Bridging Language Contact and the Process of Pidginization:

The Case of Samsung Company Employees in Naama

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Abstract

Cultures and languages are steadily in flux and unceasingly mercurial due to a set of internal forces or contacts with other cultures and languages. This contact occurs as a result of different reasons such as: migration, trade, conquests, mixed marriage, as well as globalization. Language contact is; then, an indispensable sociolinguistic phenomenon that takes place when people of various linguistic backgrounds interact and their languages influence each other. Thus, whenever people of different languages come into contact, there is a natural tendency for them to seek ways of bypassing the communicative barriers in order to facilitate the communication task and understand each other via creating new simplified words and pidginized features. Thus, pidginization stands out as a process through which a simplified form of language emerges. Hence, the focal aim of the current study is to take an in-depth look at the use of pidginized forms as a prevalent linguistic outcome of language contact-induced at the company of Samsung Construction & Trading (C&T) which gathers employees speaking distinct codes mainly: Korean, Tagalog, Hindi, Algerian Arabic, French and English. It also aims to explore the significance of language pidginization aspects and features within the context of Samsung interaction and how these aspects and features can affect both team collaboration and productivity. To do so, the researcher collected data through an interview addressed to Samsung company employees supported by recording observation. The findings revealed that interaction between employees in Samsung company have many linguistic outcomes. The employees tend to use either English as a lingua franca for inter-communication, borrowing, or creating new pidgin words. However, most workers with low English language competency are more likely to rely on pidginized communication. The results also showed that pidginization is a process that is more inclusive in transactional purposes than rigid adherence to a single lingua franca. Furthermore, pidginized communication tends to create simplified language forms based on either Korean, Tagalog, English, French, or Arabic codes in order to decrease breakdowns, boost communication efficiency, promote cohesion in workplace contexts, and heighten mutual understanding and productivity among Samsung company teams.

Introduction

In today's globalized industrial landscape, multinational corporations have become meeting points for a wide spectrum of languages, cultures, and communication styles. As companies expand across borders, the linguistic complexity within their workforce increases, often bringing together individuals who do not share a common native language. This situation is particularly evident in companies like Samsung, whose operations involve employees from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including Korean, Arabic, Tagalog, French, and various African languages. In such multilingual environments, effective communication becomes a necessity rather than a convenience. One of the most notable linguistic responses to this challenge is the emergence of pidginized forms of English: simplified, flexible language variants used to bridge communication gaps between employees of different nationalities. These forms are not officially taught or standardized, but arise naturally from language contact. Over time, patterns of simplification, borrowing, and restructuring appear in the way language is used on the ground, especially in high-pressure, task-focused settings like construction sites or technical operations.

The prime end of the present article is to probe the dynamics of language contact among employees at Samsung C&T Company. It scrutinizes how pidginization emerges as a practical communicative process between speakers who share no language in common. It also explores how workers navigate limited shared language proficiency in English as a lingua franca and how pidginized English serves both as a bridge and a constraint and its effect on team cohesion.

To achieve these ends, four main research questions are put forward:

1. What are the prevalent language contact-induced outcomes at Samsung company where employees of different cultures and various nationalities interact with each other?
2. Which factors may lead Samsung employees to use pidginized forms of communication?
3. How can the process of pidginization at Samsung affect team collaboration and productivity?

4. What are the main language pidginization aspects and features within the context of Samsung interaction?

Language Contact

Language contact is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that occurs in multilingual settings where cultures of different languages come into contact. This contact between speakers of distinct linguistic backgrounds arises due to a set of reasons. These reasons can be positive or negative. The positive part includes trade, mixed marriage, mixed population, migration, business, and globalization; whereas, the negative factors are slavery, conquests, or colonialism. Simply put, Thomason (2001, p.1) defines the term language contact as *"the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time"*. She adds (2001, p.8) that *"language contact is everywhere: there is no evidence that any languages have developed in total isolation from other languages"*. The definitions refer to the notion that contact between languages is possible to happen everywhere in correlation with various situations such as the case of Samsung company which congregate people from different nations: Algeria, Korea, Philippine, India, Ghana for the sake of trade.

In this regards, Auer (2025, p.147) asserts that language contact can be *"seen as a result of social factors enabling, encouraging or forcing speakers of different languages to communicate with each other. The type and amount of linguistic contact appears to be conditioned by these social factors"*. These factors can be either cultural, political, or economic. For example, wars push people to move from one place to another; carrying their languages from their original geographic nations to new locations and new language ecologies (Lewis, 2015). Language and trade are interrelated as well; traders who do not share the same language always use either a lingua franca or a simplified language as a means for accomplishing their economic activities. In the 17th century, Chinese traders developed a "Chinese pidgin English" since they were not able to speak English and it was necessary for them to work and understand each other. Moreover, Thus, workplace interaction in multinational companies and diverse labor sectors where individuals from multiple language communities work together, often without a shared native language. Necessitates a common or a simplified mode of communication.

The contact between speakers whose native language is different needs to look for ways to manage the communication between each other. In this line of thought, Mufwene *et. al* (2022, p.4) propound that,

> *Contact linguistics is about various facets and consequences of the coexistence of languages in individual speakers' minds and in particular populations. Instances of these include language shift at the level of either the individual or a population. A consequence of this may be language endangerment and loss (LEL), if most or all the members of the relevant population speaking a particular heritage language stop using it and thus converge in shifting to one that they either consider more advantageous to them or are forced by various ecological pressures to speak more often. The outcome of this convergence of behaviors can be compared to the emergence of new norms in a particular language in a contact ecology, when speakers converge in selecting variants (forms or structures) that come from another language they or some of them also use.*

This definition argues that when different cultures and languages come into contact, the end-results are manifold. In fact, certain contact situations involve language maintenance while others involve the death of certain languages and the emergence of new ones. Between these extremes are the situations where language shift is observed. In other words, any outcome of language contact can be perceived in a spectrum ranging from "the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by the speakers of that language", or borrowing as defined by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), to the formation of new languages like pidgins and creoles.

Differently expounded, Nordquist (2025) highlights that *"language contact is the social and linguistic phenomenon by which speakers of different languages (or different dialects of the same language) interact with one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features"*. Nordquist; here, explains that when languages come into contact, elements from one language often move into another. This movement; then, can lead to the development of reduced or simplified forms of communication such as pidgins and creoles.

Pidginization Process

When two or more people from different languages meet and try to communicate, what should they do? Of course, they should use a third language (Lingua Franca) or create a new simplified language (Pidgin). In this respect, Thomason (2001: 158) elucidates that *«any language that is used for intergroup communication is a contact language; including not only pidgins and creoles, but also nonpidgin/noncreole languages like English, which is certainly the most widely used lingua franca in the modern world».* Consequently, The questions that should be raised are: what is a lingua franca? what is a pidgin? And what is a creole?

A lingua franca is a language which is used in communication between speakers who have no native language in common. A lingua franca is not necessarily the first language of any of the speakers involved; instead, it is adopted for practical purposes such as trade, travel, education, or professional collaboration. Its main function is to make interaction possible across linguistic boundaries. English can be used as a lingua Franca, for e.g. when used in communication between Swedish & Dutch native speakers. When a language is used as a lingua franca and members of the communication are not enough competent, it normally undergoes a certain amount of simplification and reduction as well as being subject to the introduction of errors.

A pidgin is a simple speech-form which arises to fulfill restricted and ongoing needs for communication among people who have no common language. Traditionally, Thomason (2001, p. 159) construes that *"a pidgin is a language that arises in a new contact situation involving more than two linguistic groups. The groups have no shared language - that is, no single language is widely known among the groups in contact - and they need to communicate regularly, but for limited purposes, such as trade".* This definition denotes that pidgins are not native speakers; instead, they develop out of necessity and are often limited to specific social functions.

The process of pidginization usually takes place where various linguistic groups; having no shared language meet each other in contexts such as: trade, colonial settings, or multicultural workplaces. Because the speakers involved often have limited proficiency in each other's languages, the resulting pidgin is stripped down to gestures, isolated words, or mixed expressions, focusing on functionality over complexity. Pidgins are not associated with a

particular people or culture; yet, they develop their own structures which are characterized with reduction and simplification at a set of levels:

- *Phonological level*: The sounds that are difficult, unfamiliar, or do not exist in the speaker's mother tongue would be dropped or substituted as a kind of light versions like the replacement of **the sounds /❀/ with /t/; i.e,** the sound system becomes much simpler than in the original language. Even the tone and stress patterns are generally regularized or flattened.

- *Morphological and syntactical level:* Complex word formations, such as prefixes and suffixes, are usually removed. Inflectional suffixes like the 's' of plural and 's' of possession, tense endings, pronoun system, functions as articles; prepositions, and auxiliary verbs are either omitted or limited. In addition to that, sentence patterns are profoundly simplified.

- *Lexical level :* The lexicon of pidgins are very limited and sometimes new words may be created by combining or modifying known words; depending on everyday needs and situations. Most words come from a dominant source language (the "lexifier"), but meanings may shift or become broader. In cases of lack of words, pidgins shift to borrowing.

- *Semantic level:* words may carry broader or more flexible meanings compared to their source language. There is usually less precision or specialization in vocabulary use.

Most vocabulary in a pidgin come from the '***Superstrate'*** which is the socially dominant language and it is also named: ***'the lexifier';*** but they are often altered, shortened, simplified, or restructured to fit the phonological and grammatical patterns of the pidgin. Moreover, most grammatical structure come from '***the substrate language'*** which the socially subordinate language. Most of the better-known pidgins in the world are the result of travel on the part of European traders and colonizers, they are based on languages like: English, French and Portuguese such as the case of: 'West African Pidgin English' and ''British Solomon Islands Pidgin'. Pidgin languages sometimes do not last very long as in the case of 'Pidgin Russian' which disappeared when Russian settlers left China after World War II. However, if a pidgin survives and passes down to future generations as a mother tongue, it may develop into a creole; gaining complexity and broader social functions as the example of Tok Pisin. Tok Pisin is probably the mot widely spoken pidgin ***'expanded pidgin'*** derived from English, It has

official status in Papua New Guinea, and is used nowadays there on the radio, in newspapers, and in schools as well. A creole is; thus, a stable natural language that has developed from a pidgin. It has its native speakers and it is used in all domains of life unlike a pidgin which is employed for solely limited functional contexts. Those languages, consequently, are often considered simplified languages; unconciously born from a practical situation of interlinguists communication. They have their own characteristics that make them unique to be investigated and learnt. Burga (2023) spotlights that *«pidgins and creoles are not erroneous forms of other languages, yet new languages needed to be studied»*. In this article, pidgin is studied in the company of Samsung C&T where workers from different linguistic backgrounds tend to create a new code in order to heighten intercommunication in the company.

Samsung C&T Company

Samsung C&T is an international Korean company. Its main goal is construction and trade. It began its activities in the region of Naama (a city situated in the south of Algeria) in 2014 for the sake of providing the city with electricity. It consists workers of different nationalities mainly; Koreans who are the owners and speak Korean, Filipinos speaking Tagalog, Algerians who are the clients speaking Algerian Arabic and French, in addition to Indians who speak the Hindi language.

Research Methodology

The present research is based on a case study method in order to a have full control over the study. The research is conducted on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative approaches for the sake of having a valid data as will be explained in the following sessions.

Sampling and Stratification

The study was conducted in Samsung company. It involved 35 employees selected in a random way from various departments. The respondents came from different countries and carrying distinct nationalities: Algerian, Filipino, Korean, Indian, and some African Origins. This mixture of nationalities results in a multilingual workplace. Each group speaks a certain language and of course is competent in his native language, only some of them are able to speak or understand English or Arabic. This cultural and linguistic diversity created a context where pidgin naturally takes place. The employees occupied a variety of positions; some of them held technical or engineering positions whereas others belong to administrative and support staff.

Diversity in both linguistic backgrounds and job functions exhibits beneficial visions about the creation of simplified expressions and pidginized forms.

Reserach Instrumets

In order to gain authentic primary data about the current issue, the researcher adopted a mixed- methods approach; using two data collection instruments which are: recording observations in addition to a structured interview with Samsung employees. The recording observations, on the one hand, were employed here to gather qualitative data through which the researcher be able to examine the instances and features of pidginization among workers. The recordings were made spontaneously via 'a friend of friend procedure' with the help of an Algerian worker who could recorded various audio clips and conversations with a hidden mobile at distinct situations in the company in order to get objective data. On the other hand, the interview is devoted to Samsung employees in order to investigate the main factors that may lead them to use pidginized forms of communication and examine how can these forms affect their team collaboration and productivity. The interview contains both close-ended and open-ended questions.

Research Results Analysis

The present section exposes systematically the results and treats them both quantitatively and qualitatively, in an attempt to validate our research hypotheses.

Interview Results Analysis

When the respondents were asked which code is used when communicating with people from various nationalities and speaking different codes, the answers differ from one person to another. Only 17% of the participants said that they kept using their own native language with all employees though the employees were unable to understand; whereas 83% of the workers said that they tried using either English or a simplified code in which they used a simplified English with some foreign elements since some workers had not a proficient level in the English language.

The respondents were asked to evaluate their linguistic proficiency in the English language. Thus, nearly half of the employees (47%) answered that they had an average level in the English

language; 10% had a very good level; 21% had a good level; 13% had a bad level; whereas 9% of the participants responded having a very bad level in the English language.
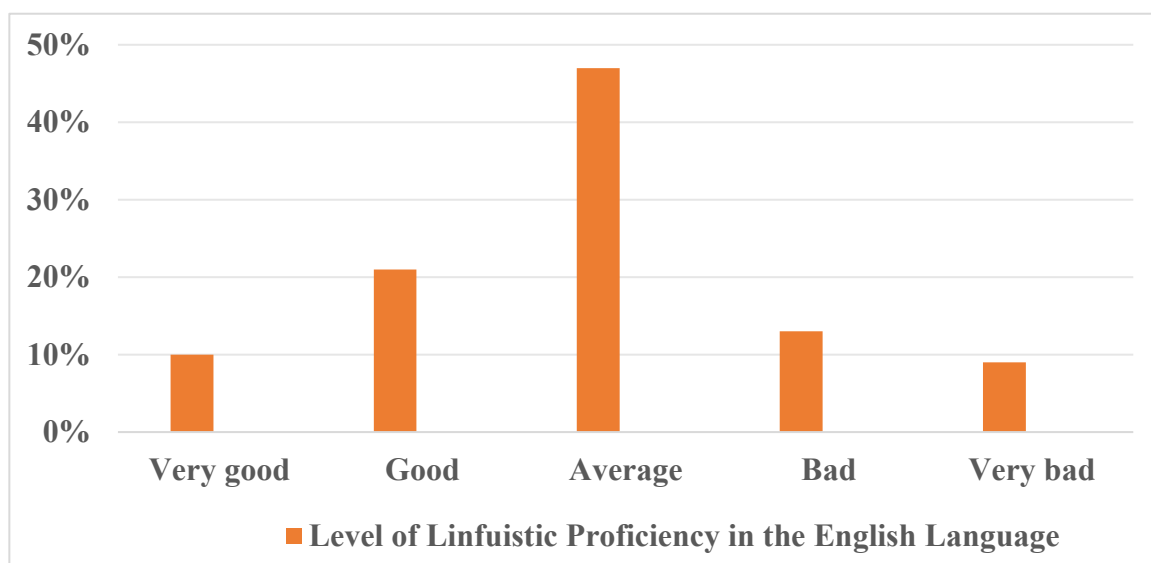
Linguistic Proficiency Level of Multilingual Employees in the English Language

When the employees were questioned whether the use of simple English forms affected team collaboration and productivity or not and how, nearly all the workers declared that the use of simple pidginized forms helped them to communicate easily and affected positively team collaboration and productivity; whereas, employees with good linguistic level in the English language stated that the use of mixed languages and pidginized forms negatively affected their level and use of the English language since they must simplify their English to make employees with low English level understand them. They said that they sometimes had to insert some foreign words.

The respondents were asked to give some instances about the inserted foreign elements as well as about the elements learnt from each others. The main examples given were: the word /mliha/ which means 'good' in Algerian Arabic, /walang pera/ from Tagalog meaning 'no money', /anyo/ means 'no' in Korean, /ça va/ means 'how is it going? in French, /gamsahanbida/ means 'thank you' in Korean, /bezzaf/ means 'a lot' in Algerian Arabic, / thik hon/ means 'good' in Hindi, / hago/ means 'and' in Korean, /maganda/ 'beautiful' in Tagalog, /bslama/ meaning 'good bye' in Algeria Arabic, /sahbi/ and /sadiqi/ means 'my friend' in Algerian Arabic, /buqas/ 'tomorrow' in Tagalog, and /makanch lma/ means 'there is no water' in Algerian Arabic. The respondents learnt from each other various elements which are used frequently by their natives

as the employees gained familiarity with the surrounding languages thanks to long term contact between each other.

Recording Observation Results Analysis

Through the use of a friend-of-friend procedure, various conversations had been recorded from which different language contact outcomes as well as pidginized features can be evidently noticed as follows:

✧ *Pidginized Features at the Phonological Level:*

The Filipinos, Koreans, and Indians replace the sounds /z/ with /s/, /f/ with /p/, and /v/ with /b/ as can be seen in the next examples in bold:

● The word 'co**ff**e' is pronounced as / ko**p**i/.
● The word 'bu**sy**' is pronouned ad / bi**s**i/.
● The word '**vi**sual' is pronounced as /**bi**sual/.

✧ *Pidginized Features at the Grammatical Level:*

Many expressions and sentences were reduced and simplified in Samsung company since the main aim is to transmit the information not the grammar correctness as appeared in the examples below in bold:

● '**No any issue?**' instead of 'is there any issue?'
● '**Cup, have?**' instead of 'do you have a cup'
● '**This one need?**' instead of 'do you need this one?'
● '**Come or no come?**' instead of 'did he/she come or not?'
● '**Have not**' instead of 'he/she did not come'.
● '**He make**' instead of 'he makes'.

✧ *Pidginized Features at the Lexical Level:*

The expression *'alibaba'* is frequently used to refer to something stolen such as:

● 'You **alibaba** my pen' wich means 'you stole my pen'.
● 'Who **alibaba my birthday**' instead of 'who leaked my birthday party news?'

- 'This one **same same**' instead of 'these two reports are similar'.
- 'This one **too much headache**' instead of 'this work is too tiring'.
- 'No boss, **no come**' instead of 'no boss, he did not come'.
- '**Always problem**. We lose time now. Jo, **machine ready**?' instead of ' there is always a problem which leads to loosing time now. Jo, is the machine ready?'
- 'What **work today**?' instead of 'what should we work today?'

In addition to a lot of simplified pidgin features like: '**we do fast-fast', 'no late', 'me no work', 'me no have', 'time short', 'need new', 'wait small', 'need new'...etc**

❧ *Other Outcomes of Language Contact in Samsung Company:*

- *Borrowing:* The expression 'you are big **'hallab**' is used nearly by all employees Algerians, Indians and Filipinos. The word /**hallab**/ here is borrowed from Algerian Arabic to mean 'you are big womanizer'. The word /**sahbi**/ as well is used as a borrowed word from Algerian Arabic used by Koreans, Indians, and Filipinos as well to mean 'my friend' as in the expression '**sahbi**, let's go'.
- *Code Alternation:* All employees tend to alternate codes for the sake of transmitting ideas and help understanding each other as in the following instances:

  - An Algerian said to a Filipino 'see you **buqas**' to mean 'see you tomorrow'.
  - An Indian said to an Algerian 'this is **xalti** in the picture' to mean 'this is my aunt in the picture'.
  - A Filipino said to an Indian 'stamp **duu**' to mean 'give me the stamp'.
  - A Filipino said to an Indian 'drink **pani'** to mean 'drink water'.

Discussion

The results affirmed that Samsung employees had different nationalities and; then, speak different languages which led them to search for a solution or a united code to understand each other. The main objective of the employees is task coordination and meaning transformation despite language gaps and resource challenges. It means that the workers did not focus on the language used itself or on its correctness at various levels; but rather on team collaboration and productivity in the company. In order to achieve these tasks, the employees tend to use English as a lingua franca. However, not all the participants had a good linguistic level in the English language. This is why, they tried to create new words and a simple code as appeared in the

expressions and examples above. The findings; indeed, affirmed that the employees have had an influence on each other' English language; the influence was mainly negative since the language was reduced and simplified with the insertion of foreign vocabularies which led to the emergence of the process of pidginization in Samsung C&T company.

Many pidginized features were employed in this multilingual workplace for the sake of facilitating social communication among workers. Employees in Samsung; in fact, used incorrect and a simplified English in terms of phonology, grammar, and lexis such as the pronunciation of /s/ instead of /z/, the omission of articles and auxiliaries as in 'have, cup?' instead of 'do you have the cup?', creation of certain words or expressions to be used with different meaning as 'alibaba' to mean 'to steal or a thief', verb reduction as in 'tell workers' or 'Need new', and direct pragmatic expressions such as 'Time short'. Most pidginized features were based on the English language, Tagalog, Korean, or Arabic. This language simplification under necessity shows how pidginization emerges informally in transnational corporate settings. Pidginization; thus, leads to a decrease in communication breakdowns and increases overall team performance.

Other linguistic outcomes emerged in this company which were: borrowing and code alternation as explained in the results earlier. The interview results also gave support to these outcomes. The factors that may lead Samsung employees to these outcomes were mainly the communication within a multilingual company which gathers workers speaking distinct codes in addition to the low level of some employees in the English language.

Conclusion

The process of pidginization is an inevitable consequence of language contact. Hence, Samsung C&T company is a good example of this process and of various pidginized features among Korean, Filipino, Algerian, and Indian employees. It can be deduced that simplified English and pidginized features are the basic means of communication within this multilingual company due to the low English proficiency level of some workers. These pidginized features are able to ease the communication process, decrease breakdowns, and ensure team collaboration and productivity as well. Language contact and pidginization are dynamic means that support collaboration, knowledge transfer, and corporate cohesion in this multilingual company. At last and not the least, language usually evolves in response to social, economic,

and organizational demands. Organic pidginized communication strategies are; therefore, more adaptable in real-time workplace interactions.

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