

Creole linguistics



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The acquisition of language is very phenomenal. There is much evidence of this phenomenon in pidgin and creole speakers. It has been suggested that the dominant language of a speaker may not be his mother tongue. There has to be some overwhelming conditions, however, that would propel someone into speaking another language more than his mother tongue. Apart from social conditions a bilingual person's use of the dominant or other language is a reflection of his linguistic confidence and assertion. Creole speaking has taken on more significance in contemporary times since more studies and researches have been dedicated to both creole and pidgin languages. Although there are still many debatable aspects their inclusion into the linguistic arena has motivated scholars to have closer inspections. Unlike languages such as Slavic and Germanic languages Creole languages are different because they have no common ancestor (Baptista 5). All the creole languages put together can never be traced to a particular language or group of languages but what is evident is that there are traces of many different languages within the creoles of different regions. One of the observable features of creole is the use of the double negative or the subject as well as the verb in the negative. This double negative could be influenced by the Romance languages such as Spanish since this is grammatically incorrect in English. The Spanish, "Yo no voy a ninguna parte," to Jamaican Creole, "mi na go no wey," to the English, "I am not going anywhere," is an example of this feature. This is used by the creole speaker to show emphasis and assertiveness.

A creole is a restrictive language. Scholars point out that they were developed for communication means. They therefore lack many of the linguistic structures found in other languages. One of the features that point

to this restriction is with regard to questions. The structure of the sentence is usually the same as when one makes a statement. The only difference is in the intonation. This could be due to the absence of a written code for the language. A language that is only perpetuated orally will have reduced structures different from those languages that are written. For example, Guyanese Creole “ he gone,” can both mean “ he is gone,” or “ has he gone?” One is just left to the mercy of the speaker’s intonation before being able to decode the message. Apart from questioning there are other areas of creole languages that involves the intonation and emotional involvement of the speaker.

The use or non use of the comparative and superlative is another feature that seems to be common among many creole languages. While there is evidence of the use of ‘ pas’ in some creoles for the comparative, the double word is also used in a similar context. In Jamaican Creole, for example, “ big big,” means very big.

Like other languages creole and pidgin languages change over time and develop certain features that may cause them to differ or to be similar to their source languages. Many of the features are also present in certain regions only. This shows the broad spectrum of the language and the many different aspects that still need to be researched and studied.

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