

# Contact Languages

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A contact language is a marginal language (a type of lingua franca) used for purposes of basic communication by people with no common language.



A lingua franca also known as a **bridge language, common language, trade language or vehicular language**, is a language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language or dialect, particularly when it is a third language that is distinct from both native languages.



*Lingua franca* have developed around the world throughout human history, sometimes for commercial reasons but also for cultural, religious, diplomatic and administrative convenience, and as a means of exchanging information between scientists and other scholars of different nationalities.



- The use of *lingua franca* has existed since antiquity. Latin and Koine Greek were the *lingua francas* of the Roman Empire and the Hellenistic culture.



- The most obvious example as of the early 21st century is English. The term *English as a lingua franca (ELF)* refers to the teaching, learning, and use of the English Language as a common means of communication for speakers of different native languages.

## Pidgins

Pidgins are simplified languages that occur from two or more languages. They are developed by people who do not have a common language to communicate in the same geographical area.

According to Wardhaugh, a pidgin is  
nobody's first language/mother  
tongue, it doesn't have any native  
{ speakers, it is just used as a contact  
language for communication  
purposes.

Sometimes the people use the expression  
‘reduced variety of a normal language’.

In other words, it is the standard language  
but with a reduced or simplified grammar

{ structure, vocabulary, or phonological  
variation.

Sawant calls pidgins hybrid languages  
because of the combination of different  
languages which form them.



A very common pidginized variety of language is the Nigerian Pidgin English which is referred to as bad English because the people learn this variety without paying attention to accuracy.

{ Example: They use the words ”*Se*” and ”*Abi*” when speaking Pidgin. They are often used at the start or end of an intonated sentence or question: ”You are coming, right?” becomes ”*Se you dey come?*” or ”*You dey come abi?*”

## REASONS FOR PIDGINS TO ARISE:

- the people do not have a common language to communicate, therefore the need for communication leads them to create a pidgin.
- colonization, most pidgins were created from French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Dutch because of their power on colonies.

## Creoles

Pidgins can turn into creoles when they have been used for a long time. As a result of being used for a long time the structure starts to evolve and become more complex. Children who are born to an area where a pidgin is used, acquire it as their first language, in this case the pidgin becomes a creole.

An example for such a case is Tok Pisin which was a creole in Papua New Guinea and afterwards became a National Language when children started to acquire it as their first languages.

An example is the fact that the language of Haiti is a creole. Almost all Haitians use it and it is their native language. This creole is a native language through standard French and has evolved through pidginized French.

{ The vocabulary is French but the phonology and syntax are different from standard French. The grammatical structure is different from French and it is similar to Creole Portuguese, Creole Spanish, and Creole English. So, creolists reject calling it a dialect of French.



## Similarities between Pidgins and Creoles:

1. Wardhaugh indicates that pidgins or creoles both have a well organized linguistic system. So, even if the vocabulary is borrowed from a native language one still has to learn it not just simplify and use it;

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2. There are fewer sounds and their arrangements are less complicated than those of a standard language;

## THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CREOLES AND PIDGINS

- . pidginization occurs very quickly, almost over a night but creolization takes approximately two generations to form;
- { • creoles are mostly related to a dominant language so a creole continuum can arise. For example, an English Creole can develop into a number of varieties when it is in contact with the standard language, English in this case. A continuum is when two language varieties are varieties of the same language.

The interest of linguists in these languages has increased greatly in the last few decades. The main reason for this is that pidgins and creoles are young languages. In retracing their development it may be possible to see how new languages can arise.