Lecture 9:  
Language Contact & Change

INDV 101 -- Mind, Self and Language

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Lg EX: Chinese dialects

Chinese Dialects

The Languages of China, from the Zhou Dynasty to the Present

1. Today she goes to our house (s) we see
2. Xin-xing li-mu cha-bu-gao-xi bi-ga-nu kwhor-ga
3. Gaa-an-ja kill half now-bu go ask bi groen door keveu agneu
4. Jhameu say-guhk ito kee-keh dorz ear-mee jo la fihon wiil
5. Paata ujgh akkaan doo komo ait lii kana wi

1. English
2. Taiwanese PRC
3. Southern Taihu Wuxi-Hebei
4. Northern Mandarin Wuchang
5. Nanthan Huyan
linguistic "correctness":
(prescriptive grammar)

- Established criteria of educated written language
  - third-person singular /s/: she goes, not she go.
  - no double negatives: he didn’t see anybody, not he didn’t see nobody.
  - complete sentences

- Issues on which educated people differ (and which may be different in written and spoken forms):
  - who/whom did you see
  - you should speak like/as your teacher does
  - the data is/are unreliable
  - I disapprove of him/his doing it
  - get it done as quick/quickly as possible
  - hopefully, she’ll be there on time

- Changes in the spoken language that some people resist:
  - between you and I
  - me and Harry went downtown
  - was like for said

- Pure inventions of self-appointed grammarians with no basis in linguistic structure or historical usage:
  - prohibition of split infinitives
  - prohibition of prepositions at the end of a sentence
  - I shall vs. you will
  - It is I

Language Contact—**Pidgins** and **Creoles**

- **Pidgin**
  - A pidgin is a new language which develops in situations where speakers of different languages need to communicate but don't share a common language. The vocabulary of a pidgin comes mainly from one particular language (called the "lexifier"). An early "pre-pidgin" is quite restricted in use and variable in structure. But the later "stable pidgin" develops its own grammatical rules.
Once a stable pidgin has emerged, it is generally learned as a second language and used for communication among people who speak different languages.

When children start learning a pidgin as their first language and it becomes the mother tongue of a community, it is called a creole. Like a pidgin, a creole is a distinct language which has taken most of its vocabulary from another language, but has its own unique grammatical rules.

Unlike a pidgin, however, a creole is not restricted in use, and is like any other language in its full range of functions. Examples are Gullah, Jamaican Creole and Hawai`i Creole English.

Hypothesis: children have a bioprogram for language. If the surrounding language does not supply the structure for this program, they draw on the innate template.

FILM: American Tongues