

ENGLISH PAST AND PRESENT

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ENGLISH FOR CROSSTALK: PIDGIN FOR PENTECOST?

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«At countless points on the world's surface, English will be the most available language - English of some sort» (I.A. Richards, 1943, p. 120)

«'English of some sort' said Richards, meaning a basic orthographically rationalized version. But the simplification may be of an even more damaging order. The externals of English are being acquired by speakers wholly alien to the historical fabric, to the inventory of felt moral, cultural existence embedded in the language. The landscapes of experience, the fields of idiomatic, symbolic, communal reference which give to the language its specific gravity, are distorted in transfer or lost altogether. As it spreads across the earth 'international English' is like a thin wash, marvellously fluid, but without adequate base... Only time and native ground can provide a language with the interdependence of formal and semantic components which 'translates' culture into active life. It is the absence from them of any natural semantics of remembrance which disqualifies artificial languages from any but trivial or ad hoc usage.

The internationalization of English has begun to provoke a twofold enervation. In many societies imported English, with its necessarily synthetic, 'pre-packaged' semantic field, is eroding the autonomy of the native language-culture... More subtly, the modulation of English into an 'Esperanto' of world-commerce, technology and tourism is having debilitating effects on English proper... Again, it is too soon to judge of the dialectical balance, of the reciprocities between profit and loss which accrue to English as it becomes the lingua franca and shorthand of the earth. If dissemination weakened the native genius of the language, the price would be a tragic one... *It would be ironic if the answer to Babel were pidgin and not Pentecost*». (emphasis added) (Steiner, 1976, pp. 469-470).

1.0. *Introduction*

I should like here to speculate, very informally and very exploratorily, from the diachronic perspective of our seminar¹, on how English may be being influenced under pressure of its ever-stronger position as an/the international lingua franca, our world's principal vehicle for cross-cultural communication (or cross-talk)².

Taking my lead from Steiner's use of the term «pidgin» to allude to the fate of English in foreign mounths, I should like to briefly outline how I see the analogy to be, indeed, apposite, although I do not share his doom-laden evaluation. His analogy, rather, prompts me to suggest some link between several themes from neighbouring fields.

In section 2, we take a brief look at *natural* «pidginization» and its connections with, for instance, lingua franca and foreigner talk. In section 3, I consider the tradition of *deliberate linguistic engineering* or manipulation of English for international communication (and other purposes), and its roots in the centuries-old search for the perfect Universal language.

Section 4 fantasizes on the ultimate implications of some of the common themes. Sections 5 and 6 address the wider perspective of language planning for world-wide communication and understanding, and attempt to show that the universalist/uniformist approach on the one hand, and the relativist/pluralist one on the other may not, necessarily, be totally incompatible.

¹ I take it as meaning English, yesterday, today and tomorrow; although speculations on the future of English were in vogue particularly in the 1940's (Jagger, 1940, is particularly instructive for a glimpse of the climate of the times when, say, Richards did much of his work), with the current growth in interest in English as an International Language (E.I.L.) many ultimately similar concerns (sometimes unacknowledged) are to be found again in the recent literature.

² See Gumperz et al., 1979 for the term; see also Vincent Marrelli, in press; it is used here generally to indicate any sort of cross-cultural interaction, i.e. that between natives and non-natives of a particular language, as well as that between non-natives from different cultural matrices using or creating a lingua franca.

2. Natural pidginization

«A pidgin language is generally defined as a strongly *reduced* linguistic system that is used for incidental contracts between speakers of different languages, and that is the native language of nobody...» (Appel & Muysken 1987, p. 175).

«...Its vocabulary is usually drawn primarily from the prestige language of the dominant group, while its grammar retains many features of the native languages of the subordinate groups. ... It is as if the vocabulary provides the basic material, and pidginization refers to the techniques of working it into a usable garment. These techniques in turn depend on the ways of putting material together with which the subordinate groups are accustomed ... plus some «universal» principles of reduction or simplification which speakers seem to draw on the world over when trying to communicate across linguistic barriers. ... Frequently, pidgins serve limited functions, especially in their early stages. ... they may be inadequate in size of their lexicon, the complexity of syntactic structure, and range of styles for the range of uses to which native languages are put.» (Rickford & Closs-Traugott 1985, pp. 253-254).

2.1. Pidginization is increasingly seen in the literature as a *general «widespread phenomenon»* (see Appel & Muysken 1987, pp. 180ff. & Schumann 1978, pp. 69ff. for overviews; see also Muhlhausler 1986; Valdman & Highfield 1981). It is not confined to the formation of pidgin languages as such but is apparently at work notably also in:

1. baby-talk, i.e. talk *to* babies; 2. child first language acquisition, i.e. the talk *of* babies; 3. «interlanguage» (or second language learner re-elaborations of a given model³, i.e. the talk *of* foreigners; 4. lingua franca talk⁴, i.e. NNS-NNS dis-

³ See e.g. Corder & Roulet 1977, and Schumann 1976 where the analogy is explicit.

⁴ The original «Lingua Franca», Sabir (studied by Schuchardt in 1909) is classed as a pidgin by Appel & Muysken 1987; Schumann 1978 mentions it as being seen as the «proto-pidgin» for monogenesisists in pidgin and creole studies).

2.2 International English, i.e. English for CrossTalk (CrossEng) is realized, of course, in as many forms as there are combinations of native and non-native speakers with their varied competences using «English» as their «base language», point of reference, or «prototype»⁹. The resulting surface forms of CrossEng may thus range, on a cline, from the simplest most basic «pidgin» (say that realized between an Italian and a Greek making friends who have just started an elementary English course in England) to that, I suggest, realized in an exchange between native speakers (of two different native varieties), meeting, say, in Italy¹⁰. It is possible, I suggest, to make the analogy with pidgins and the general pidginization process all along the cline.

2.3 Although there are general common issues in crosstalk, we must, of course, distinguish between non-native speakers' (NNS) and native speakers' (NS) CrossEng, and furthermore between the possible combinations, and directions of talk, interlocutors' discourse roles, and the territorial/power aspects (see also Anderson 1988, Anderson & Vincent in press, Ciliberti 1988a & b, Thomas 1984). While there is a growing body of data and literature on NS-NNS or «foreigner talk» (see below,

conditions is the pidginogenic social context where the function of the language is restricted to communication of denotative referential information. Both the child in early native language acquisition and the pidgin speaker reduce and simplify the language to which they are exposed into a set of primitive categories which are undoubtedly innate (p. 11). These primitive categories emerge in speech as utterances relatively unmarked by inflections, permutations and functors. Within this framework unmarking is not seen as a deficiency, but as a positive cognitive strategy to which a language learner turns at certain development stages and under certain social conditions.» (Schumann 1976, p. 111).

See also citation in my section 4 referring to Corder and Kay & Sankoff's views.

⁹ See Holland & Quinn 1987, pp. 22-24, for a brief introduction to prototype theory.

Furthermore, non-native speakers may be seen as members of the fuzzy set «speakers of English».

¹⁰ Furthermore, it may also be possible to see the English of isolated long-term anglo-phone ex-patriates as undergoing pidginization in some respects as, among other things, their contact with «the landscapes of experience, the fields of idiomatic, symbolic communal reference» becomes more and more tenuous.

course or talk *between* foreigners; and, 5. «foreigner-talk», i.e. NS-NNS, or talk *to* foreigners.⁵ 6. Sign Languages.⁶)

Let us briefly see some of the characteristics reported by various scholars (see e.g. in Schumann 1978, pp. 72-75) as yielded by the «pidginization process»: In general terms, 1. Word order tends to replace inflectional morphology; 2. Certain grammatical transformations tend to be eliminated (e.g. question transformations)⁷. In more specific terms, one finds 1. reduplication of forms; 2. absence of tense markers, definite article and copula; 3. juxtaposition of terms in topic-comment order; 4. use of same word for a variety of grammatical functions; 5. possession indicated by simple juxtaposition; 6. use of uniform negative *no*; 7. pronoun-subject deletion; 8. absence of auxiliaries; 9. free or unmarked form of verbs; 10. repetition of verb to indicate reiteration, etc.

Rather than seeing pidginization as a process of simplification or reduction of a particular more complex and expanded code, however, some scholars see pidginization as the recreation or redeployment of an innate, universal, basic simple «unmarked» code arising under certain conditions: the «pidginogenic social context» (see § 4 below, and Schumann 1978, p. 111, Kay & Sankoff 1974)⁸.

⁵ Significantly, «intuitions about stereotypical foreigner talk are identical to stereotypes about interlanguage» (Appel & Muysken 1987, p. 140).

⁶ Deuchar 1987 sees them as creoles, i.e. developed pidgins, and speculates on the universal properties of the human mind (referring to Bickerton's biogenesis explanation for the common properties of creoles).

⁷ Cf. also Giunchi (this vol.) on the related question of the relative markedness, neutrality and simplicity of constuctions; questions being more marked than statements, negatives more than affirmatives.

⁸ «...the earlier speech of children is generally unmarked (hence the term telegraphic speech) and ... in the process of socialization the child learns to mark his language with those features which characterize his speech community. The result of this development is that adult speech is naturally and normally marked (p. 3 [Smith, 1973]). However, pidgin languages which are spoken by adults are characteristically unmarked. Smith attempts to account for the fact that pidginization produces a generally unmarked language by viewing unmarking and marking as part of the same process. The child at one point in his development has had the ability to unmark. Smith speculates that this ability is not lost and can be retrieved under certain social conditions. One of these

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and Anderson 1988), one must still look forward to empirical studies specifically on English in NNS-NNS discourse (its typical features, if any, wherever and by whomever it is spoken, and the differences with foreigner talk (NS-NNS) at various levels of NNS linguistic and communicative competence with reference to the standard English code itself. Investigation is needed in order to be able to see the process of pidginization at work, furthermore, not only on the more attested morphological and syntactic levels (where pidgin and creole studies have focussed), but also and especially, on the semantic and pragmatic ones (a start has been made, however, by e.g. Varonis & Gass 1985, Aston 1986, Tarone & Yule 1987).

2.4 An important distinction is made by Arthur et al., reported in Appel & Muysken 1987, between foreigner talk and foreigner register. While foreigner talk is «a simplified interlanguage made up largely of content words», foreigner register involves only slight deviations from the normal code of speech.

In the foreigner register speakers tend to avoid the type of blatantly ungrammatical, socially stigmatized forms mentioned above, however, modifying their speech only in subtle ways that become obvious under quantitative analysis. ... slower and clearer speech, shorter sentences, avoidance of idioms, avoidance of complex or exceptional grammatical patterns, avoidance of rare vocabulary items, etc... (Appel & Muysken: 140; see also Long 1981 for a survey of foreigner talk studies.)

Foreigner talk (i.e. in the sense of extreme pidginization by the native speaker) is often coloured by implications of offensive paternalism, while foreigner register is a more emotionally acceptable instance of accommodation leading to an easier input for listener and less difference between native and non-native ways of speaking. We might also bear in mind that the accommodation in both foreigner talk and foreigner register may not be deliberate or totally conscious. In sum, pidginization in foreigner talk and register, characterized by «unmarking» (see

my note 8) may be seen as a positive «strategy of neutrality»¹¹, i.e. as type of *accommodation*¹² to one's foreign interlocutor.

2.5 Let us now consider Long's (1983, pp. 132 ff.) set of «strategies» (for avoiding trouble) and «tactics» (for repairing trouble), which he *observed* functioning in foreigner talk/speech, i.e. employed by NSs to provide comprehensible input to NNS interlocutors; and these obviously take us to semantics and beyond to pragmatics and discourse structure:

Strategies: S1. relinquish topic-control (by offering alternative choices: e.g. the use of or-choice questions), S2. select salient topics, S3. Treat topics briefly, S4. Make new topics salient, S5. Check NNS's comprehension (note the emphasis on «salience»). *Tactics*: T1. Accept unintentional topic-switch, T2. Request clarification, T3. Confirm own comprehension, T4. Tolerate ambiguity. *Strategies and Tactics combined (for avoiding and repairing trouble)*: ST1. Use slow pace, ST2. Stress key words, ST3. Pause before key words, ST4. Decompose topic-comment constructions, ST5. Repeat own utterances, ST6. Repeat each other's utterances.

2.6 Consider now Smith's (1983, pp. 10-11) *recommendations* or guidelines which may help in communicating effectively across cultures:

2¹³. Avoid slang, jargon, and figures of speech. Be as concrete as possible. Be specific and illustrate your points with examples when feasible. 3. Avoid long monologues and limit the number of ideas in each of your sentences. 4. Beware of trying to be humorous, ... 5. Tactfully ask questions ... to ascertain com-

¹¹ Cf. Appel & Muysken 1837:133 ff., Scotton 1976 (My suggestion is on a micro level compared to the socio/politically motivated ones Appel & Muysken discuss).

¹² See e.g. Thakerer, Giles & Cheshire, 1982.

¹³ The first, which exhorts people not to speak louder or more slowly than natural, is, presumably, to be seen as an attempt to counter the negative aspects of foreigner talk — the stereotype we all know and comics ridicule, of talking loudly and slowly to a foreigner.

prehension ... 6. At the end ... paraphrase the essential items ... (For listeners:) ... 5. ask: is that what you mean?, 7. ... rephrase or repeat key ideas of the conversation.

2.7 Candlin, among many, also points to the necessity in cross-cultural interaction of being aware of the contextual and cultural relativity of speech acts and the interpretation of their force. (see e.g. Clyne 1981, pp. 147 ff., Wierzbicka 1985, Eisenstein & Bodman 1986, Wolfon 1986, Candlin 1987, see also Vincent Marrelli in press). Indirect speech acts, especially, may be particularly variable (see e.g. Tannen 1985). Suggestions abound that explicitness and directness, a closer tie between literal and conveyed meaning or illocutionary force, be more suitable, (see also my discussion in section 3 below). As Candlin (1983), for example, puts it:

«If then... utterances have to have their force negotiated, there is even more grounds and more necessity for enhancing learners' *interpretative competence*. *Compelling clarification by making force overt* is the language learner's principal need, and indeed, his principal communicative weapon.» (Candlin 1981, p. 173)¹⁴.

The emphasis has now clearly shifted from the surface form to meaning and communication of intent with a focus on clarity of expression (anticipating themes to be found among the Universalists, the Plain English, Basic English and Nuclear English movements, see section 3).

2.8 Pidgin and creole studies as such, as I mentioned earlier, have concentrated, as far as I can see, solely on surface form. Whereas cross-talk studies, developed notably by anthropologists

¹⁴ Candlin speaks also, indeed, of «pidginization» (1981, p. 199) of discourse as an occasionally necessary compromise to that «our message comes over loud and clear». See also Smith, 1987 (in his introduction to Smith ed pp. 3-5) for the «five senses» or awarenesses which must be taken into account for negotiation of meaning in intercultural contexts.

and later by sociolinguists, semanticists and pragmaticists among linguists (usually with some attachment to applied linguistics and second language learning), have tended mostly to concentrate on the cultural presuppositions of interlocutors, and on the differential meaning and/or interpretation of behaviour, verbal and non-, according to cultural matrix or «frame of reference», i.e. context (see Vincent Marrelli, in press, for bibliography).

2.9 The role of context in the information structure of messages is undisputed today, and has been stressed in an anthropological perspective, for example, by Hall 1976¹⁵. The concept of cultural presupposition is also central, in as much as, a) it focusses on the cultural specifics and variability aspect, and, b) on the general question of shared knowledge, values, expectations, frame of reference (i.e. on context), and the «attribution» (see Ehrenhaus 1983) of interlocutors' meaning and intent as based on this.

In as much as cultures are different, (for the depth of their differences see e.g. Hall *passim* [especially 1976]), and in as much as interlocutors are aware that their cultural presuppositions are different to some degree, and they know that they are, therefore, in some condition of uncertainty (see Gudykunst 1985; cf. also Scotton 1976) as to what and how much is shared, then it seems plausible that the more efficient code for the highest possible degree of efficiency in message exchange be one that is low context. This implies, loosely on the various levels of analysis (in as far as they can be meaningfully separated), from the pragmatic to the phonological: that degree of explicit-

¹⁵ «A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite, i.e. the mass of information is vested in the explicit code» (Hall 1976, p. 91).

By «internalized in the person» read «the person has internalized the culture's presuppositions» (Ehrenhaus 1983, p. 263). See also Vincent Marrelli (in press).

ness and directness of communication of intent, goals and the generation of illocutionary force will be a function of the depth of context of the encounter; the lower the context, the higher should be the message redundancy, the greater the explicitness of intent, goals, and directness of illocutionary force generation. Semantically, one might imagine (along with many language engineers mentioned in section 3, but see my note 22 below) that, for example, ambiguities would /should be eliminated; concreteness preferred to abstractness, specificity to generality; redundancy added, explanations, definitions, periphrastic (i.e. analytic) expressions be preferred to synthetic expressions (see also Tarone & Yule 1987, pp. 57ff on NNS «explication», «over-explicitness» i.e. greater use of details, etc); on the grammatical and phonological levels «transparency», regularity, uncluttering and ease of decipherability seem to be the focus.

2.10 The simplification and reduction themes are still present but rather than involving morphology or syntax they concern (lowering) density of information and its articulation or organization, reflected in the introduction of redundancy, explicitness and directness on the semantic and discourse levels. On the other hand, one could also see this introduction of redundancy, the opposite to economy, as re-elaboration, and, therefore, the opposite to simplification. But economy of expression (typical of high-context communication), in conditions of uncertainty and of low contextualization, would hardly be very efficient for effective communication; this in turn would cause trouble which would then need even more expense of effort to repair. In anticipation of this, a speaker presumably feels there is a better trade-off between effort (cost) and benefits accrued if one invests a little more on the semantic and pragmatic levels. Less effort will be accordingly spent on the surface (at least in the more extremely pidginized forms) as we have seen. So, pidginization seems to involve simplification and reduction of the syntactical and morphological levels, but re-elaboration

and redundancy on the semantic and discourse levels, respectively ¹⁶.

2.11 It might seem tempting to say, as Haugen 1987 has suggested, although for different reasons, that English, be «naturally» suited to its role as lingua franca and have acquired it through «natural selection». He suggests this because of the simplification and analyticity of the grammatical system with respect to its Germanic origins and to its lexical mix¹⁷. One might also speculate that it may be «naturally» suited to its role for lingua franca talk (a low-context type of encounter by definition, at least concerning shared cultural presuppositions and knowledge) by virtue of its being a naturally low-context language/culture itself (see Hall 1976 *passim*).

This, however, would, arguably, still hardly render the resulting discourse «neutral». Values implicit in the English-type low context system, such as directness valued over indirectness, «verbal (literal) truth» over «truth of mood» (E.M. Forster, *Passage to India*, discussed in Vincent Marrelli in press, see also George 1984) would come to be associated with Universal, superior values and we would be back in the firm grip of ethnocentrism and linguistic and cultural imperialism (see 4)¹⁸.

However, we might remember that neither language nor relationships are ever totally static; with increasing interaction between individuals or groups from different cultural contexts, and with the establishment of more and more common ground, wi-

¹⁶ «Creolization» and/or higher context communication, i.e. higher degrees of shared perceptions and lower degrees of uncertainty will then cause a trend towards economicity on the semantic level and complexity of the grammatical (cf. Aitchison [this vol.]).

¹⁷ We might compare Haugen's 1987, p. 87 comments with those of Jagger 1940, pp. 131ff, and especially Richards, 1943, pp. 40ff. Off (see also note 31 below).

¹⁸ Furthermore, although Quirk, 1981, sees Nuclear English as «culturefree as calculus», calculus itself may not be culture-free (see e.g. Strevens, 1987 on «society's ultimate myths»); even Richards was also ultimately convinced of the relativity of logical thinking (see his essay «Sources of Conflict» in Richards, 1968, pp. 218-239).

thin some dyads of interlocutors it will be presumably safer to embark on higher and higher context type messages, including the use of more indirect language.

2.12 One might, thus, in sum, add to Appel & Muysken's (1987) list the following types of accommodation or «strategies of neutrality» as occurring in cross-cultural interaction.

- A. neutralization or unmarking of the language forms, and
- B. neutralization of cultural identity and cultural presuppositions (i.e. low-contextualization).

Both would be characteristics of pidginization in the broad sense used here.

3.0 *Engineered pidginization of English*

In the previous sections we passed naturally from discussion of some *observed* characteristics of pidginization and cross-talk, to that of *recommendations* for successful cross-talk. Let us look now in this and following sections at other even more explicit and detailed deliberate moves essentially in this latter direction.

3.1 There is a time-honoured tradition of linguistic engineering or manipulation of English. Limiting our attention to this century one thinks especially of Odgen and Richards (Basic English), Hogben (Essential English, not to mention his Interglossa), Korzybsky and, recently, Quirk (Nuclear English)¹⁹;

¹⁹ One cannot fail to mention also G.B. Shaw, who according to Quirk (1981, n. 6, pp. 164-5) «...in pleading for the rationalization in the teaching of English as a common world language, ... was ready to encourage wholesale pidginization»; we shall not be concerned, however, with such constructs as the Council of Europe's Threshold Level English (see Van Ek & Trim eds., 1984; Vincent, 1978) since, to greatly over-simplify, it is meant mainly (unlike Basic) as a pedagogically staged entry to Complete English, and British culture, within a European context (with goals of mutual enrichment and sharing of linguistic and cultural resources (cf. 4 below) within the Community, where for each of the European languages there is now, or soon will be, also a corresponding

moreover, the popular fascination with linguistic engineering is testified to by the enduring success of Orwell's *Newspeak*, (see Quirk 1985²⁰; cf. also Bianchi 1984, Marroni 1984).

These attempts at linguistic engineering have, at least part of, their intellectual roots (acknowledged by Quirk 1981, pp. 161, 163) in the philosophical traditions to be traced back at least to Bacon, Descartes, Comenius, Hobbes, Locke, Wilkins (1668) (see Frank 1979 on Wilkins and his intellectual predecessors), and the search for a «real», perfect, language, one that would reflect reality accurately and that would allow clear thinking and thus enable the acquisition of true knowledge. Quirk also traces the movement for «The Advancement of Learning» and the concern for the clarification of linguistic expression thence to Leibnitz, Berkeley, Horne Tooke and Bentham (who also, incidentally, coined the term «international»).

Pervasive themes, along the entire course of the tradition, whether the aims be for the benefit of the Englishman (see e.g. the Plain English movement [see Gowers 1973, Redish 1985]; the «death-of-language» writings [see Stalker 1985]), or for international communication (Richards 1968, Quirk 1981) are the, by now familiar: clarity of expression, and thus of thinking and effective communication, through, for example, elimination of obscurity of expression (i.e. obfuscation), avoidance of ambiguity²¹,

threshold level specification), rather than as an end in itself with basic world communication as a goal. Furthermore, although there are some common points (see e.g. «notions») its selection principles (of situationally defined behavioural and functional objectives) would take us too far away from our central themes. In other words, neutralization or pidginization would be, as I see it, contrary to the Council of Europe team's goals.

²⁰ For his critical discussion of Orwell's linguistic naivety as discerned in his 1984 and other writings; Quirk also discusses Burgess's *Worker English* in his 1985, in the light of these issues.

²¹ And may be seen as something of an extension of the familiar Gricean conversational maxim of Manner- be perspicuous i.e. avoid obscure expressions, avoid ambiguities, avoid prolixities and be orderly; incidentally, *perspicuitas* (clarity and intelligibility for the hearer) was also one of the *virtutes elocutionis* in rhetoric; see also Vincent & Castelfranchi, 1981 on obfuscation and deliberate ambiguity as strategies of deception.

avoidance of metaphor²², i.e. directness or literalness; one also sees from the beginning a call for the elimination of redundancies, for regularization and generalization of grammatical rules by analogy.

²² This is a more complicated story. Hobbes and Locke saw metaphor and all figurative speech as deceptive (see Frank 1979, p. 28; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 190). Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 (and one must not forget also Richards, 1936; thanks to my student M. Olmina Centomiglia for bringing Richard's essay to my notice), put metaphor in a totally different light as fundamental and pervasive in language challenging the empiricist («realist», «universalist»), as well as the subjectivist («romantic») views of meaning, understanding and truth, they offer a third alternative, the «experientialist synthesis» which has its fulcrum in metaphorical thought i.e. «imaginative rationality» uniting «reason and imagination» (p. 193). As they say, furthermore, «metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally...» (p. 193). Understanding, in intercultural communication, is possible through the «negotiation of meaning» (a link with Candlin's position); the following allows us to see further significant convergences between the applied linguistics and discourse analysis studies in the intercultural field we mentioned in section 2, with (their brand of) theoretical semantics and pragmatics:

«To negotiate meaning with someone you have to become aware of and respect both the differences in your backgrounds and when these differences are important. You need enough diversity of cultural and personal experience to be aware that divergent world views exist (see also the W₃ hypothesis in section 4 below) and what they might be like. You also need patience, a certain flexibility in world view, and a general tolerance of mistakes, as well as a talent for finding the right metaphor to communicate the relevant parts of the unshared experiences or to highlight the shared experiences while deemphasizing the others. *Metaphorical imagination is a crucial skill in creating rapport and in communicating the nature of unshared experience.* This skill consists, in large measure, of the ability to bend your world view and adjust the way you categorize your experience. «... meaning is almost never communicated according to the CONDUIT metaphor, ...where one person transmits a fixed, clear proposition to another by means of expressions in a common language, where both parties have all the relevant common knowledge, assumptions, values, etc... meaning is negotiated: you slowly figure out what you have in common, what it is safe to talk about, how you can communicate unshared experience or create a shared vision» (p. 231).

The implications for us are clear: far from condemning the use of metaphor in intercultural communication, it would seem we should rather perorate its cause, as a «compensatory strategy», for example (Low 1988, p. 135). This suggests a worthwhile area for investigation in empirical nns-nns and ns-nns discourse studies. Furthermore, metaphor and analogy would also tie in with the desirable economicity of code in pidginization contexts.

Quirk 1981 suggests some reduction of syntactical rules,²³ and while he propounds the necessity for finer distinctions so as to render the use of, for example, modals less ambiguous in English, he does this not by adding words (as the earlier utopian realists Comenius and Sprat [see Frank 1979]) but by suggesting the use of paraphrase and periphrastic expressions, which is reminiscent of the Basic English type of analytical²⁴ procedure which was in turn ultimately based on Wilkins' use of a reduced and very limited core of key general and simple notions²⁵.

(As Aitchison points out, pidgins have relatively few vocabulary items and each «can mean a number of different things depending on the context» (1981, p. 200) (presumably through the agency of analogy and metaphor); she further points out, (p. 226), economicity or simplicity «seems to be counterbalanced by ambiguity and cumbersomeness» ...and... «A straightforward simplicity measure... will not necessarily pinpoint the 'best' language. ... (no) clear measure of excellence ... even though the majority (of linguists) are of the opinion that a language with numerous irregularities should be less highly ranked than one which is economical and transparent.» (p. 226) So, pidgins would seem to be characterized by both cumbersomeness (circumlocution) and the use of metaphor, analogy and ambiguity seen positively (alongside vagueness) as the basis for the negotiation of meaning in context, both as a result of the economicity of lexical means. This is a significant departure from the thematic commonality with the early language engineers, who saw ambiguity, vagueness, and metaphor negatively. No one today denies, however, that metaphor, for e.g. can, of course be *used* with non-cooperative aims: Low, 1988 refers to Lerman, 1985 on the obscurantist uses of metaphor.

²³ See e.g. his discussion of tag questions, relative clauses etc., 1981, pp. 156-7.

²⁴ See Richards (1968, p. 248); cf. also the notion of transparency (rather than opaqueness) of expression (which connects up again to regularity, «one form per unit of meaning» (see Aitchison, 1981 p. 201 above on this feature in pidgins); Richards (1968, p. 139), also reminds us of H.G. Wells' (in 'The New Machiavelli') distinction between «fine» and «thick» thinking and meaning.

²⁵ The earlier writers, e.g. Comenius, Sprat, suggested «so many things in almost an equal number of words» (quoted in Frank 1979, p. 37) and the elimination of redundancy and irregularity, («regular, analogical and harmonious»); the semanticists, on the other hand, and the philosophers such as Locke, suggested the analytic, or componential approach, with the use of a limited number of basic or «key general ideas», or «simple notions», universal elements with which to construct transparently, explicitly and clarifyingly through paraphrase the complex concepts we use (see Richards 1968, pp. 247 ff); there is surely no need to mention here the modern developments of componential analysis.

Wilkins (see in Frank 1979, p. 38) saw his «design» contributing to the

«clearing of some our Modern differences..., by unmasking many wild errors, that shelter themselves under the disguise of affected phrases; which being Philosophically unfolded and rendered according to the genuine and natural importance of words, will appear to be inconsistencies and contradictions. And several of those pretended, mysterious, profound notions, expressed in great swelling words, whereby some men set up a reputation, being this way examined, will appear to be either nonsense, or very flat and jejeune» (Wilkins 1668: B1 recto).

This would not be out of place in a 'Plain English' or 'Plain words' manual:

«Plain English means writing that is straightforward, that reads as if it were spoken. It means writing that is unadorned with archaic, multisyllabic words and majestic turns of phrase that even uneducated speakers cannot understand. Plain English is clear, direct and simple; but good plain English has both clarity and grace...» (Redish 1985: 125).

And modern indictments of 'double speak'²⁶ are even more reminiscent of the earlier writers:

«...double-speak (is) pretentious and *dishonest*, seeking less to express than to impress... Basic to double-speak, the linguistic manifestation of Orwell's double-think and often the cloak²⁷ for the doubledeal, is incongruity. It is the incongruity between what is said and what is left unsaid — and what really is, between word and referent, between seems and be. It is the incongruity between what language is supposed to do — communicate — and what double-speak does — obfuscate» (Penelope 1985, p. 87 [citing Kehl 1982]).

²⁶ Not to be confused with what Sledd (1973) polemically calls «double-speak» (i.e. bidialectalism).

²⁷ See Chandler, this vol., incidentally, or rhetoric as seen as the «clothing» on the «plain sense» and on its manipulatory potential.

3.2 Next, it is important to note that Ogden in his original conception of Basic English, Richards in his later discussions and up-datings, and Quirk in his Nuclear English, specifically talk of language functions and communicative needs other than the ideational or transactional: Ogden spoke of social exchanges, and Malinowski's «phatic communion» (see in Richards 1968, p. 243; Quirk 1982, p. 19). This also distinguished them from the philosophical language or real character exponents, who were solely concerned with the ideational or cognitive plane²⁸.

Pidgin and creole studies and second language learning studies too maintain by implication that pidgins perform no functions other than the cognitive or denotative / referential (see Schumann 1978, p. 111, Kay & Sankoff 1974, p. 62)²⁹. However, I believe that this is too restrictive a view. The need for solidarity or closeness and establishing of friendly relations is so pervasive and basic a communicative need (certainly when members of High context / high contact cultures are involved) that even grunts, if all else failed, could be put to serve the communicative function variously known as «phatic» (Malinowski), «interpersonal» (Halliday), «affective» (Condon, Ochs), «interactional» (see Aston 1988, p. 75, on G. Brown's distinction, and on its ubiquity); certainly non-verbal (e.g. laughter) and non-vocal means (e.g. kinesics (see e.g. Morain 1986) and facial expressions (e.g. smiles etc.) can serve this basic communicative need (see also Vincent Marrelli 1988, Anderson & Vincent, in press on interactional goals in crosstalk, Ochs 1986 on 'affect' in child language acquisition).

3.3 A further important, rather obvious, difference between the earlier and later engineers, is that while both had partially

²⁸ See Frank 1979, p. 72 on the «fact-stating function»; although as Frank also says Wilkins must have had some little concern for its use in communication ('commerce') in as much as he also paid attention to the pronunciation of the characters.

²⁹ Rather than seeing pidginogenesis as arising from incomplete socialization or the absence of the interpersonal function, we may also see it, I suggest, as arising from speaker uncertainty, for e.g. either with respect to the model or prototypical code, or to the degree of shared knowledge, cultural presuppositions, values, etc., or any combination of these.

similar aims, the latter-day semanticists and linguists were involved with *adapting a natural language*, in particular English, for use in communication in natural interaction by speakers; the result was to still retain a direct relationship to its parent language³⁰. The earlier philosophers, on the other hand, were talking of *creating an artificial, perfect*, language or even of recreating or reconstructing the 'lingua adamica', the original, perfect, universal language (where words reflected the real nature of things), that which was given to Adam by God, and spoken before the curse of Babel caused confusion and linguistic diversification (Comenius, indeed, saw irregularity and morphological complexity as a corruption of the primordial tongue [Frank: 38])³¹.

³⁰ Basic and Nuclear English are both seen as expandable («an expanding series of restricted forms» Richards 1968, p. 242 (Richards 1943, pp. 63ff) (denied by Jagger 1940, p. 152); «amenable to extension» Quirk 1982, p. 19); also among their prerequisites is «naturalness» of expression (see principle 2. Richards 1968, p. 244). Their artificers do not talk of eliminating redundancy, which would indeed work against efficiency of communication in a natural language (not to mention that between interlocutors with minimal shared knowledge and expectations) but only of eliminating obscurity, obfuscation and ambiguity, and this, in Basic English was to be done through decomposition or analysis into the «key concepts». Ogden, as Richards tells us, however did not feel it was necessary to take this to the level of a logical analytical language, «of the kind Leibnitz dreamed of» which would have been both «very inconvenient» (with its long descriptions, i.e. uneconomical) and inappropriate for ordinary everyday speech between (very) ordinary everyday people who are not, and will not for a long time, be intellectually equipped to cope with it (see Richards 1968, pp. 247-248). But cf. Jagger 1940, pp. 151-152 who expressly says that in Basic English (which had sacrificed «brevity» one of the «principal excellences» of English), with its drastic reduction of vocabulary which made circumlocution a constant necessity with the concomitant over-taxing of one's ingenuity (and expenditure of effort).

«Mr Ogden shifted the burden from the memory to the intellect... for 850 names are far too few for practical requirements. Basic, in consequence, is a bow for Achilles, far beyond the strength of a child.»

³¹ See Aitchison, 1981, pp. 227ff. on the question of 'perfect' languages and linguistic evolution. Compare Jagger 1940, pp. 131-134, who equates economy, simplicity regularity and analyticity with higher evolution, English (having reached this higher stage) being thus by natural selection the most excellent candidate for the world language (Thanks to my student Umberto Geremia for bringing Jagger 1940 to my attention and into my possession). Richards 1943, pp. 40ff, on the other hand, while saying that English has evolved towards analyticity does this without value judgements of superiority or excellence. Much more interesting for us here, he speculates on the reasons which have caused this trend (his argument is to show that these habits of analysis «have made

4. *Pidgin at Pentecost?*

It is tempting to fantasize on the intuitions of these early utopians in the light of the studies mentioned here on the roots of language as seen in pidgins, foreigner talk, child language acquisition, interlanguage etc., and such as Bickerton's bioprogramme theory (not to mention Chomsky's Universal Grammar [see e.g. in Cook 1985, Schachter 1988]), which postulates innate human universal linguistic capacities and basic simple linguistic structures³².

May we not be gaining a glimpse through all these studies of the univocal base... the primordial tongue? After all, it may well be that:

«simple codes» spoken by children, neophyte second language learners, pidgin speakers, and adults using baby talk or foreign talk are not «simplified», i.e., they are not reductions of a more complicated and expanded code. Instead they represent a *basic language* which, in the process of learning, is expanded and

Basic English possible»; «it was a possibility prepared by the history of the language» [p. 42]); as his speculations unfold (on how English might have become analytic [structurally and semantically]) one recognizes many elements of the pidginization process: contact between languages and speakers of different tongues without a common tongue; unmarking: «if a Dane got the sense of what the Englishman was saying, the smaller details of his ways of saying were not important. The outcome... the process of smoothing and levelling of forms of «grammar» (...) The rubbing together of the two languages... wore off many inflections- the removable points of variance- and at the same time it stretched the range of service of those little all purpose verbs- give, get, (...) etc (...) which are the mainspring of Basic English» (p. 41); interlanguage and second language learning: «English became simple largely through being taught to so many adult aliens in the historical period when it was most ductile and malleable» (...) «It is no accident that English has a Basic form. A thousand years of teaching it out of school (e.g. to the ordinary Normans) have gone into its making» (p. 42). It would seem that through Richard's words we could also unite the natural pidginization and artificial engineering themes.

«Basic English... when Ogden took up the detail of his research in 1926... was present in scattered form among the inexhaustible resources of English, but it needed to be disengaged, extracted, assembled and systematized before it could be available either as a quasi-independent medium of communication or as the right introduction to the rest of English» (1943, pp. 42-43).

³² See also Semantic transparency theory (Seuren & Wecker, 1986).

complicated. Following Kay & Sankoff (1974), Corder suggests that simple codes «are 'nearer' in some sense, to the underlying structure or 'inner form' of all languages, i.e. more overtly reflect semantic categories and relations» (p. 7). He goes on to speculate that this basic language, and all intermediate linguistics (sic) systems between basic and complex, once learned are never obliterated. These approximative systems remain «available both for communicative functions in the mother tongue (baby talk, foreigner talk) and as an 'initial hypothesis' in the learning of second language» (p. 9) (Schumann 1978, p. 111).

Let me indulge this vision a little further as we consider the Pentecost Mystery³³.

The modern text permits two interpretations of what the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire enabled the 'believers' to do³⁴. Apart from the interpretation that each separate believer spoke a different tongue and each of the foreign visitors found and listened to that believer who was speaking his particular

³³ «When the day of Pentecost arrived, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire spreading out; and each person there was touched by a tongue. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious men who had come from every corner in the world. When they heard this noise, a whole crowd gathered. They were all excited, because each one of them heard the believers talking in his own language. In amazement and wonder they exclaimed: «These men who are talking like this- they are all Galileans! How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native language? We are from Parthia, Media, and Elam; from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia (...) — Yet all of us hear them speaking in our own languages of the great things God has done!» Amazed and confused, they all kept asking each other, «What does this mean?» But others made fun of the believers, saying «These men are drunk!» (*Acts of the Apostles 2*, verses 1-13, *Good News for Modern Man: The New Testament in Today's English Version*, Collins, 1971) — the editors, incidentally, say the new translation was prepared for people «who speak English as their own mother tongue or as an acquired language»... it «seeks to express the meaning of the Greek text in words and forms accepted as standard by people everywhere who employ English as a means of communication».

³⁴ A «Basic English» translation or, indeed, one into the philosophical language itself, or in logical analytic terms, would have to choose between the alternatives.

tongue, there is the traditional and more befittingly awe-inspiring interpretation: that all the believers spoke in such a way («these men who are talking like this») that was understandable to all and each of the hearers as if it were in his/her own native tongue («Yet all of us hear them speaking in our own languages»). Let me labour this no further than to say that it pleases me to think that «this» would have been none other than the universal, primordial tongue, the ideal *lingua franca*, which we all latently know and which we recreate as children, as talkers to foreigners and as pidginizers...

5. *Pidgin or Pentecost?*

But returning now from contemplation of the Logos, let us consider the alternative solutions to Babel proposed in the profane literature for the achievement of cross-cultural understanding and harmony.

They are essentially related to the old rivals universalism / uniformism, on the one hand and specifism / pluralism on the other. Fishman 1982, in this context, invokes the latter approach dubbing it W_3 «Whorfianism of the third kind», i.e. world-wide multiculturalism and linguistic plurality (W_1 and W_2 being relativism and determinism, respectively).

Whorf warned:

Those who envisage a future world speaking only one tongue, whether English... or any other, hold a misguided view and would do the evolution of the human mind a great disservice. Western culture has made, through language, a provisional analysis of reality and, without correctives, holds resolutely to that analysis as final. The only correctives lie in all those other tongues which by aeons of independent evolution have arrived at different but equally logical, provisional analyses (1956 [1941], p. 244).

Whorf, consequently refuted the purported superiority of Western languages and of Western logic or thinking patterns.

They had no better claim to higher 'evolutionary eminence'. Their eminence proceeding simply from 'human economics and history' (Whorf 1956: 84). 'Multilingual awareness' (accepting and utilizing the perspectives of non-Western peoples in particular) must be sought, the «human treasure trove» valued and shared; only in this way can a truly universal perspective be attained, rather than a «self-serving imperialistic one» (Fishman 1982: 9).

Fishman (*loc. cit.*) also reports that:

Whorf was particularly dubious about schemes such as Basic English or some other natural or artificial auxiliary language as the basis of world unity. There was no easy road to world unity as far as Whorf was concerned, and the best that native speakers... could do in pursuit of that goal was to supplement their English with the «point of view of multilingual awareness».

Now, although, it is true that Richards, for example, did seem to believe in the superiority of the Western way of thinking in that he saw Basic English as a way of teaching Chinese, Africans and Western school children to think properly (see e.g. Richards 1968, p. 254) so that we could all then think and communicate on equal terms and along the same lines³⁵, it is also true that he explicitly spoke of English (i.e. Basic English or rather «probable successors to Basic English» [p. 241]) as an «elucidatory», «World Auxiliary» (p. 241) language (and Ogden spoke of it as an «all-purpose auxiliary» language) and certainly not as the future single world language (see especially 1943, pp. 9ff)³⁶.

Quirk, indeed, essentially reiterates one of Richards' ('politi-

³⁵ He was convinced as I have said earlier of the cultural relativity of reasoning; the only way to avoid conflict would be to uniformize by building a bridge through education in (Basic) English which would constrain clear rational thinking and thus communication between peoples.

³⁶ «Free adoption, absence of all threats of domination of any type, protection for primary languages, symbolization of supra-national aims- these are some of the necessary political conditions for the coming into currency of a world secondary language...» (Richards 1943, p. 10).

cal') concerns as he loads the argument for a unifying second language:

if we concede... that the individual benefits by seeking community identity through repose in his most local variety of language *can we afford to neglect the same individual's needs in a wider role- ultimately as «citizen of the world?»* (1981, p. 153).

Here Quirk reminds us of the individual's social, cultural and psychological needs; this is certainly not incompatible with the desire for cultural plurality and awareness. Being a citizen of the world means having right of access to the world and communicating with one's fellow-citizens, and not remaining confined to one's own little corner. A world community, in as much as it exists, will inevitably create (or recreate) a common code.

6. *Pidgin for Pentecost?*

There may yet be a compromise solution (despite Widdowson's 1982 pessimism), one which saves the multilingual / cultural plurality aspect dear to the Whorfians of the third kind in all of us, not to mention our «homing» instinct (see Widdowson 1982), the centripetal «yin» need for «repose in one's local variety», and yet also safe-guards our right to exercise our «questing» (see Widdowson 1982 again) centrifugal «yang» instinct³⁷. Indeed, is it possible to have a common auxiliary language (which allows us to participate in global as well as local pulsations of «Gaia») without succumbing to the dangers of the tug of the chosen language's culture and/or logic?

6.1 For a start, if it is indeed plausible to see CrossEng as an often pidginized version of Complete English, there is also

³⁷ This (typically non-Western) reconciliation or joining of opposites (also pursued in Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 incidentally) would, moreover, be a fitting application of W_3 itself.

reason to believe that as such it may also «creolize», i.e. recontextualize, for certain groups of interlocutors. On a local level, if allowed to take root as a language for intranational and literary expression (see e.g. Mazrui [in Bailey & Robinson 1973], Kachru 1983, 1987) there is evidence that any language may become the vehicle for any culture³⁸ (see also Smith 1987, p. 4). Furthermore, at the global level, as the world community becomes closer-knit, the common auxiliary language will also presumably become Higher Context (i.e. acquire contextual depth as it becomes the expression of a community with more and more shared knowledge, perceptions [and values?]). Moreover, the multi-bilingual speakers of the world language from their various other cultural realities will inevitably enrich it and enable it to express other realities, but even if this were not possible to the extent that, say, grammar and semantics actually *determined* thought processes (to momentarily entertain W_2), then they would still nonetheless be custodians of different realities, not only wardens of the «treasures» but, through their expanded and multiple horizons, also more inclined to tolerance and understanding of other realities.

Cultural awareness programmes are increasingly emphasized in the literature (see e.g. Gumperz & Roberts 1980, Brislin et al. 1983, Valdes 1986, Strevens 1987, Vincent-Marrelli in press). Many authors emphasize, as Whorf did, the special need of the often complacent or «haughty» (Fishman 1982: 8) monolingual English natives for «cultural sensitivity» programmes; put more kindly, they too have a right to the benefits of multilingualism and cultural plurality.

6.2 When all is said and done, it seems unlikely that humanistic principles will prevail over economics or politics in the questions of whether English (or Englishes «of some sort») will continue or not to be widely used and pursued by non-native

³⁸ and logical patterning; W_3 does not necessarily mean adhering to a strong version of W_1 and W_2 .

speakers who desire some glimpse through the «window on the world» or just a slice of the pie. The best we can do, while accepting the position of English, rather than glorifying it, is to cut it down to size (and I don't mean artificially pidginize it) by a shift in emphasis towards the multilingual and cultural sensitivity perspective.

As I have mentioned elsewhere (and is to be found stressed in much of the cross-cultural or inter-ethnic communication literature) cultural differences survive under the mask of the apparent uniformity of «externals» anyway (see e.g. in the Preface to Smith 1987). Brumfit (1982, p. 7)³⁹ recognizes, with all his reservations, that «users of English have been provided with a unique opportunity for cross-cultural contact on a hitherto unprecedented scale». This could apply to the native as well as non-native speakers of English.

And finally, what about Steiner's worry? Although it is true that many users of English will use it only as «shorthand», acquire only its «externals», there is no reason to believe that «English» in native settings will pidginize too. Pidginization occurs only locally where there is need for neutralization. The «wash» will be thinner and thicker in patches.

³⁹ Brumfit, 1982 suggests, incidentally, that the world needs a minimum of two international languages, since unity is not a universal desire of humanity's.

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