GERMAN AND ENGLISH WORKING PIDGINS*

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The postwar immigration program has brought nearly 1.5 million non-English-speaking people to Australia. Many of them are manual workers in secondary industry who speak no English on arrival and pick up the language from other immigrants as well as from native-born Australians. In most cases the majority of their workmates are non-English-speakers. At first they communicate in a sort of pidgin English with interference from several other languages.

Two 'waves' of non-German immigrants have come to Australia after spending some time in German-speaking countries: the 'displaced persons' e.g. Balts, Poles, Yugoslavs who were labourers in Germany during World War II and were in refugee camps there before emigrating in the late 40s and the 'guest workers' of the 60s and 70s (Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, Turks) who gained their experience of industrial society in West Germany (or Switzerland).

2. GERMAN PIDGIN

In the German-speaking country many of the guest workers and some of the displaced persons acquired the kind of pidgin described in Clyne 1968 and in Gilbert's paper for this conference. The pidgin serves as a means of communication between German-speakers and foreign workers and between foreign workers of different language backgrounds. It is characterised by deletion of articles, prepositions, pronoun subjects, the copula and auxiliaries, the generalisation of a particular verbal form (usually the infinitive), a tendency to drop bound morphemes, leading to 'ambivalent word classes', the generalised use of du, the

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generalised final positioning of the verb and, to a lesser extent, the generalisation of nix for nicht and nichts. 2

Most of the above characteristics were found in the Gastarbeiterpidgin of 15 informants of different mother tongues (Greek, Spanish, Slovenian and Turkish speakers) interviewed in Germany, (Clyne 1968):

Verb → end: Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Slovenian, 10 out of 15 informants.

Generalised infinitive: Greek, Spanish, Turkish, 9 out of 15.

Negative hopping: Greek, Slovenian, Spanish, 6. du: Greek, Spanish, Turkish, all those using a pronoun of address.

All the base languages of the informants have conjugated forms of the verb and the distinction between 'familiar' and 'formal' modes of address. Negative placement before the verb in the Romance and South Slavic languages could cause interference. (The Turkish subjects placed the negative at the end as in Turkish). Of the base languages, only Turkish sends the verb to the end. Final positioning of the verb in embedded sentences frequently makes German a difficult language for non-native speakers learning it.

2.1. KARL MAY'S NEGRO GERMAN AS A BASIS OF COMPARISON

The fact that there are 'traditional' conceptions of how foreigners speak German is already apparent in Karl May's very widely-read adventure stories, e.g. Cäsar the negro in Winnetou (1893) tends to use the verb in the infinitive form, though not necessarily in final position: "Milch und Wasser nicht helfen. Cäsar sterben. Cäsar fühlen im Mund und Leib Arsen und Tollkirsch." Unlike the Gastarbeiter who often delete the auxiliary and copula, Cäsar uses them repeatedly, in the infinitive: "Nur Julep können retten armen Neger Casar. Da sein Cäsar mit Messer. Indian haben fangen Casar. Werden sich lassen braten und kochen und fressen."

The 'elaborate' vocabulary used by Casar is inconsistent with his syntax, (e.g. weshalb, sondern, denn, spazieren, Arsen.) Some German speakers, while 'adapting' their syntax, use lexemes that the decoder is not likely to know, e.g. Kommt ein Mann und nimmt eine Ding auf im Tonband. Cäsar constructs almost exclusively complete sentences, with syntactic modifications, whereas the Gastarbeiter tend to generate elliptic ones. As in Gastarbeiterpidgin, nicht is placed before the verb, even in dependent clauses: e.g. ... daß er nicht werden frei. Sehr viel schnell fort, daß nicht kommen noch Indian. Nicht wissen Cäsar.

However, Cäsar's daß clauses usually, but not always, have the verb before the first NP. Interrogative sentences generally show 'normal' word order, but sometimes the same order as statement sentences, e.g. Cäsar warten hier?

As in Gastarbeiterpidgin, articles and inflectional endings are generally deleted, e.g. auf Baum, bei Bär, durch Fenster, schlecht Ding, gut Massa.

Generations of teenagers became acquainted with this stylised type of foreigner talk through Karl May's works.

A 'pidgin tradition' in German seems to have developed through contact with non-German-speaking miners in Westphalia at the turn of this century, 3 with soldiers and civilians on the Eastern Front in World War I, and perhaps with Pidgin (English)-speaking natives in German-administered New Guinea, among whom Mühlhäusler (in press) has traced evidence of a German pidgin.

Pidginised German was used in Australia in the 1940s by some displaced oersons who did not know any English on arrival 4 and is spoken by former guest workers employed in Australian subsidiaries of German firms, to German-speaking foremen and ex-guest workers of other language backgrounds.

3. DATA

Our corpus is based on:

- (a) the tapes made in 1967-8 of 15 guest workers in Germany speaking to the researcher at their place of employment and in some cases communicating with the foreman or forewoman, and
- (b) 18 sides of cassettes containing spontaneous communications and interviews taped with the help of a small recorder (with built-in microphone) in the work situation in six German-Australian companies in Melbourne. Here there is interaction between native speakers of English, German, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Turkish (40 of whom are not English or German speakers).

4. ENGLISH PIDGIN IN AUSTRALIA

The English industrial pidgin has similar characteristics to the German one - deletion of function words, e.g.

This is demonstration (article deletion, Italian informant).

Plenty people here speak German (preposition, Yuvoslav).

Christmas ready (preposition and other parts of speech, Hungarian).

deletion of bound morphemes, leading to 'ambivalent word classes', 5 e.g.

Go; no go (go - verb, noun; no - article, adverb; Greeks, Italians, Turks, Yugoslavs).

I like the people no talk (talk - verb, noun; no - article, adverb; Italian).

Finish; no finish; these finish (finish - verb, noun, adjective (finished); no - article, adverb; Turk, Yugoslav).

Like that no turn (turn - verb, noun; no - article, adverb; Jordanian).

expressions such as 'no go' and 'no finish' have become part of 'industrial terminology' and are even transferred into German (see Section 5). Many Southern European workers responded only to this type of syntax, e.g. German-born foreman: They're alright now? Turk: (nods).

Foreman: Ja. These parts, Jasa, you take them out of this box in here, from here in machine.

Turk: (no reply)

Foreman: Finish? No finish?

Turk: No finish.

Foreman: No finish. Sure?

Turk: Yes.

Foreman: No finish. Good!

negative hopping and/or auxiliary deletion (a frequent phenomenon), e.g.

I no come in the outside (Italian)

I no understand what they mean (Hungarian)

That's why I no give to other people (Yugoslav)

generalisation, in this case, of the 'free' form of the verb, e.g.

| work in a Osram (worked; Greek)

I go to the Germany (went; Yugoslav to Australian)

Who teach you? (taught, is teaching; Italian to Hungarian. The

Italian is 'helping' his workmates with their English.)

But she speak Turkish too (speaks; Jordanian)

From where you come? (do/did you come; German-Swiss to Yugoslav; see below)

About how long time take you? (will it take; Greek to Hungarian).

copula or passive auxiliary deletion, e.g.

Jovo busy, me busy (Italian)

I still in Robert Bosch (Yugoslav)

Because I born in Yugoslavia (Yugoslav),

pronoun subject-deletion, e.g.

I ask him how he is. How feeling. (Greek)
Sometimes work bore-machine. (Turk)
After come here. (Yugoslav)
Outside the factory no speak English. (Greek)
... No speak Germany. (Yugoslav)

Of these, only negative hopping and pronoun subject deletion can be explained by native language interference. In the English pidgin, the verb does not go to the end, and in interrogative sentences introduced by a pronoun it comes in third position, 6 e.g.

When you finish whole lot? (Greek to Yugoslav)
How long you been married, George? (Italian to Hungarian)

This is even the case with one German native speaker, e.g.

Why you came to Australia? (to Yugoslav)

(N.B. Past tense, therefore not merely deletion of do)

How you like the job? (to Hungarian)

How you know they go in the right spot? (to Greek)

However, the same person generates grammatical sentences of a comparable construction in German, e.g.

Wie wissen Sie? (to Greek)
Warum tun Sie die Kabel hier auf die Connectorlahn machen?
(to another Greek)

and, when questioned, revealed he was not aware of the grammatical English word order. Probably the ungrammatical order had been picked up from other non-English-speaking immigrants at work.

4.1. COMPARISON WITH FERGUSON'S STUDY

Ferguson (1975) elicited 'translations' of ten sentences into the form which American-English speakers would use to communicate with uneducated non-Europeans. The versions given featured the deletion of articles, copula, inflections and pronoun subjects and the use of no an an adverb, which we have come across, and, in addition, reduplications and other features perhaps restricted to 'inter-racial' communication. Me replaced I as a subject form.

4.2. ME FOR I

Although many of my Australian and German immigrant informants claim that the use of me for both I and me is very common among immigrant workers, (some say mainly among Greeks, others claim among Turks), I

only came across this from one informant, an Italian who had been in Australia for $5\frac{1}{2}$ years. In the taped communications he used I eight times and me eight times as a subject. He works at close quarters with a German supervisor who believes you have to 'adapt' your English to make yourself understood to 'new arrivals'. The me construction could be promoted by the fact that, in Italian, io is usually deleted in a verbal construction while mi frequently occurs as an oblique case in initial position. However, two of the informant's me sentences express special emphasis, in a way unparallelled in Italian:

me no, Jovo yes.

me understand (cf. Jovo speak)

Otherwise there seems to be variability. Generally, both the English and German pidgin speakers are characterised by an inability to switch to a more standard variety.

There is little evidence from out studies of the English pidgin being developed or reinforced by native speakers' simplifications as is the case for German pidgin (Clyne 1968). Most Australians simply raise their voices or speak more slowly when communication breaks down. Some children of immigrants speak a phonetically, syntactically and lexically deviant variety of English to their parents and other adult foreigners and Australian English to their brothers and sisters, other Australians and immigrant children. (I have not yet investigated the effect of the employment on second generation Australians on 'industrial pidgin'.) But immigrant foremen who are very proficient at English have told me that they speak 'ordinary English' to everyone so that they do not fall into bad habits which may cause their English to deteriorate. One Turkish foreman who spoke excellent English tended to use 'unusual' vocabulary, evidently to 'show off'. In one case he perhaps tried too hard and came out with:

We must count these lenses with the $minimum\ [sic]$ care. (Addressing Greek women)

However, many immigrants do communicate in the pidgin and it does bear strong similarities with the variety spoken to American Indians in television films. Perhaps Australians did set the ball rolling!

Among German-speaking supervisors there is, on the whole, a tendency to speak English more slowly to newly-arrived immigrants. But a small minority of German speakers are guided by their preconceived ideas as to how Southern Europeans speak English and what they are 'capable of understanding', e.g. (German to Turk):

Off, no go. On, go.

Four o'clock finish here!

and they out.

He even switched to the pidgin variety in a conversation with the researcher when discussing a Turkish offsider, e.g.

Now he start the machine. because that noisy.

5. CONTACT BETWEEN GERMAN AND ENGLISH PIDGIN IN AUSTRALIA

Many of the ex-guest workers employed in the Australian subsidiaries of German firms find it very difficult and unnecessary to learn English (Clyne, 1976) and make use of whatever German they had previously learned, in order to communicate. There develops a mixture of English and German pidgins, involving both lexical transference and codeswitching though it is hard to distinguish between these, owing to the 'simplified grammar'. The lexical transference is mainly from German into 'pidgin' English discourse. In the communications of seven informants whose speech is characterised by mixed pidgin phenomena, 39% of the utterances contained transference from German into English in response to an English question or statement or as part of English discourse, e.g.

Sam, you want speak a little bit Italienisch? (Yugoslav)

11% contained transference from English into German in reply to a German question or statement. 23% of the utterances represented code-switching from English discourse and 11% code-switching from German discourse, e.g.

- a. Jovo yes, sprechen deutsch, but me understand
 (Ja, Jovo spricht deutsch German context).
 3 underlying sentences, (1) English, (2) German,
 (3) English (Italian)
- b. No much sprechen, a mir and Jovo. (English context. cf. the use of me in English by the same speaker, see 4.2). (Italian)
- No, not plenty Leute hier griechisch. (German context. Nein, es gibt hier nicht viele leute, die griechisch sprechen.) (Greek)
- d. Jack, can you mir fixen this? (English context. Not strictly Pidgin.) (Yugoslav)
- e. Beide go, no go ausprobieren. Wenn das so hereinpaßt. Das paßt jetzt, go ist es richtig. No go soll nicht hereinpassen. (German context. Beide Maschinen ausprobieren, ob sie gehen

oder nicht... "Go" = einstellen. "No go" = abstellen. Here no and no go can be regarded as switches or lexical transfers from English pidgin into German.)

Of course there is no uniformity in either the Gastarbeiterpidgin or the English pidgin or the way in which they are 'mixed'. As some of the immigrants in Australia and guest workers in German eventually learn the relevant language grammatically and most immigrants make some progress towards this, one could conceive of a pidgin continuum similar to DeCamp's (1971) "post-creole continuum". In the bottom ranges of the continuum in both German and English we find elliptic sentences:

Soon ready. (Hungarian)
No everything for me. (Yugoslav)
Nachher Griechenland. (Greek)
Krankkasse viel Geld. (Greek)

With the deletion of pronoun subject:

In house speak Greek. (Greek)
Arbeit bei Deutschland. (Yugoslav)

of articles:

I change tool. (Italian) Was machen mit Fu β ? (Greek)

and of the copula:

I now nearly seven years. (Greek)
Das Kennedy-Brücke. (Turk)

"ambivalent word classes":

I finish. No finish. These finish. (Various) Biβle unterhalt in Englisch. (Yugoslav) Viel schenke. (Greek)

and a uniform negative (article-adverb), no in English, nix or nicht in German, and negative hopping:

I no go in school. (Greek)
Ich nix verstehen. (Greek; same informant)

Whereas the free form of the verb is generalised in English, in German it is the infinitive that is preferred usually in final position:

cf. Because give my wife job. (Yugoslav)

Gar nicht verstehen. (Spanish)

In both languages, but especially in English - this involves the absence of auxiliaries. At least in English, interrogative sentences introduced by a pronoun have the verb following the NP.

It is at the level of the elliptic sentences and ambivalent word classes that the greatest price has to be paid for simplification, especially where the pronoun subject is deleted. Viel schenke can mean 'Ich bekam viele Geschenke' (as it seems to in the context), 'Ich machte viele Geschenke', 'Viele Leute machten Geschenke'. Krankkasse viel Geld could mean 'Ich bekam von der Krankenkasse viel Geld' (as it does in the context), 'Ich mußte der Krankenkasse viel Geld bezahlen', 'Die Krankenkasse hat viel Geld'. No finish can be interpreted as 'They haven't finished (it)', 'I won't finish', and so on. Arbeit bei Deutschland also has numerous possible meanings. Of course, context and non-verbal language go a long way to eliminate ambiguities and communication in the work situation tends to be efficient at its very restricted level.

I would like to describe two other 'cut-off points' on the continuum. At the second, the generalised negative, negative hopping, deletion of some articles and sometimes of pronouns continue, but more experimentation and therefore some variability occurs in the verbal forms, though the English free form and the German infinitive still predominate. However, the general verb-final word order in German is challenged. e.g.

I'm change tool and cleaning machine. (Yugoslav)
I go to the Germany working maybe eleven months. (Hungarian)
Wenn is' etwas, sofort nehmen aus der Maschine. (Yugoslav)
Fragen unserer Vorarbeiter or der Βοβ. (Yugoslav)

By the third point on the scale, only few of the characteristics of the bottom range remain, e.g.

If you finish dealing von milling, it can go grinding, ah grinding, for hardening. If finish hardening, after come to Mr. Timber for straightening. If it is finishing with straightening, we can go assemble the stuff. (Greek)

How long it takes to progress along the continuum depends on the individual's sociolinguistic environment and his learning capacity. But, as Bickerton (1973) has shown, DeCamp's implicational model is based on a sort of vicious circle, and this certainly applies to our continuum. Since our informants (in both Germany and Australia) may be exposed to the appropriate standard language at least to some extent, they are liable to produce unsystematic configurations of forms after exceeding the bottom of the continuum. It is the bottom that is easiest to define. However, the speech of not many guest workers in Germany

and very few immigrants in oustralia could be located at that point for very long.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN GERMAN AND ENGLISH PIDGIN, AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are, as we have seen, distinct similarities between the German and English pidgins, which makes it easy to switch and transfer from one to the other. The major differences between the English and German pidgins are the position of the verb in 'statement' sentences, the nature of the generalised forms, and - to a lesser extent - verbal position in interrogative sentences introduced by an interrogative pronoun. There is no evidence in favour of the English pidgin being a relixification of the German one. If there is any truth in the belief that the English 'pidgin'-immigrant speakers generalise me as the first person singular pronoun, this would be a further difference. However, our evidence in favour of this is limited to the speech of one informant and the comments of Australian and German immigrants.

Roeper (1972) refers to the position of the verb in the statement and interrogative sentences of English and German baby talk as an argument for verb-final deep structure in German. Using comparable data for American English (Menyuk 1969) and German (Park no date) he shows that, while the 4-6 year old American speakers often fail to perform subject-verb inversion for questions in English, their counterparts always put the verb after the question word ('Warum er spielt Fuβball?' or 'Warum er Fußball spielt?'). On the other hand, the German children put the verb at the end in 80% of their statement utterances (e.g. Dies haben. Das auch nicht malt.) While the American children consistently place the verb before the object. Basing himself also on Emonds' (1970) claim that all cyclical transformations but not subject-verb inversions preserve deep structure though lexemes are moved from one position to another, Roeper concludes that the children's utterances reflect the deep structure of the language. There are clear parallels between baby talk and 'industrial pidgins'. Final versus second positioning of the verb is also a difference between the English and German pidgins under consideration and we have also referred to German questions with the verb after the question word and English ones with the verb following the NP produced by the same speaker. Boost (1955) stresses the structural pre-eminence of the end of the German sentence, which bears the 'meaning part'. Is it possible that the pidgins reflect deep structure? Could speakers with such limited competence in a language have acquired 'deep structure' - if deep structure is, in fact, linear and a psychological reality? Or do the native speakers or other foreigners with a

high competence in the language pass on the rules to the 'new arrivals'? We could cite as evidence for this view: code-switching to Gastarbeiterpidgin by many Germans when addressing at least (some) foreigners; and similarities between the German of Gastarbeiter, displaced persons and the old Niuginian studied by Mühlhäusler and some aspects of the German speech of, say, Cäsar in Karl May's Winnetou. If 'working pidgins' always reflected the 'deep structure' we would have to postulate a deep structure without a copula or auxiliaries, without prepositions and articles. Ferguson (1972:2) claims that English speakers have "as part of their linguistic competence the ability to produce and respond to" foreigner talk. One could expand this and postulate that each speech community possesses a 'pidginisation competence', influenced by deep structure (if there is such a thing) through native speakers' intuition determining how they speak to (some) foreigners, the universal - a general intuition on the part of the foreigners as to what is simple and most essential for communication and interference from various mother tongues and simplified varieties of the mother tongues. Whinnom (1971:106) claims that a pidgin always arises from contact between a target language and at least two substrate languages and this is true of both the German and English 'working pidgins'. 'Pidginisation competence' would account for similarities in English and German pidgins and the resultant ease of code-switching as well as the 'pseudosimplifications' of Gastarbeiterpidgin, which seems to have been moulded by native speakers more than has its Australian equivalent. A major factor in the difference between the communication situation in Australia and that in the German-speaking countries are the attitudes of the local populations to the foreigner. In Australia, although immigrants are imported because of their potential contribution to the economy, they are strongly encouraged to assimilate and are generally regarded as future citizens. The concept of the 'guest worker' is repugnant to the Australian immigration programme. In West Germany and Switzerland the foreigner is considered merely a temporary member of the labour force, even if he has been living in the country for several years. German speakers who use Gastarbeiterpidgin to foreigners will usually justify this as an act of kindness and consideration to those who would not understand grammatical German and who, because of their limited stay, should not be burdened with the task of learning it. That this has condescending overtones is often not acknowledged; nor are the implications to the social status, economic advancement and personal well-being of foreigners internalising Gastarbeiterpidgin, foreigners whose stay in the host country may not be quite so temporary and whose children may learn

standard German and/or a regional variety. As in some colonial situations, in the foreign labour situation, pidgin can be an instrument of suppression and the most symmetrical language communication situation (A speaks to B as B speaks to A) can mean the perpetuation of the most asymmetrical power relationship. My subjective impression is that this results in far fewer guest workers in Germany surpassing the first point on the pidgin continuum than immigrants in Australia. Whinnom (1971:102) has stressed that opportunity to improve performance in the target language and motivation for this prevent the development in Argentina of a pidgin comparable to Chinese Pidgin. The same applies to the immigrant situation in Australia and only to a much lesser degree, to that prevailing in Germany.

GERMAN AND ENGLISH WORKING PIDGINS

NOTES

My thanks are due to those who have made helpful suggestions, especially Peter Mühlhäusler and Jiří Neustupny.

- 1. In 1971, 1,403,778 out of a work force of 5,240,414 were immigrants, but in some industries (e.g. motor car, clothing), they represented the vast majority of the workers. Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs and Germans (in that order) are groups of which there are over 70,000 in the work force.
- 2. Examples:

Was machen mit Fuβ? Viel schenken Weihnacht.

Heute morgen wieder hier kommen (meaning - first person singular).

Leute gut. Ich heute bringen Kartoffel mit Reis. Patiente Essen.

Du das verkaufen? (to stranger)

- 3. cf. M. Holzach and T. Rautert, So deutsch wie Wachowiak. Zeit Magazin. No.13, 22. März, 1974:18-24.
- 4. Some examples:

Nachher heiraten und Kinder (ellipsis). Das keine lesson nicht sprechen (Infinitive, verb-final).

Aber wenn ich sprechen länger (Infinitive).

Ich besser gesprochen aber jetzt so schwer (deletion of auxiliary and copula).

- 5. cf. "looseness of form classes", Goodman 1967.
- 6. In other interrogative sentences, it is in second position, e.g. You finish only the tenth? (Greek to Yugoslav) You understand? (German-Swiss to Greek)

- 7. Both are unstable and therefore not true 'pidgins' in Whinnom's 1971, sense.
- 8. cf. Clyne 1972:36-7.
- Ich gut kochen. Dann wir nach Dorf kommen.
 Dann ich große Mädchen. (70-year-old woman of the West Sepik district, Papua-New Guinea, cited in Mühlhäusler, 1977).

GERMAN AND ENGLISH WORKING PIDGINS

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