

NOTES ON THE PIDGIN GERMAN OF KIAUTSCHOU

Peter Mühlhäusler

1. INTRODUCTION

Research into the pidgin languages of the Sino-Pacific area in recent years has demonstrated the existence of a large number of varieties and subvarieties of Pidgin English (cf. Mühlhäusler, Bennett and Tryon 1979) as well as that of a smaller number of pidgins derived from other metropolitan languages. Many of them are only sketchily documented or sometimes merely known by name. The existence of Pidgin German in this area was first documented for the Papua New Guinea mainland in 1977 (Mühlhäusler 1977); a second variety of Pidgin German (now in its creolised form) is spoken by the mixed-race community of Rabaul, the former capital of German New Guinea. The present paper describes a variety for which there is unfortunately only second-hand evidence. Still, it would seem that a better knowledge of the many minor pidgins is desirable for the following reasons:

- i) A better understanding is needed of the history of contact languages in the Pacific area derived from European languages (such as Pidgin English) or promoted by the European colonial presence (such as Hiri Motu).
- ii) The linguistic development of the major *lingue franche* of this area (Tok Pisin, Bislama, Hawaiian Pidgin and Chinese Pidgin) has involved repeated contact with, or merging of, minor pidgin languages.
- iii) A study of the minor pidgin languages can throw light on a number of theoretical issues, such as the nature of incipient pidginisation, language decline and death, and relexification.

The present paper is concerned with one such minor language, Pidgin German of the former German protectorate of Kiautschou (China).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Kiautschou is the name of an area of about 500 square kilometres situated in the Bay of Tsingtau in central eastern China. It was declared a German protectorate in 1898 and a German colonial presence lasted until 1914 when the territory was occupied by Japanese troops.

Unlike other German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, Kiautschou became urbanised within a relatively short period of time. Between 1898 and 1914 the population of its main centre, Tsingtau, grew from about 1,000 to 35,000, the total population of the protectorate being in excess of 180,000. There were more Germans in Kiautschou than in any other Pacific German colony, and the proportion of Germans among the European population was significantly higher as well, as can be seen from the following figures (quoted from Schnee 1937):

	number of Europeans	Germans	Germans serving in 'Schutztruppe'
New Guinea	970	750	20
Micronesia	460	260	
Samoa	550	330	2
Kiautschou	4,500	4,300	2,632

3. THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN KIAUTSCHOU

Whereas the majority of the indigenous population did not know any European language, some of them had a knowledge of Pidgin English. In the first years of German colonisation English and Pidgin English appear to have played an important role. Wintersheim (1903:16) remarks that 'unfortunately even many Germans prefer English in this place' (author's translation).

The promotion of German was given considerable attention by the government, however. German was taught in the German Government School (Realgymnasium) as well as in three mission primary schools, and one mission secondary school. Unfortunately I do not have any details about enrolment or syllabuses. A number of observers remark on the strong position of the German language in later years, however. Friederici (1911:97) writes:

During the campaign in China, the Chinese 'boys' of my cavalry regiment spoke a smattering of German, in spite of the fact that no one had made an effort to teach them this language. When I was last in Tsingtau [= Kiautschou, P.M.], quite a few Chinese spoke German. I understand that nearly all Chinese who are in touch with the Germans speak the language of the latter [author's translation].

Similar remarks also appear in an editorial of the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* of 24 May 1913:

In Kiautschou, much has been done in recent years in the field of instructing the Chinese in the German language. We do not know to what extent English is used in everyday communication. However, judging from the attitudes of the 'Tsingtauer Neuesten Nachrichten', it would seem that the role of German as the everyday language of Kiautschou is quite satisfactory [author's translation].

4. PIDGIN GERMAN IN KIAUTSCHOU

Whenever a European language acquires a dominant position in a colonial setting pidgin varieties begin to emerge. As early as 1898 Pidgin English began to be replaced by a pidginised variety of German, a process which involved

relexification rather than the creation of an entirely new pidgin language. The travel writer Von Hesse-Wartegg (1898:10) remarks on the language used by the proprietor of the Hotel Kaiser in Kiautschou:

The proprietor with his friendly smile had already learned German. Ik sabe Deutsch, he addressed me while making deep bows. Gobenol at gebene pamischu open Otel, kommen Sie, luksi, no hebe pisiman, no habe dima, bei an bei. Since this Spanish-English-German-Chinese dialect differs from native to native, I want to add the German translation: "Ich kann Deutsch, der Gouverneur hat mir Erlaubnis gegeben, ein Hotel zu eroeffnen, kommen Sie, besehen Sie es; Ich habe noch keinen Gast, weil ich keine Zimmer habe, aber nach und nach. "The words pamischu, luksi, pisi, and bei an bei are not German, but belong to the lingua franca used between the Chinese and the Europeans, the so-called Pidgin English. Pamischu is 'permission', luksi means 'look see', pisi stands for 'piece', for the Chinese do not say "one man, two men" but one piece man, two piece man; bei and bei is English 'by and by' [author's translation].

A few years later, Wintersheim unambiguously states (1903:16):

"In Kiautschou a variety of Pidgin German corresponding to Pidgin English is developing" [author's translation].

Unfortunately linguistic samples of this Pidgin German are rare. A brief utterance quoted in the *Kiautschou-Post* of 1911 p.240, again illustrates the ongoing process of relexification.

Deutschland master in schipp	The German masters (within their)
make make bumm bam fisst	ships make a lot of noise.
(spelling not adjusted)	

This example incidentally illustrates the use of onomatopoeia in incipient pidgins.

The only example of a 'pure' Pidgin German is found in a novel by Kueas (1915:134). The Chinese servant is reported to have said:

"Esselenzy nich wollen nehl Schampin, chinaboi gehen flotti"
 (Excellenz wollen keinen Champagner mehr, der Chinesische Diener wird fortgehen 'Your Excellency don't want any more champagne, the Chinese servant will go away' - author's translation).

In this example we encounter many of the typical attributes of German foreigner talk, including the reduction of consonant clusters (nich for 'nicht'), the use of the infinitive instead of inflected verb forms (wollen, gehen) and the omission of articles. In addition there is the stereotype confusion of l and r.

It appears that there was a good deal of variation in Kiautschou Pidgin German. In addition to such 'untargeted' varieties one finds second language German learned by educated Chinese in a more formal learning context. An example is the following extract from a letter presented in a court case dealing with a written insulting proposition to a German lady (quoted from *Kiautschou-Post* 1912:119):

Bei gestern abend schamte ich auf der Strasse gegenueber ihre Veranda nach Sie zu schauen da viele Leute mehr fuerchte ich sie mich verspoten.

(Last night I was ashamed to watch you from the veranda of the house opposite, there were many people and I was afraid they would ridicule me - author's translation).

There are no doubt many more examples of Kiautschou Pidgin English and Pidgin German and it is hoped that they will be made available to a wider public soon.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- (i) It appears that pidgin varieties can arise, either through relexification or independent development, in a very short time. The absence of remarks on varieties of Pidgin German in the literature reflects their low social status and short life. However, a closer examination of contemporary sources can reveal the existence of many more such varieties.
- (ii) The case of Kiautschou Pidgin German can provide interesting evidence for the processes of language mixing and language replacement accompanying the formation of pidgins.
- (iii) The data presented further illustrate a very common phenomenon, linguistic discontinuity, resulting from discontinuity in the social and political life in the Sino-Pacific area.

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