the existence of an English-based jargon which were made during the author's ten-day stay in the Turkish tourist resort of Alanya. The discussion of the linguistic material gathered for this study is preceded by a theoretical introduction to contact linguistics and its branch

– creolistics. Some remarks are also made on the nature of jargons and their place in pidgin/creole lifecycle. Afterwards, the linguistic situation of the Alanya region is briefly outlined. Then, the exponents of the existing English-based jargon are provided and discussed.

As the title says, this is just a preliminary study so certain observations should be treated tentatively. Definitely, a more profound research project should be initiated to fully examine the nature of tourist jargons which emerge in the majority of tourist places all around the world. Such studies might contribute to a better understanding of language mixing processes and – generally – of language developmental mechanisms.

2. Language contact and linguistics

People of different linguistic backgrounds have always come in contact with one another and in many cases this has resulted in the changes in the interacting parties' languages as well in the creation of new means of verbal communication such as jargons, pidgins, creoles or bilingual-mixed languages[1]. Thus, following Joan Swann *et al*[2]. language contact and the study of this phenomenon may be defined as "[t]he coexistence of languages in a geographical area or in a speech community. […] The linguistic study of language contact is sometimes termed contact linguistics". In other words, language contact occurs in situations, in which members of two or more speech communities interact verbally. This is often connected with some kind of bilingualism, code-switching and language mixing. Interestingly enough, it is language contact and mixture that usually drive language development and evolution. This fact is attested by Donald Winford, a prominent contact linguist, who is of the opinion that

> […] language mixture is a creative, rule-governed process that affects all language in one way or another, though to varying degrees. […] [T]hey [language mixtures] are by no means unusual and have played a role in the development of just about every human language, including some that are regarded as models of correctness or purity[3].

Since it turned out that such language contacts are numerous, linguists started to examine their nature, scope and mechanisms which lead to them. Moreover, contact linguists deal with various changes in the structure, lexicon or even pragmatics of languages. It has also become evident that language contacts lead to the

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[1] Cf. Sebba, Mark: Contact Linguistics. Pidgins and Creoles. Houndmills, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1997. Thomason, Sarah. G.: Language Contact. An Introduction. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press 2001.

[2] Swann, Joan, Deumert, Ana, Lillis, Theresa, Mesthrie, Rajend: A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004. Pp. 167–168.

[3] Winford, Donald: An Introduction to Contact Linguistics. Malden, Oxford, Melbourne, Berlin: Blackwell Publishing 2003. P. 2.

creation of new languages – that is – to pidginisation, creolisation or the formation of bilingual-mixed languages. Therefore, the interest in the contact between speech communities and the results of such linguistic contact gave rise to contact linguistics.

A subdiscipline of linguistics which is strictly connected with contact linguistics is pidgin and creole linguistics, also known as *creolistics*. Creolistics deals primarily with the creation, development and demise of jargons, pidgins and creoles. This being so, it might be postulated that creolistics examines only these specific types of language contact and their outcomes.

Both creolistics and contact linguistics constitute the framework of examining the language in question – jargon.

3. Jargon in creolistics

Generally speaking, *jargons* are usually defined as objects of terminological or sociolinguistic research. Jargons, understood in this way, are collections of specialised lexical items used within a particular, typically specialist or professional, group. Jargons are therefore characteristic of such professional groups as physicians, businesspeople, IT specialists and many more. Sociolinguists sometimes put jargons next to slang and claim that they have two main functions: firstly, they are used to aid professional communication and secondly, they are markers of specialist or professional group membership[4].

In creolistics, however, the term *jargon* has a different meaning and use. In pidgin and creole studies, this notion is used to describe "[a] rudimentary pidgin, also known as a pre-pidgin, which has an unstable structure and limited vocabulary on account of sporadic use and restriction to a few domains like trade or labour"[5]. To put it differently, jargons are rather rudimentary speech varieties, devoid of any stable grammatical and lexical rules. They usually exist for a very limited period of time to fulfil a particular communicative function (e.g. trade) and become extinct as soon as the purpose for which they were called for is achieved.

As jargons are generally rather short-lived, many of them have never been documented. However, those which have been documented and examined by scholars (e.g. rudimentary versions of Tok Pisin) have been termed differently by different linguists. Hence, jargons may be known as *unstable pidgins*, *early pidgins*, *pre-pidgins*, *pre-pidgin continua*, *primitive pidgins*, *incipient pidgins* or *rudimentary pidgins*[6].

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[4] Swann, Joan, Deumert, Ana, Lillis, Theresa, Mesthrie, Rajend: A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004.

[5] Ibidem. P. 157.

[6] Bakker, Peter: Pidgins versus Creoles and Pidgincreoles. In: Kouwenberg, Sylvia, Singler, John, Victor (eds.): The Handbook of Pidgins and Creoles. Malden, MA, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2008. Pp. 130–157.

A jargon is the first phase of *pidgin/creole lifecycle* – the concept devised by Robert A. Hall, Jr., who is sometimes known as the father of creolistics. Hall observed that the nature of jargons, pidgins and creoles is different from the nature of what he called "normal" languages in that they are usually not transmitted from generation to generation in the process of first language acquisition but – instead – they come into being to fulfil a particular communicative need and if there is no need for these languages to exist, they simply disappear[7]. Obviously, if the use of a jargon is prolonged, it might undergo pidginisation and even creolisation provided there are proper conditions for these processes. Pidgin/creole lifecycle is presented in Figure 1, in which the jargon constitutes the first stage of the developmental continuum.
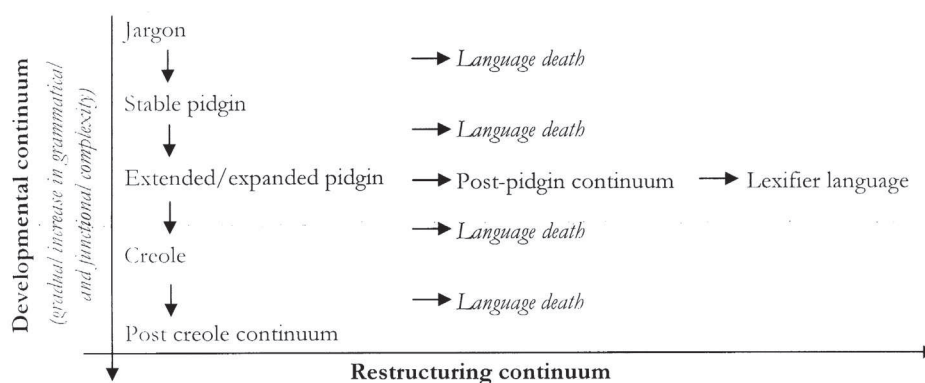

Figure 1. Pidgin/creole life cycle model[8]

As aforementioned, jargons are characterised by great variation and instability in phonetics, grammar, vocabulary and pragmatic rules of communication. As far as jargons are concerned, scholars on numerous occasions have observed the phenomenon called *double illusion* or *the illusion of double communication*[9]. Using the jargon in communication with other people, jargon speakers think they speak the other interacting party's language. In this way, they believe that they communicate in a foreign language whereas they actually use grammar structures, lexemes and pronunciation patterns which are alien to the other party's native language and are more similar to their own native language. The examples of double illusion encountered in Papua New Guinea are quoted by Suzanne Romaine[10]. This has also been observed in the language under discussion – in the jargon used in Alanya.

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7   Hall, Robert, A.: Pidgin and Creole Languages. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press 1966.

8   Walczyński, Marcin: A Living Language. Selected Aspects of Tok Pisin in the Press (on the Basis of Wantok Newspaper). Nysa: Oficyna Wydawnicza PWSZ w Nysie 2012. P. 115.

9   Fernández Bell, Maria, Rosa, Gilbert, Glenn (eds.): Glossary of Terms Related to the Study of Pidgin and Creole Languages. http://linguistics.osu.edu/research/publications/jpcl/terms_df. Date of access: 26.09.2012.

10 Romaine, Suzanne: Pidgin & Creole Languages. London, New York: Longman [1988] 2000.

In any jargon, grammar is very simplified, with short sentences, no embedded clauses and no morphology. The word-orders are usually copied from the native languages of the interlocutors. Vocabulary is also very limited and includes the lexical items referring only to the semantic domain, in which the jargon is used (e.g. commercial contacts). Some scholars also notice that one meaning can be expressed in a number of ways, depending on the situation and on the individual interlocutors involved[11]. They solve the problems of cross-linguistic communication on their own by using various grammatical and lexical patters as well as by facilitating communication by means of pointing, body language and gestures.

Concluding this section, it is worth emphasising that any jargon is a very unstable language variety composed of a very limited stock of vocabulary and simple grammatical patterns. Such great structural and lexical variation and instability can be easily explained by the fact that interlocutors focus on attaining their communicative goals paying at the same time little attention to the manner, in which it is done. This was also observed in the jargon under analysis, as is presented in the next sections of this paper.

4. Overview of the linguistic situation in Alanya

Alanya is located on the Mediterranean Sea in the Turkish province of Antalya, being one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Turkish Riviera. An easy access to the city is provided by well-developed transport infrastructure (highways) and the major gate for most tourists is through the Antalya Airport, located about 120 kilometres from Alanya. The closest airport – Gazipaşa Airport, situated about 15 kilometres from Alanya – has a rather small contribution to tourists' influx although in the summer season the number of connections with the European cities (mostly German and Dutch) increases every year.

This tourist centre is inhabited by about 100 000 residents and the number of people in the tourist season increases tremendously thanks to the influx of tourists, mostly from European countries and the Asian part of Russia.

The major language spoken on a regular basis by the original inhabitants of Alanya is Turkish. Because of property development in this beach resort, more and more Europeans (mostly the citizens of Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain) settle down, bringing their languages, and adding colour to the culture of the city[12]. The fact that Alanya is home to many foreigners is also attested in the media because some of them are available in English, German and Dutch[13]. Interestingly enough, one of the most important foreign languages is also Russian, which is the

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[11] Cf. Bakker, Peter: Pidgins versus Creoles and Pidgincreoles, Mühlhäusler, Peter: Pidgin and Creole Linguistics. London: the University of Westminster Press [1986] 1997.

[12] Alanya Chamber of Commerce: http://www.altso.org.tr. Date of access: 26.09.2012.

[13] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alanya#Tourism. Date of access: 26.09.2012.

second (and in some cases – the first) medium of communication at the Antalya Airport. What was noticed is the fact that the announcements for passengers are communicated in Turkish and Russian (especially when the flight passengers are Russians). English is also used but to a lesser extent.

The city of Alanya becomes a real melting pot in the summer season when tourists of various linguistic backgrounds come to the city, vacation there and engage in commercial relations with the native Turkish tradesmen and stallholders, using various mixtures of languages. Thus, in the summer season, many different languages can be heard. Among them are Turkish, English, German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, Polish, Czech. Such a great linguistic mixture contributes to the emergence of jargons in this area.

5. Linguistic evidence for the existence of an English-based tourist jargon

Before the presentation of the linguistic material gathered in Alanya showing that a jargon is used in tourist-commercial contacts, one remark must be repeated. Due to the paper author's rather short stay in the city (ten days), the observations made here are tentative. Therefore, they should be regarded as preliminary observations of the existence of an English-based jargon. Moreover, in spite of the fact that attention is focused on the English-based jargon, the existence of other jargons based on other languages cannot be excluded; English is probably the source of one of such jargons because this language is nowadays used as a global lingua franca whose role is still increasing but jargons based on other languages are certainly in use in various parts of Alanya, especially in the places where there is a big speech community of tourists speaking a given European language, like, for instance, in selected hotels accommodating mostly the speakers of Russian.

It has already been explained that a jargon has a limited stock of vocabulary and this vocabulary is also unstable. This could be observed in – what is called for the purpose of this paper – written communication between the Turkish hosts and non-Turkish tourists. First of all, the instability of lexicon, which is typical of jargons, can be noticed in the spelling of some words, found mostly on the shop-signs in Alanya. The following spelling variations of the English words have been observed:

(1) "cash dispenser/machine", "ATM": *ATM, cash automat, cash machine*
(2) "leather": *leather, leder, leadher, lether*
(3) "original": *orginal, oryginal*
(4) "postcard": *postcard, karten, karte, postkarte*
(5) "salon": *salon, salonu, saloon*
(6) "Scandinavian": *Scandinavian, Scandinav, Skandinavisk, Scanvinavias*

(7) "taxi": *taksi, taxi*
(8) "water pipe": *water pipe, wather pipe*
(9) "apartment": *apartment, apart ment*

The above-quoted words from the shop-signs prove that a certain kind of an English-based jargon is in use in this city. However, it is also worth noting that some spelling patterns can result from language contacts with German or Dutch speakers, which can be evidenced by the spelling forms in (2) or (4). The major social function that this jargon has to play is fulfilled – the customers get the information about what kinds of products a given shop sells. Probably there is no other function which these shop-signs are to play so the owners of the shops did not pay much attention to the standard English spelling. They were focused only on one aspect: attracting the customers to enter the shop and buy some products. Hence it can be stated that such jargon is used in (written) contacts between Turkish traders and tourists who are native speakers of other languages only for the purpose of trade.

Another set of English-based words written in an non-English way, proving the existence of some English-based jargon, was found on textile materials. To quote just two:

(10) ALL PRODUCTS CRAFTER FER STYLE AND QUALITY
(11) ALL PRODUSCTS CRAFTED FOR STYLE AND QUALITY

In personal communication with shop assistants, it became evident that the whole assortment of the textiles had wrongly spelled tabs and appliqué designs. This may bear witness to how unstable the English language used in Turkey may be and that some English-based jargon may be in operation.

Another collection of words written in a non-standard way was gathered on the hotel premises. It means that the target audience was tourists staying in this hotel – so again it was a kind of written contact. Among the lexemes which stood out were:

(12) *Aromatheraple massage*
(13) *Befor*
(14) *Carefull*
(15) *Coffe peeling*
(16) *Shover*

As evidenced by the quoted examples, the spelling system is very unstable and such instability may characterise jargons, understood as very rudimentary systems of communication used in a very limited range of communicative situations.

Apart from the highly variable spelling, grammar is also quite unstable. There are some examples which function well as far as attaining the communicative goal is concerned (*i.e.* the convey the desired meaning) but which are certainly deviations from standard English. Below are the examples collected on the hotel premises as well as in the Turkish bath house:

(17) *Forbidden to use pool for children befor 14 years old.*
(18) *Peeling full body* (instead of: *full body peeling*)
(19) *People,who can not swimm dont use the pool*
(20) *Unaccompanied children under 12 years can not use.*
(21) *Visual step by getting on the elevator you have locked cabinet.*

Figures 2 and 3 present the photographs of the announcement for tourists – swimming pool users and the information for lift users, respectively.
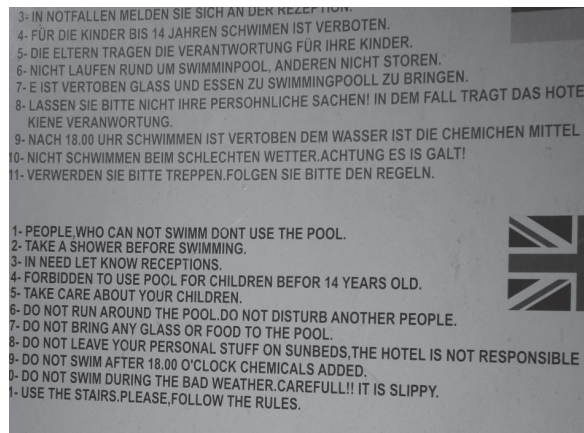

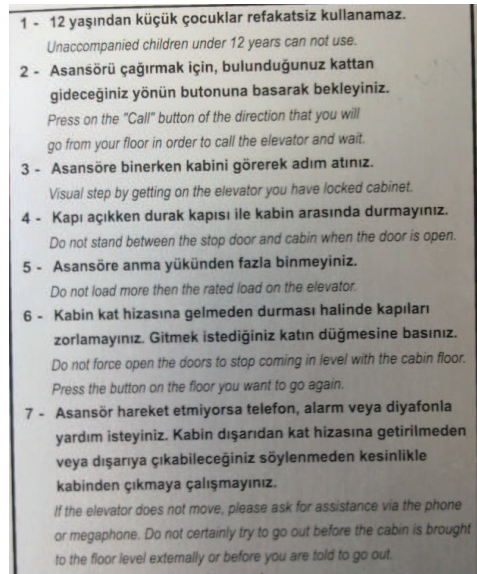**Figure 2.** Photograph of the announcement for hotel swimming pool users[14]

Figure 3. Photograph of the information for hotel lift users

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[14] Photographs 2 and 3 were taken by the author himself.

Jargons are predominantly spoken forms of verbal communication so some observations must be made on the oral versions of this language. First of all, there is certainly a kind of double illusion. In personal communication with some Turkish people, the author found out that they *did* believe they were speaking the standard version of English although there were quite many problems communicating with them. Interesting linguistic evidence was collected during a stroll in the shopping precinct of Alanya. It turned out that very few shop assistants could communicate in standard English and instead, they used the jargon – a mixture of Turkish, English and – depending on the customers' native language – Russian, German, Polish, Dutch or Swedish. Such communication was greatly facilitated by the use of body language, gestures, miming and pointing. Of course, all of the communicative situations involved trading and their main goal was to persuade customers to buy some products. In one of the shops, the following phrases were uttered by the shop assistant:

(22) *How can ja helpen?*
(23) *Det er not your size.*
(24) *My friends, polski, Warszawa, Lech Walesa.*

Interestingly enough, some tradesmen spoke no foreign language and – willing to sell their products – they used Internet Google® translator or a calculator to inform the customer about what a given product was or what the price was. In some cases, they called for help and another shop assistant – speaking some English, or rather the jargon – approached the customers.

Yet another interesting linguistic situation was observed at the hotel reception. It is usually assumed that all receptionists speak at least some basic English. However, it turned out that in the hotel where the author of this paper stayed, one receptionist, addressed in standard English, answered in Russian, thinking that the hotel guests asking about some service were Russians whereas they were in fact Polish. She was made to ask another receptionist for help as she could not communicate even in the jargon.

Taking into account all of the evidence quoted above and the linguistic situation of Alanya, it might be postulated that some form of an English-based jargon is in use in this city. Great variability of spelling, grammar, pronunciation and pragmatic rules may bear witness to the existence of such a language. It would probably be not incorrect to suggest that every international tourist centre has such jargons. Unfortunately, the majority of them have never been documented and what is usually known about them is that they are mixtures of a few languages: usually English plus the native original languages of the interacting parties.

6. Conclusions and paths for further research

Jargons, understood as rudimentary pidgins, are found probably in every tourist centre hosting international guests in the Middle East (*i.e.* Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco). It might even be speculated that there might be numerous jargons in a single place as they are usually quite unstable, variable and *ad hoc* linguistic creations formed to facilitate basic communication in a rather limited range of situations, the most common of which is certainly trade between the local people and tourists.

In view of the above, the fact that jargons are studied within the frameworks of creolistics is justified because the creolistics paradigms seem appropriate for examining various social and linguistic aspects of such new languages as jargons, pidgins, creoles or bilingual-mixed languages.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to shed some light on the nature of jargons and present some preliminary observations of the existence of an English-based jargon in one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Turkish Riviera – in Alanya. It turns out that there is ample linguistic evidence, showing great variability and instability of this linguistic form, to make a preliminary conclusion that such jargon is used in this city. Of course, more research is needed to make unequivocal statements on the character, structure an use of this English-based prepidgin. More linguistic data and more observations of this linguistic variety conducted for a longer period of time could certainly help determine the appropriate status of the language in question. Perhaps, it could also provide social and linguistic data confirming or rejecting the currently uncertain statement that there might be more English-based jargons in use in this place.

To sum up, it might be said that the existence of such newly created *ad hoc* means of communication proves the creativity of humans. This is what Donald Winford notices at the very beginning of his book on contact languages. He claims that "[…] these languages are testaments to the creativity of humans faced with the need to break down language barriers and create a common medium of communication"[15]. Tourist jargons are unquestionably such means of communication.

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