EXPLORING A KUWAITI ENGLISH PIDGIN WITHIN KUWAITI HOUSEHOLDS:

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

When speakers belonging to different language communities come together and attempt to communicate efficiently, they usually need to find a contact language that could lead to the birth of a pidgin language variety. The present study is a sociolinguistic investigation of an English-based pidgin that emerges through work-oriented interaction, necessitating Filipino domestic workers and their Kuwaiti employers to use it to communicate. The study thoroughly investigates the similarities between the variety under investigation and other pidgins using phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical diagnostic features. Findings of the study present the English variety used by Kuwaiti households in their communication with Filipino workers as a pidginized English in Kuwait featuring four reported linguistic aspects in pidgin languages: morphological simplifications, syntactic simplifications, lexical simplifications, and functional limitations. The study concludes that such pidginized English is strategically utilized to simplify and ensure efficient language communication between Filipino domestic workers and their Kuwaiti employers.

Keywords: English, pidgin, domestic workers, language contact, language change, functional limitation

EXPLORANT UN PIDGIN ANGLÈS KUWAITÍ A LES LLARS KUWAITIANES:
UNA INVESTIGACIÓ SOCIOLINGÜÍSTICA

Resum

Quan parlants que pertanyen a diferents comunitats lingüístiques intenten comunicar-se de manera eficient, generalment necessiten un idioma de contacte que pot conduir al naixement d'una varietat d'idioma pidgin. Aquest estudi és una investigació sociolingüística d'un pidgin basat en l'anglès que sorgeix a través de la interacció orientada al treball, ja que requereix que els treballadors domèstics filipins i els seus ocupadors kuwaitians l'utilitzin per comunicar-se. L'estudi estudia a fons les similituds

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entre la varietat investigada i altres pidgins tot aplicant característiques de diagnòstic fonològic, morfològic, sintàctic i lèxic. Els resultats presenten la varietat de l'anglès utilitzat a les llars kuwaitianes en la seva comunicació amb els treballadors filipins com un anglès pidginitzat a Kuwait. Aquest mostra quatre aspectes lingüístics propis dels idiomes pidgin: simplificacions morfològiques, simplificacions sintàctiques, simplificacions lèxiques i limitacions funcionals. El treball conclou que aquest anglès pidginitzat s'utilitza estratègicament per simplificar i garantir una comunicació lingüística eficient entre els treballadors domèstics filipins i els seus ocupadors kuwaitians.

Paraules clau: anglès, pidgin, treballadors domèstics, contacte lingüístic, canvi de llengua, limitació funcional

EXPLORANDO UN PIDGIN INGLÉS KUWAITÍ EN DE LOS HOGARES KUWAITÍES: UNA INVESTIGACIÓN SOCIOLINGÜÍSTICA

Resumen

Cuando hablantes que pertenecen a diferentes comunidades lingüísticas intentan comunicarse de manera eficiente, generalmente necesitan un idioma de contacto que puede conducir al nacimiento de una variedad de idioma pidgin. Este estudio es una investigación sociolingüística de un pidgin basado en el inglés que surge a través de la interacción orientada al trabajo, ya que requiere que los trabajadores domésticos filipinos y sus empleadores kuwaitíes lo utilicen para comunicarse. El estudio estudia a fondo las similitudes entre la variedad investigada y otros pidgins utilizando características de diagnóstico fonológico, morfológico, sintáctico y léxico. Los resultados presentan la variedad de inglés utilizada por los hogares kuwaitíes en su comunicación con los trabajadores filipinos como un inglés pidginizado en Kuwait. Este muestra cuatro aspectos lingüísticos propios de idiomas pidgin: simplificaciones morfológicas, simplificaciones sintácticas, simplificaciones léxicas y limitaciones funcionales. El estudio concluye que dicho inglés pidginizado se utiliza estratégicamente para simplificar y garantizar una comunicación lingüística eficiente entre los trabajadores domésticos filipinos y sus empleadores kuwaitíes.

Palabras clave: inglés, pidgin, trabajadores domésticos, contacto lingüístico, cambio de lengua, limitación funcional

1. Introduction

Language is a remarkable process of linking sounds and words to perform meaningful speech. Languages are sometimes receptive, based on what the receptor understands. They can also be expressive, which is the complexity of all speech elements to produce meaningful expressions, and the pragmatic part of a language reflects the subtle expressions such as gestures, facial expressions, body movements, intonation, and volume. While the ability to produce speech is biological, languages are not. Language, as stated by Sapir (1921: 7), is a "purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires". When people from two

different linguistic communities communicate with a language, they usually find a common language, or they use a third language and change it to ensure it is understood; this change is generally towards simplification. One of these languages is a pidgin.

A pidgin is considered a type of language that occurs between people who speak different languages but need to communicate often. Historical evidence shows that pidgins were used in trade, plantation labor, and colonial intrusion. Jenkins (2009: 9) defines pidgins as a "contact language" that is used between two communities that have different first languages when it is on a permanent basis. Yet, when used in temporary situations, it is defined as a "marginal language". A pidgin could never be spoken as a first language, despite having distinctive grammar and vocabulary.

There has been controversy over the complexity of pidgins (Mcwhorter 2005, Mayers 2006, Robinson 2008 and Bizri 2014); most linguists agree that a more complex language in terms of the vocabulary and grammar would be called a creole. Described by Hymes (1971: 84) as "comprising reduction in inner form", pidgins are known to have less vocabulary, simpler grammar, and convey messages using the limited set of vocabulary available (Todd 1990).

In Kuwait (the context of the current study), the researchers of this study noticed that the English language being used to order food at a well-known fast-food restaurant was notably different than Standard English. Standing in line, the primary researcher observed that the vast majority of Arabic-speaking customers would start their request with "give me…" instead of the usual "can/could I have…". Also, the sequence of the order would continue with no plurals "three big Mac and two Pepsi", and the repetition of words for clarification also occurred. Similarly, this unique variety has also been notably utilized by Kuwaiti households when communicating with their Filipino domestic workers. We, therefore, decided to look thoroughly into whether the used language variety implements the linguistic characteristics of pidgin languages as described in the literature.

The current study, therefore, aims at investigating the features of the English variety uniquely utilized by Kuwaitis during their communication with Filipino workers.

The importance of the study lies in the fact that this linguistic phenomenon is a long-lived variety that has not been previously investigated in the Gulf region. It is an outcome of the attempt by Kuwaitis to communicate with their Filipino workers at restaurants and homes, as the only common language between the two groups is English.

2. Literature review

2.1 Pidgins

Generally, pidgins are languages that evolve from constant contact between different languages; they are considered a "reduced, improvised language" (Gramley 2012: 4). Certain sociological factors often impinge whenever and wherever two or more speech communities with different languages and possibly different cultures need to engage in creative linguistic communication, an example that is referred to as 'language contact' (Garret 2006: 48). As such, Haraty et al. (2007) confirm that Lebanese households utilize a distinctive pattern of speech (whether in English or Arabic), that is fragmented, slow-paced, delivered in high intonation, repeated phrases or words, and combined with intensive use of gestures and hand movements, with the aim of enhancing the comprehension level when they address their domestic workers (who are non-native speakers of either Arabic or English). In specific contexts, this language could be temporary, and in others, it may persist to form a pidgin. However, when it becomes a permanent language, it may develop into a creole—a more developed language innovation style. What makes pidgins different than other languages is that they are non-native languages, where both the speaker and recipient are non-native to the target language, such as the interaction between the Portuguese and the Spanish with natives in West Africa in times of trade and colonization (Goodman 1987).

In order to identify Pidgin's social origins, several sociolinguists listed several social settings where a pidgin might be established. One of the most influential

researches in the field was conducted by Sebba (1997: 26-33), who provided seven typologies of social elements to define its social origins. Sebba identified pidgins of the military, of trade, of mines, of plantations, of tourists, of immigrants, and pidgins emerging as a vernacular of urban contact; the last is believed to be the social context where pidginized varieties have been originated in the Gulf region, including Kuwait (Salem 2013).

Linguistically, when compared to natural languages, pidgin languages are described as utilizing a relatively smaller vocabulary (Robinson 2008). It is marked by the absence of inflectional morphemes, less marked grammatical categories, and a few stylistic options (Siegel 2004). Phonologically, pidgins present indistinctive vowel length, inter-speaker consonant variations, and a reduction in the inventory of vocalic and consonantal phonemes, which may lead to a significant decrease in the phonological contrast between the host language and the guest language (Avram 2014). The degree of development and sophistication attained by such a pidgin depends on the type and intensity of communicative interaction in a speech community (Mühlhäusler 1986). According to Siegel (2008), pidgins have three developmental stages, which gradually progress in its linguistic sophistication from pre-pidgins (also called jargons) and are characterized by high lexical and grammatical variation among its speakers. Stable pidgins are characterized by less linguistic variability and established grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary that are often distinct from the hybrid's source languages. Expanded (or extended) pidgins present an overall structural elaboration in both vocabulary and grammar (Schreier 2003). As soon as a pidgin is acquired by its native speakers during any of the three developmental stages, it becomes a creole.

The names given to pidgin languages by linguists depend on their location and their principal lexifier (base language) – the language from which they draw most of their lexicon. As such, Papuan Pidgin English refers to the Pidgin that is spoken in Papua, brings most of its vocabulary from English, and is, therefore, an English-based pidgin. Romanian Pidgin Arabic (RPA), on the other hand, is the Pidgin spoken by Romanian, which mainly draws its vocabulary from Arabic (Iraqi in this case).

2.2.1 Arabic-based Pidgin

Arabic-based Pidgin evolved approximately 40 years ago with simplified grammar and morphology (Avram 2014: 3); and has been recently investigated by many researchers (Wiswal 2002, Gomaa 2007, Almoaily 2008, Bakir 2010, Alshammari 2010 and Dashti 2013, amongst others). It has also been labeled 'pidgin madame' by Bizri (2005: 53) as "the main actors/creators of the language are the Lebanese Madame and the Sri Lankan maid". Miller (2002), however, called it 'foreigner talk' due to the fact that those using the language are foreign to it. Regardless of the terminology, in the Arabian Peninsula, Gulf Pidgin Arabic has been predicted to soon "serve as a Lingua Franca" (Bassiouney 2009: 255). This type of Pidgin evolved since the expatriates' native language varied immensely. Bakir (2010: 202) listed the most popular languages of the expatriates as being "Farsi, Punjabi, Malayalam, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Thai, Tagalog, and Indonesian". As these languages are quite diverse, the need for a new language (Gulf Pidgin Arabic) emerged as a means of communication between the Arab-speaking population and the foreign expatriates.

Several features were associated with Gulf Pidgin Arabic. In his extensive analysis of Gulf Pidgin Arabic, Almoaily (2013: 52) was able to identify several features of this language variety such as the re-education of the phonological inventory of the Arabic-based Pidgin, the reduction of lexicons, free word order, reduplication, and the disagreement of the vowels with the nouns. All in all, Almoaily (2013) concludes that simplification is the main and general feature of Gulf Pidgin Arabic.

In Kuwait, the setting in which this study is based, Salem (2013) sketched four main linguistic features of what he referred to as 'Asian Arabic Pidgin' utilized by Asian expatriates living in Kuwait (AAP). These features are summarized as follow:

1. Phonologically, short and long vowels become indistinctive and interchangeable; consonantal phonemes of Arabic are either replaced or lost, and the geminate consonants undergo degemination.

2. Lexically, the small size of the Arabic lexical items obtained by the Asian workers in Kuwait leads to code-switching/code-mixing between Kuwaiti and English.

3. Morphologically, there is a re-analysis of morpheme boundaries [also found in other Arabic pidgins and creoles such as Naess (2008), Miller (2002) and Avram (2010), absence of plural markers, and misuse of cardinal numbers].

4. At a syntactic level, Asian Arabic Pidgin is characterized by inadequate development of pronouns, invariant basic verb system, absence of the use of copula, primitive negation system, as well as the absence of tense and aspect markers.

On a related note, Dashti (2013) categorized the simplified Kuwaiti Arabic form that Kuwaitis use when interacting with their domestic workers under 'foreigner talk' (FT). FT was created by Ferguson (1975) to address a simplified register used by native English speakers when they communicate with incompetent non-native English speakers. In his account of Kuwaitis FT, Dashti listed a number of major morphemic and syntactic variants of the language variety including indistinguishable verb tense, deletion of 'il' definite article, adjective-noun phrase order violation, interrogative word order violation, number agreement violation, adjective gender agreement violation, personal pronouns violation, and demonstrative rule violation, based on which Dashti claimed the language variety to be best described as FT.

However, not all expatriates in the Middle East use Gulf Pidgin Arabic. The educational background, according to Dashti (2013: 65), is often the deciding factor behind the choice of communicative language. In Saudi Arabia, for example, Luebker et al. (2013: 32) found that 301,000 female domestic workers in 2009 had no formal education, 247,000 of which had "basic literacy skills", and the remainder were identified as "illiterate." The least educated came from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Indonesia. These domestic workers learned very little Arabic during their stay and hence communicated with their employers using Gulf Pidgin Arabic. This is one of the main varieties identified by the illiterate and near-illiterate.

2.2.2 English-based Pidgin

Pidgin English is not a new concept. It has been identified as a lingua franca of trade: a language that evolved from the necessity of the need for communication

between groups with no common language (Briney 2020). Peter & Wolf (2007) delivered the first comparison of English Pidgin, which has developed in West Africa in the 17th century with the Nigerian English Pidgin, being the most studied linguistically and the oldest form historically. They found that West African Pidgin English shared similarities with the Nigerian Pidgin in terms of structure. Peter & Wolf (2007) added that with the continuity of the use of these forms of pidgins, mostly in Nigeria, the Pidgin is turning gradually into a creole, as it started constructing a more complex structure and extensive vocabulary. Elugbe & Omamor (1991) also found that Nigerian Pidgin English has been used for so long, even between the natives of Nigeria, which allowed it to gradually turn into the language of the media, religion, and education.

In the Arab World, Arabs use, alongside their vernacular variety, another variety of language used to communicate with a group of literate workers, most of which were Filipino. These workers, as noted by Luebker et al. (2013: 31), were usually able to communicate using the English language due to their good command of English. As mentioned earlier, Filipinos, both in Kuwait and across the Arabian Peninsula generally, work as domestic workers, as well as in shops and restaurants. While these workers gradually built a limited list of Arabic vocabulary, they often tend to use English in their daily communication. Hence, a large number of locals in Kuwait found the use of English to communicate with this specific group of expatriates a better language choice than Pidgin Arabic.

It is important to note that although English is taught in public schools for 12 years, many locals speak in "broken English", a language variety characterized by ungrammatical form with minimal vocabulary choice. Interestingly, even the locals with good English command tend to use this new form of English variety. And in doing so, linguistic features such as structure, phonology, and morphology are changed to communicate with the English-speaking expatriates in English as a form of a lingua franca given that the two groups have different native languages. The linguistic features of this new variety of English are the aim of investigation in this study. The focus here will revolve around the phonology, lexicon, morphology, and syntax of the phenomenon analyzed from samples of speech excerpts produced by Kuwaitis, from

different educational backgrounds, when communicating with their Filipino domestic workers.

This study aims to answer the following question: What are the linguistic features that distinguish the English spoken variety utilized by Kuwaitis when communicating with their Filipino domestic workers? The choice of domestic workers, as opposed to workers in shops and restaurants, was made because of the ethical issues associated with recording in public spaces. In doing so, the study will thoroughly look into the similarities between the variety under investigation and other pidgins using phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical diagnostic features.

3. Methodology

3.1 The context of the study

Kuwait is a small country with a total of a land area of 17,820 sq.km. (Salem 2013). While the Kuwaitis form 1,385,960, the rest of the population are expatriates from different countries, with approximately 60% of the entire population are Arabs. See Table 1.

Table 1 below displays the four largest Arab and non-Arab expatriate population in Kuwait [Central Statistical Bureau]:

Arab Expatriates		Non-Arab Expatriates	
Egyptians	696,387	Indians	895,348
Syrians	145,328	Filipinos	241,268
Jordanian/Palestinians	12,000	Bangladesh	198,151
Lebanese	49,000	Pakistan	119,853

Table 1. Number of Arab and non-Arab expatriates in Kuwait.

The official language in Kuwait, according to the Kuwaiti constitution, is Standard Arabic. It holds a special status since it is the closest resemblance of the language of

the Holy Quran. While the Indian community is the biggest non-Arab community in Kuwait, Filipinos are estimated to be 241,268, forming the third-largest group of expatriates in Kuwait, 60% of them work as domestic workers in homes. The majority of these Filipino domestic workers, as Dashti (2013) states, are females who mainly speak English but not Arabic.

This massive number of non-Arab expatriates in Kuwait resulted in radical changes in the existing language varieties. Consequently, the need for communication led to the emergence of many language varieties, including one to communicate with expatriates who do not speak English. This formed a new form of Arabic defined as Gulf Pidgin Arabic (Miller 2004, Dashti 2013, Avram 2014 and Salem 2013), and another unique form of English (the focus of the present study), to communicate with expatriates who do speak English alongside their native language, which is incomprehensible to Kuwaitis.

3.2 Data collection method

The study implements a qualitative design, which focuses on descriptions and explanations of the phenomenon under investigation. The data were composed of recorded conversations obtained using Zoom H1 digital recorder. A total of 60 hours of recordings were obtained. The recorder was left for six days at each household, for two hours approximately of recording timeframe a day, in five houses. The prolonged recorded timeframe ensured subjects would eventually overcome the 'observer's paradox', 'a phenomenon whereby the vernacular speech of a person under investigation is altered by the presence of the observer, thus compromising the accuracy of the observation' (Labov 1972). The data were analyzed linguistically in an attempt to describe the recorded speech phonologically, morphologically, lexically, and syntactically. In the beginning, we ran a general linguistic investigation to locate a number of peculiar linguistic trends in the data, based on which a list of 12 items was obtained (reported in the data analysis section). This step was followed by a more detailed investigation of the data to number each linguistic feature as it appears in the data. At a later stage, each participant was interviewed and asked about certain

features used during their communication with the workers. This inquiry enabled the researchers to elicit in-depth insight into whether the subjects used certain linguistic features intentionally (to aid comprehension) or spontaneously (due to English incompetence).

3.3 Participants

The study involves the choice of two groups: the Filipino domestic workers and their Kuwaiti employers. These workers do not speak Arabic and communicate solely in English with their employers. The main subjects of this study are all English-speaking educated Kuwaitis, who have done years of their education in English-speaking countries, apart from their basic education during which they were exposed to 8-12 years of learning English as a foreign language. This would ensure reaching a level of competence in English that should not affect their communication when using the language. All in all, ten subjects provided the bulk of the present study data (see Table 2 for a detailed description of the subjects).

Subject Code	Age	Gender	Education	Years of residence in E-Speaking countries
P1 SA	66	F	Diploma	8
P2 AT	70	M	PhD	8
P3 JG	49	M	Bachelors	6
P4 FJ	26	F	Bachelors	4
P5 MT	37	M	Bachelors	4
P6 FT	46	F	Masters	11
P7 MS	50	M	PhD	6
P8 GH	23	F	Bachelors	4 years & an English school graduate
P9 RA	54	F	High school	3
P10 JA	49	M	Bachelors	3

Table 2. Subjects' descriptive details

3.4 Data analysis

The data obtained was transcribed in English orthography to be analyzed linguistically. Initially, a general investigation provided a list of 12 tendencies that were

used as a checklist for further investigation. From these 12 items, the linguistic feature was considered as a significant feature of the English variety used, in the communication of the Kuwaiti participants with their Filipino workers, only when it occurred in the speech of all ten subjects. This step should ensure that the ethnographic characteristics, such as the English proficiency level of the speaker, did not affect their English use.

Data linguistic analyses were conducted in two phases. During the first phase, each of the above listed linguistic features in the checklist was located in the data produced by each subject. When found, a plus sign in the linguistic profile was added (in Tables 3 and 4, which indicates its occurrence in the data produced by the identified subject).

During the second phase, subjects with missing features were approached for a second session of recordings to elicit the relevant data. Red plus signs indicate the occurrence of the feature during the follow-up phase. Minus signs, however, indicate that the feature has not occurred in any of the two recording sessions. Unfortunately, though, two of the subjects (namely P4 FJ & P10 J) were not accessible during that phase. Where the secondary data were not obtained, question marks are used in the linguistic features (see Tables 3 and 4 below).

4. Study's findings

4.1 Linguistic analysis findings

The language analyzed was found to hold similar aspects of a pidgin in terms of complexity and limitations. Predominantly, the data reveal limited lexicon, simplified morphology, simplified syntax, simplified requests, and question formats, as well as frequent use of code-switching between the Kuwaiti Arabic vernacular and English.

A closer look into the data presents the following list of tendencies:

1. Simplified question format.

2. Syntactic simplification a. Deletion of definite and indefinite articles (a, an, the); b. Copula deletion/violation [is, was; are, were]; c. Model verb deletion/ simplification (don't for doesn't/ didn't); d. preposition deletion/modification.

3. Violation of sentence word order

4. Violation of phrasal word order [adjective phrases & noun phrases].

5. Fragmented sentences

6. Simplification of negatives

7. Verb tense simplification (present for past & future)

8. Simplification of demonstratives (here & there)

9. Functional simplification (request form)

10. Code-switching: a. Lexical switching; b. Tag switching; c. Intrasentential switching

11. Lexical simplification (use of shorter and more common vocabulary); repetition for clarification

12. Morphological simplification: [Rare/no use of plural 's', vb 'ing', vb 'ed', vb 's', adv 'ly'…, etc.].

The tables below present a full linguistic profile of the gathered data.

	Simplified question format	Syntactic simplification	Sentence word-order violation	Phrase word-order violation	Fragmented sentences	Simplification of Negatives
P1 S	+	+	+	+	+	+
P2 AT	+	+	+	?	+	+
P3 JG	+	+	+	?	+	+
P4 FJ	+	+	+	-	+	+
P5 MT	+	+	+	+	+	+
P6 FT	+	+	+	?	+	+
P7 MS	+	+	+	?	+	+
P8 G	+	+	-	-	+	+
P9 RA	+	+	+	+	+	+
P10 JA	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 3. A linguistic profile representation of the gathered data

	Verb Tense simplification	Demonstratives simplification	Functional simplification	Code-switching	Lexical simplification	Morphological simplification
P1 S	+	+	+	+	+	+
P2 AT	+	?	+	+	+	+
P3 JG	+	+	+	+	+	+
P4 FJ	-	-	+	+	+	+
P5 MT	+	+	+	+	+	+
P6 FT	+	+	+	+	+	+
P7 MS	+	+	+	+	+	+
P8 G	+	-	+	+	+	-
P9 RA	+	+	+	+	+	+
P10 JA	-	+	+	+	+	+

Table 4. A linguistic profile representation of the gathered data

As shown in the tables above, the data reveal four main linguistic features, which will be described in the sections below.

4.2 Simplified lexicon

The data reveal a widespread tendency to simplify the lexical items, and use of repetitive lexicon for clarification by the subjects of the study used when they communicate with their workers.

'put spoon on rice' for 'serve'

'finish' for 'ready'

'open' for 'turn on'

'wash' for 'rinse'

'do in machine' for 'blend'

'restaurant' for 'delivery man'

'cook' for 'fry'

'put more' for 'add'

'all' for 'the rest of'

'all…killa [meaning all] repeated for emphatic function

'not today…mo elyoum [meaning 'not today'] repeated for emphatic function

'quick…quick' [meaning quickly] repeated for emphatic function

'put here…here'

'make chicken…this…chicken'

4.3 Morphological simplification

The data also show a process of morphological simplification, where most of the verbal, nominal, and adverbial morphemes were deleted (more examples could be found in the data available in appendix A).

'two minute' for 'two minutes'

'yalla..quick' for 'quickly'

'Mohammad want' for 'Mohammad wants it'

'finish' for 'finished'

'he wait' for 'he's waiting'

4.4 Syntactic simplification

The data disclose several syntactic features; including an absence of articles, copulas, model verbs, preposition deletion/modification; invariable use of 'here' and 'there,' simplification of question/request format, negative forms, verb tense; violation of phrase/sentence word order; and the use of fragmented sentences/phrases (see below some examples extracted from the data).

'Turn on stove' for 'Turn on the stove'

'for big jider' for 'under the big pan'

'bring…don't wash' for 'don't wash it; bring it here!'

'heat again' for 'heat it again'

'Dina, bring brush…clean there…there under cage' for 'Dina, bring the brush, and clean here and there under the cage'

'you put paper for oil?' for 'Did you use the paper to absorb the oil?'

'Where you put black bag? Big black?' for 'Where did you keep the big black bag?'

'Give me spoon for salad' for 'Can you bring a spoon for the salad please?'

'You take dress on chair? Dress, ha? Up stairs you take?' For 'Did you remove the dress that I left on that chair?'

Tomorrow we go Jabriya (an area in Kuwait), bring salad' for 'Tomorrow we'll go to Jabriya. Bring the salad with you please!'

'Where my key? I put here… yesterday I put…here?' for 'Where's the key that I placed here yesterday?'

4.5 Features of code-switching

Code-switching between Kuwaiti Arabic and English would occur continuously in the recordings, but it does not seem random. Some words would be added for emphasis in the form of tag-questions (referred to as 'tag switching'). Usually, words like /zeɪn/ (okay) and /sˤaħ/ (right) and /jalla/ (come on), which are used to ensure the listener understood, they are used as tags. To clarify the definition of tag-questions, it is essential to describe its use in a code-switching context. Previous research on the phenomenon of code-switching reports four different types of code-switched utterances; namely, Inter sentential code-switching whereby the switching occurs at a clause or sentence boundaries; Intra sentential code-switching referring to the switching that occurs within the same clause/sentence; Tag switching (also referred to as emblematic code-switching, whereby a tag of one language is inserted in an utterance which is entirely in another language (Polack in Romaine 1995: 122-123). According to Akbar (2007), all three types of code-switched data were found in the speech of Kuwaiti/English bilingual teenagers. In the present study, the data reveal all three types of code-switching in the English variety utilized by Kuwaiti households in their communication with their Filipino workers. Below are a few examples of tag switching extracted from the provided data (see below).

a. "First boil egg, /zeɪn/? (okay)"

b. "We go now, /jalla/ ?(come on)"

c. "You take laundry, /sˤaħ/? (right)"

Another instance when code-switching is used is when some words are added in Arabic most often if the speakers either do not have an equivalent or could not recall the English word. Sometimes, the speaker says the word in Arabic and follows it with

the equivalent English word, which would seem that they have remembered the English equivalent. However, the conversation progression makes it also seem like the domestic workers responded in a way that assures their understanding of these words, probably because these words are used often, especially with food and kitchen appliances. This type of code-switching has been also reported in the speech of Kuwaiti/English bilinguals under the term 'lexical code-switching' (Akbar 2007). It is usually utilized to fill in a lexical gap, due to a lack of competence in the spoken language or habitué use of certain lexicons over others (see examples below from the data).

    a. "No, only /xijar wu rɔb/ (cucumber and yogurt). Cut small small cucumber."

    b. "Give me blue cup.. /la la/ (no no) dark blue."

    c. "Put in …/haða/ (this) in ah /mɪʃxal/ (strainer) strainer."

    d. "At two, turn on stove for big /d͡ʒɪdɪr/ (pot)…pot."

The final instance of code-switching is repetition (reduplication) of words. This repetition occurred for two reasons, namely, cohesion and description. Moreover, 'ha' meaning 'okay' is a word that is commonly used in Kuwaiti Arabic to make sure people understood what is requested or to ensure the clarity of instructions, reflecting on what previously mentioned as tag switching. These features were commonly identified in the English variety under investigation (see examples below).

    a. "You know how you make /ħallum/ (halloumi cheese)? / ħallum/ you do before? You know?"

    b. "Remove all…all, ha/. Three, there, …all."

    c. "When you put /d͡ʒɪdɪr/ (pot)? /d͡ʒɪdɪr marag/ (stew pot)? When you put?"

5. Interview findings

The participants in this study were later asked about the features significant in their utilized English variety. All 10 participants were interviewed, face to face, and via the social media application WhatsApp, to identify language choices. Apparently, the speakers' use this form of language intentionally.

When asked why this choice of language form was made, their response appeared to be unanimous. All the participants stated that they "simplified" their speech because it is easier to understand. Many added that since the workers' mother tongue is not English, they need to make the language easier for them. Two participants added that the workers themselves also use this simplified language variety. However, notably, simplification was not the only feature of their spoken English.

Features of repetition and code-switching were also addressed during interviews. One female participant commented that repetition is essential "because I need to make sure they understand … sometimes they (workers) don't understand, but they don't like to admit it". Most speakers agreed that they would repeat once they have the impression, from the workers' facial expressions, that the instructions they were given were not clear or not understood. As for code-switching, most speakers agreed that they code-switch when the word is not known in English, this would mostly occur when the topic is about Kuwaiti food as noted from the recordings. Some participants found it challenging to speak in an all-English conversation, claiming they are not used to it; hence, code-switching makes it easier. However, the majority stated that most often than not, they tend to know the word in English, but until they could recall it, they would use the Kuwaiti equivalent.

Do the participants feel that their use of the English variety is useful? While some were hesitant and decided they are not sure if this variety of English is required because they have not tried any other variety of English (e.g., Standard English), others believed that the workers feel comfortable being spoken to using a "simple" language that (as described by the subjects,) resembles the English the workers speak. This confident conclusion led them to decide not to speak fluent English, lest it would be

too challenging for the domestic workers to comprehend. It should be noted here that all present study subjects have done some of their education and lived in an English-speaking country. This may imply that the speakers would less likely be incompetent in English than attempting to enhance the comprehensibility of their communication with their Filipino workers.

The findings of the present study tend to be in congruence with Holmes (2008) description of pidgins, developing when two groups with different languages communicate in a setting where there is also a third dominant language, in this case, Filipino and Kuwaiti, in a setting of a third language, namely English. Holmes describes pidgins as maintaining a narrow range of functions that tend to be referential rather than affective, typically used for specific functions of business rather than to express progressive social interactions, for instance, as a means of group identification. As such, pidgins disregard referentially redundant features of a language, with all involved languages contributing to the sounds, the vocabulary, and the grammatical features, to different extents, combined with some additional features which are unique to the new variety Expectedly, the prestige language (English in the present study) supplies the more significant bulk of the vocabulary (termed as a lexifier) that does not exceed a few hundred, while the other varieties would more likely influence the Pidgin's grammar. In order to make them easier to learn for the speaker, while burdening the listener with structural irregularities, pidgins tend to reduce grammatical features to their minimum.

In the present study, our findings present the English variety used by Kuwaiti households in their communication with Filipino workers as a pidginized English in Kuwait that features four reported linguistic features in pidgin languages, namely: morphological simplifications (verbal, adverbial and nominal morpheme deletion), syntactic simplification (verb tense, copulas, model verbs, prepositions, articles, demonstratives, sentence/phrase word orders, fragmented sentences), lexical simplification (limited vocabulary enhanced with codeswitching from Kuwaiti vernacular alongside emphatic repetitions), and functional limitation (maintaining referential while avoiding affective functions).

6. Conclusion

The current study investigated a form of the English language used by Kuwaiti-Arabic speakers in conversations taking place between Kuwaiti employers and their Filipino domestic workers. These two groups found English, which might not be mastered to perfection, the common language of communication between them. The findings in the following study demonstrate the way in which the English-based pidgin variety enables its speakers to make maximal usage of minimal linguistic resources. Data, demonstrating numerous linguistic features being utilized, point to a variety that is not used as an 'auxiliary language' (see Garret 2006: 58), but rather a 'primary language' that is used as the 'only' means of communication during an extended period of time (usually, the duration of a 2-year contract, at least). Moreover, it is the sociocultural conditions within this context of interaction that shape the linguistic features being utilized by its speakers (Gramley 2012).

To start with, the non-egalitarian relationship between employer and domestic worker, coupled with the former being in a position of needing the service of the latter, creates a distinct interactional dynamic wherein the communication skills of both parties necessitate functionality and efficacy. Additionally, the context of the interaction is always relied upon to remove ambiguity and allow for finer distinction of meaning to assist in comprehension (Formkin et al. 2003: 470). Pidginization, in this case, is developed to simplify the conveyance of clear messages between speaker and hearer, as well as to prevent miscommunications or misunderstandings in a given household situation. For example, as mentioned earlier, non-linguistic strategies, such as gesturing and pointing to objects, fulfill a range of communication functions, especially in the context of the kitchen, for instance.

However, this is not to say that the underlying linguistic process involving the strategic use of language features – such as structure simplification, use of simple lexicon, and code-switching – entail a variety of Pidgin that is stable in this specific context; even for the duration of time in which it will be needed (Hymes 1971: 84). With time, domestic workers are often exposed to the native language of their employers (in this case, Kuwaiti Arabic). They are, as a result, bound to acquire work-

oriented repetitive local expressions after being exposed to them regularly. Consequently, this pidgin variety goes through a natural shift with time as opposed to being stable, as is the case with a primary native language. While this factor was not addressed in the present study, as the aim of the current study was identifying features of the existing language through comparing it with other pidginized languages, it is considered a starting point for a longitudinal study. Wherein the status of a pidgin and the speech context in which it is born are both monitored across an extended period; this could inform us a great deal about the profile of pidgins and the pidginization process itself. The pidgin variety in the present study indeed has certain repetitive, formulaic expressions and language features (such as imperative verbs to replace proper request forms, recurrent lexical items while shuttling between English and Kuwaiti with simplified structure). These features are typically linked to a household work-related context. However, this does not mean that this emerging pidgin variety will not eventually go through patterns of complexification, a language in which two languages (Kuwaiti and English) are strategically put to use to enable efficient communication between people from two different speech communities. Future studies should also compare and contrast between the emerging Kuwaiti English Pidgin with other pidginized English varieties across the Arabian Peninsula. The importance of this form of Pidgin in the Middle East makes this study an essential evaluation for many related future studies.

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