

Parrot Time

The Thinking of Speaking

Issue #15 May / June 2015

Sound Notation Systems

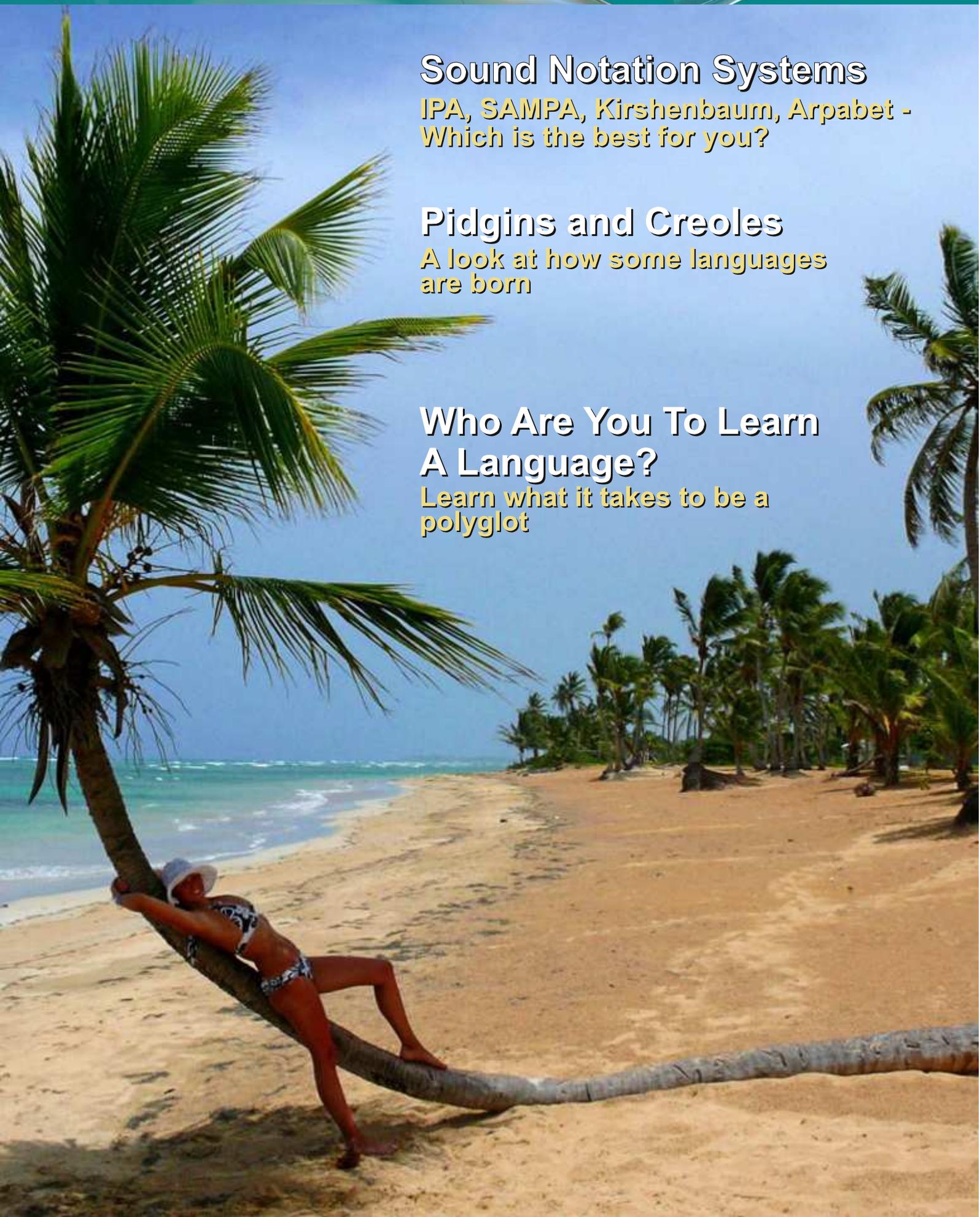
IPA, SAMPA, Kirshenbaum, Arpabet -
Which is the best for you?

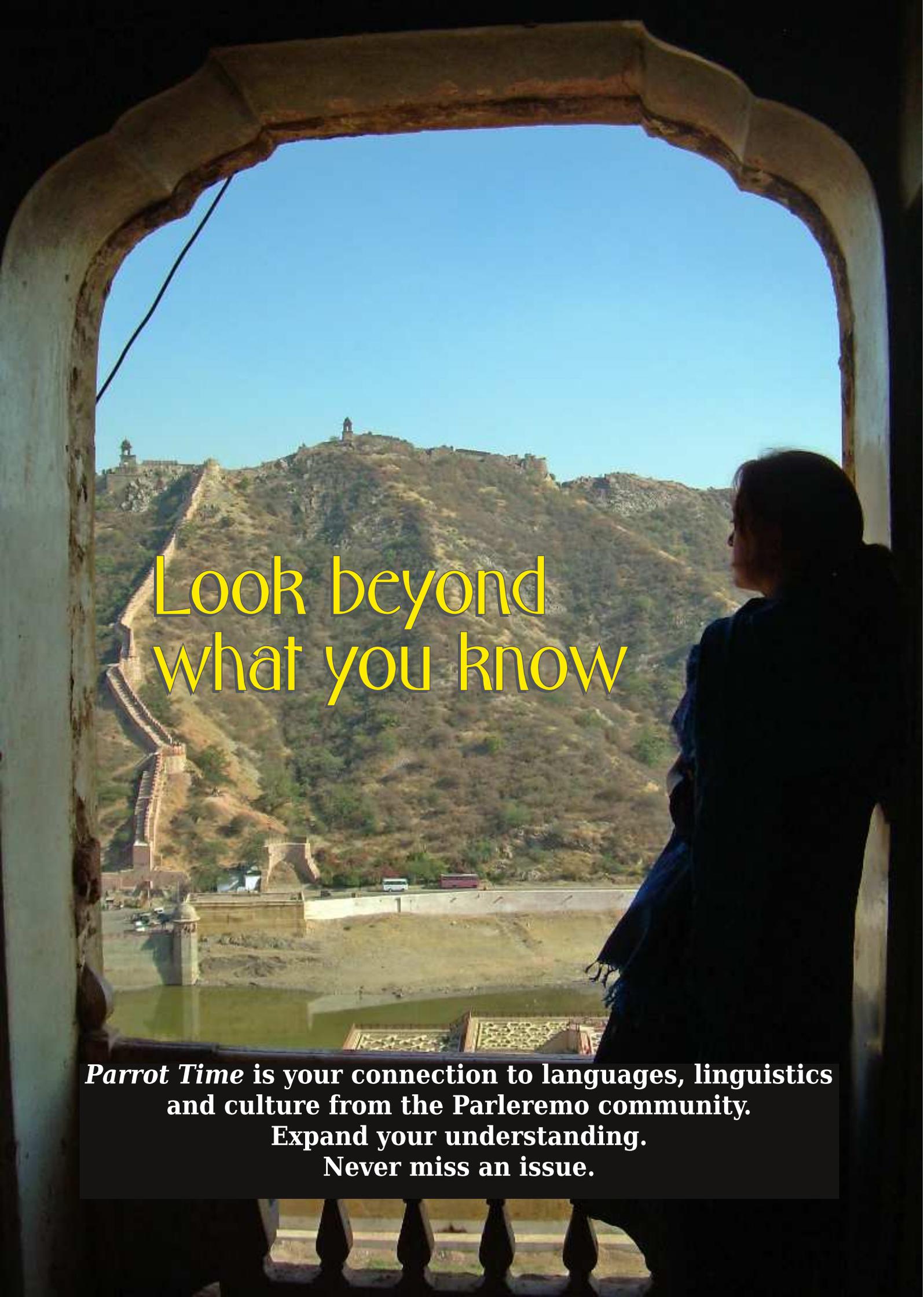
Pidgins and Creoles

A look at how some languages
are born

Who Are You To Learn A Language?

Learn what it takes to be a
polyglot



A woman in a blue sari is seen from the side, looking out from an arched window. The view outside shows a hillside with a fort on top, a long wall leading up the hill, and a dry well in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Look beyond
what you know

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Editor: Erik Zidowecki
Email: editor@parrottime.com

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Cover: A woman relaxes on a beach in the Dominican Republic. She has spent all Winter studying languages and needs a break in the sun.

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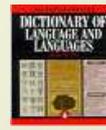
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Czy mówisz po polsku?

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Sounds Like

A short time ago, I was spending some time practising my pronunciation of some basic Italian phrases. I was using a simple app on my kindle that showed me the phrase, then I could click on the icon to hear it spoken by a native speaker.

Now, I know the rules of pronunciation for Italian. I know the rules of stress. I even understand how the entire phrase was formed, with the meaning for each word and their combinations.

But I just could not get my pronunciation to match that of the speaker.

I kept listening to the recording, making mental adjustments on what I was doing wrong. I would then try again, but still get it wrong. I can normally say what I need to properly (at least to my untrained ear). What was so wrong with me that I could not manage this *simple* phrase?

The more I thought about, I realized just how difficult learning the sounds of another language is. No matter what you might read about how close to your language another one is, it is still going to be strange to you, often in very subtle ways.

We become so attuned to our own language that we can tell when a phrase sounds wrong, grammatically, even if we cannot explain the rule for it. The same for the sounds. We can make the sound for someone else, and hope they can match it, but we can rarely explain how to make it.

Now, some people can handle new sounds better than others. We say they have an “ear for languages” to mean they can pick up a language quickly, but that can even more directly refer to their ability to mimic the sounds.

My problem was not just with the new sounds of a few of the Italian letters, as I have learned to match those (again, as far as my ear tells me). It was the flow of the speech. The sounds change based upon the other sounds around it.

In this case, I was having a problem combining “da” and “un” into an almost single sound while having it flow properly with the intonation of the next word. Still have not gotten it sounding good enough to even my own ears.

Sound like something which has happened to you (pun intended)?

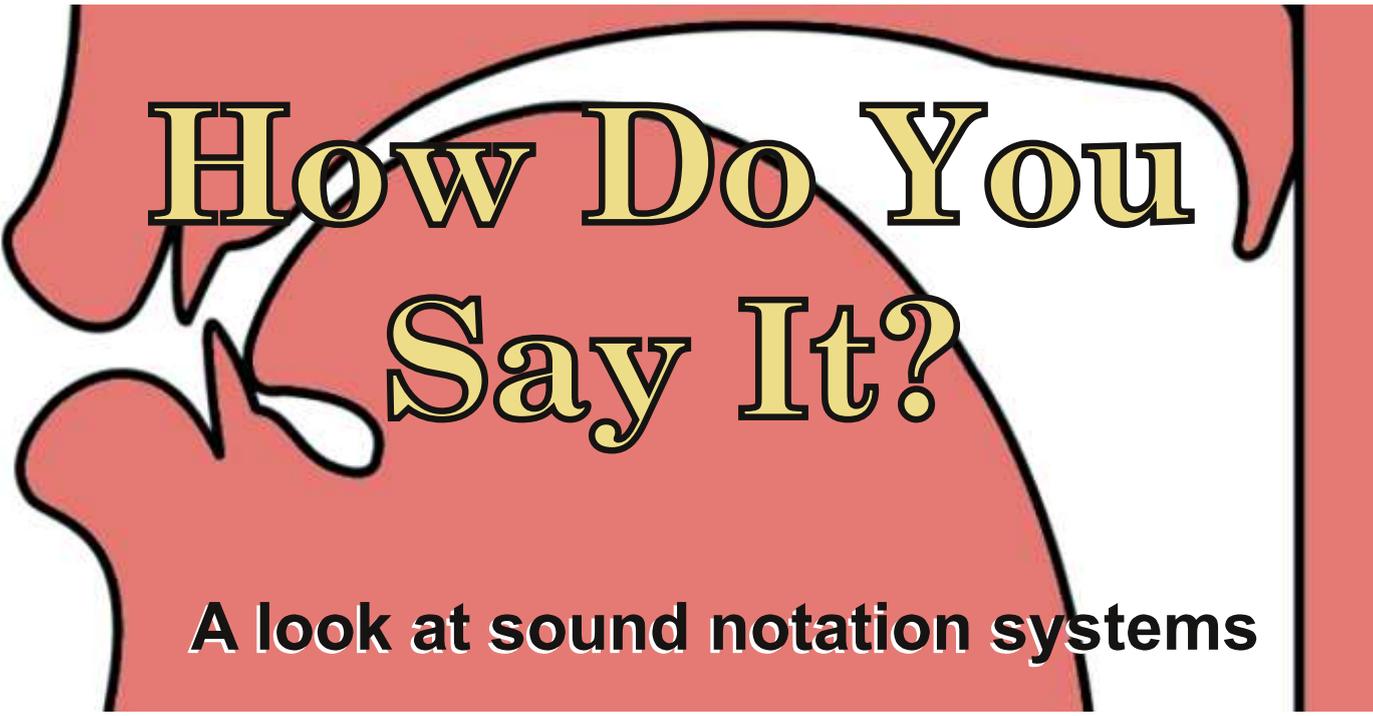


Erik Zidowecki

ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

A young woman sits in a library, studying how to pronounce the foreign sounds in a new language. Special notations have been created to make this process easier, but none of them are perfect.





How Do You Say It?

A look at sound notation systems

When you learn another language, everything about it is new and fresh. You need to learn an entirely different set of words for everything there is. The grammar is foreign, literally, and even the writing system might pose a challenge.

But perhaps the strangest issue you will encounter is the sound of the language. A language is composed of a series of sounds, called phonemes, represented by the letter and letter groupings in the words.

We learn these for our own language when we learn how to pronounce our alphabet, and we also recognize how these sounds change in certain situations. For example, in English, the sound of a vowel in a word can change if the letter “e” is added to the end, even if the “e” is not pronounced. The “a” in “can” is different from the “a” in “cane”, simply because of the addition of a silent letter

at the end.

In Italian, the letter “h” (acca) is silent, but changes the way “c” is pronounced. The letter combination of “ci” is pronounced like the English “ch”, but ironically, the combination of “chi” is like the English “k”.

Just learning the way the new writing system sounds (and I say “writing system” because, strictly speaking, not all languages use an alphabet. They might be syllabaries or pictographs instead) may not be the only hurdle. Depending on how different the new language is from your own, you may encounter some sounds that you have never heard or even be immediately capable of producing at the moment. There are far more sounds in languages than you will know in your native language, as odd as that may seem at first.

For example, if your native language is English, then you will be very familiar with

the sound of “th”, which is done by pressing the tip of your tongue to the bottom of your top teeth and exhaling slightly with a slight hum. However, for an Italian, this a completely foreign sound, as there is no “th” combination pronounced like that in Italian. And by way of reversal, Italian (as well as a few other Italic languages) has a rolled “r”, which can be difficult for a native English speaker to produce properly.

These different sounds can be learned, of course, but it will take a lot of practice. The question is how do you learn to pronounce sounds you have never known before?

Listening

The obvious first answer to this is by listening to native speakers. The more you hear the language spoken, either directly or through media like film and recordings, your ear will become attuned to the

sound. You can then begin to form the sound on your own, comparing it to what you hear. Audio courses like Pimsleur can be very useful for this.

Working with another person will be the most useful, because they will be able to correct your pronunciation and pick up on the nuances you are not yet capable of hearing. This can be done in a language class, with a tutor, with someone on Skype, or with a friend.

A newer approach to this, in the age of the internet, is using a recording system on a website which allows you to record yourself reading a text in the new language, then having others give you feedback, either written or by way of another recording. I think this method is the most versatile, since it is both interactive but also asynchronous - the person helping you does

not need to be online at the same time as you. You can also potentially get responses from a larger group of people.

Reading

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to practice with another person, or to use audio materials. This may be because the language is not widely spoken, you are unable to find someone willing to talk with you, or you simply do not have access to the resources that allow interaction or even listening to recorded materials.

If this is the case, then you will have to rely upon a book to teach you how to speak. Is that really possible? Well, you will always need to talk to a live person to truly refine your pronunciation, but a book is capable of explaining the basic sounds, so you can begin to speak the words properly.

Any written material trying to describe sounds will need to have some kind of standardized system so that it can be applied to many languages and be understood in the same way by other learners.

IPA

The first and most important sound notation system is the International Phonetic Alphabet, or simply IPA. It uses symbols based upon the Latin alphabet to depict sounds. That is, while the Latin alphabet can be used to represent most of the sounds in English, the IPA uses it, along with many other symbols and variants, to represent all of those sounds as well as those in other languages.

The IPA was devised by the International Phonetic Association and they occasionally revise it by adding, removing, or modifying letters and diacritics. Currently, there are around 107 “letters” and 52 diacritics (marks that can be added to a letter to further define the sound).

It was first created by a group of British and French language teachers in 1886. French linguist Paul Passy led the initial creation of the alphabet, but the idea was proposed to him in a letter by Danish linguist Otto Jespersen.

It started out as a spelling reform for English, but was expanded to make it usable for other languages. At first, the sounds represented by the letters could vary between the languages, but in 1888, it was revised so that the letter to sound representation was uniform for everyone.



Man forming his mouth to produce a wide, protruded vowel

How Do You Say It? - A look at sound notation systems

This is one the reasons that despite its purpose to make it easier for people to learn pronunciations, it is still only commonly used in academic work. Not even all dictionaries use it.

Another problem, and not specially with the IPA, is that despite being standardized, it is hard to get people to agree on how a sound should be represented. I learned this when I was creating a new design for products. I wanted to show the letters “IPA” written in IPA. So I found what I thought was the proper way, then asked a group of people to verify (I did not want to put a design that was wrong on products I was selling).

What I got was a long debate involving a dozen people, arguing over the proper way it should be done. I was very surprised, since I was fooled by the idea of it being “standardized”. The problem is not with the standardization but rather with how different people hear and speak sounds.

Think of it this way: if I ask five people to look at a painting, then tell me what it means to them, I am likely to get five different responses, because each person is seeing it with the biased of their own ideas and feelings, which are unique from everyone else.

Similarly, our brains and ears are trained differently, depending upon what languages



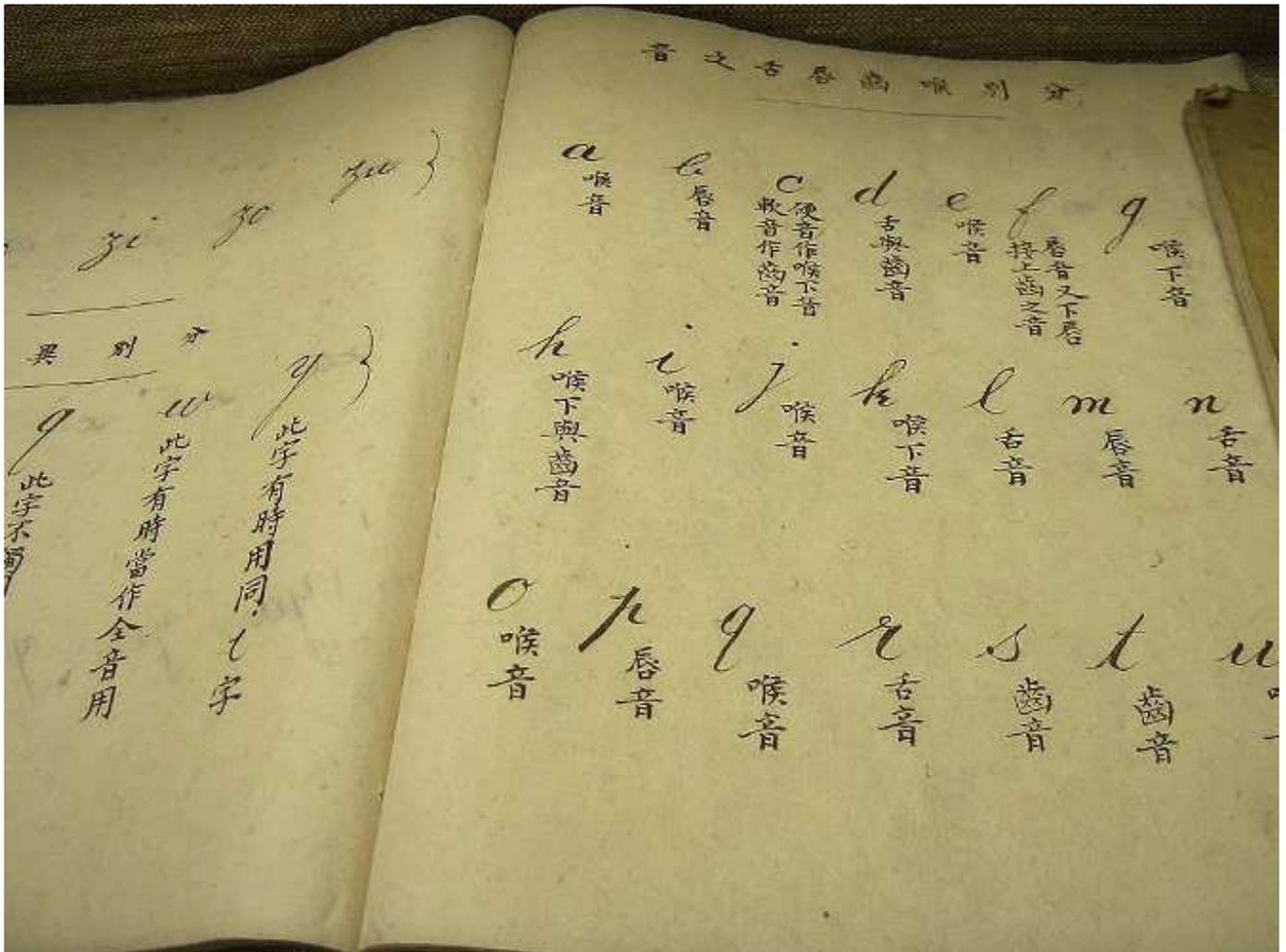
Entries in dictionary which use IPA to denote pronunciation

and sounds we have heard and used during our lives. Some people will understand a sound in one way, but another person, while hearing the same overall sound, will hear slight variants. Perhaps they hear a more defined palatization or the trace of a trill. In that case, they will want to represent it differently from each other, while a person who is new to all of it will not hear a difference.

This can happen between two people that have the same native language. Now imagine what it is like between two people with different languages, trying to define the sounds of a third?

X-SAMPA ⇄	IPA ⇄	IPA Image ⇄	Description ⇄	Examples ⇄
a	a	a	open front unrounded vowel	French <i>dame</i> [dam], Spanish <i>padre</i> [ˈpaD4e]
b	b	b	voiced bilabial plosive	English <i>bed</i> [bɛd], French <i>bon</i> [bɔ~]
b_<	ɸ	ɸ	voiced bilabial implosive	Sindhi <i>baru</i> [b_<arʈ]
c	c	c	voiceless palatal plosive	Hungarian <i>latyak</i> [ˈlɒcɒk]
d	d	d	voiced alveolar plosive	English <i>dig</i> [dɪg], French <i>doigt</i> [dwa]
d^	ɖ	ɖ	voiced retroflex plosive	Swedish <i>hord</i> [huːd^]
d_<	ɗ	ɗ	voiced alveolar implosive	Sindhi <i>daru</i> [d_<arʈ]
e	e	e	close-mid front unrounded vowel	French <i>ses</i> [se], American English <i>mate</i> [met]
f	f	f	voiceless labiodental fricative	English <i>five</i> [faɪv], French <i>femme</i> [fam]

Table showing X-SAMPA, IPA, description of sound, and language sound equivalencies



Schoolbook used by the boy emperor Puyi.

The page shown is explaining in Chinese how and where in the mouth to pronounce the Latin letters

SAMPA and X-SAMPA

A third problem with the IPA has actually come about because of the increase of computer usage. While much of the IPA is based on Latin letters, there are also a large number of extra characters and diacritics which cannot be easily typed into a computer. Even then, a specific font is required to display and print them correctly.

This display issue was tackled in the 1980s with the creation of the Speech Assessment Methods Phonetic Alphabet, or SAMPA. Simply put, it is the IPA converted into basic ASCII (the common symbols you can reproduce

with a keyboard). It uses the same letters as IPA whenever possible, but replacing them with others when necessary. For example, the schwa (an upside-down lowercase “e” - ə) in IPA, representing a mid central vowel, is replaced with the “at” sign, @, in SAMPA.

SAMPA was developed in the European Commission-funded ESPRIT project “Speech Assessment Methods” (SAM), and was initially created just to cover the sounds of English, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Dutch, and Danish. Each set of symbols only matched the language they were made for, similar to the way the IPA

was first created. Therefore, a revised set was made, to include all languages in a standardized version. This is known as X-SAMPA.

This was all done before Unicode, the system to represent all the characters of all the languages of the world, was supportive of the IPA. Now that Unicode and its full computer version, UTF-8, are so widely used, the need for SAMPA and X-SAMPA has greatly decreased. However, it is still a system that should be recognized alongside IPA for those who may not be able to properly display Unicode.

Kirshenbaum

SAMPA and X-SAMPA are not the only attempts to make IPA easier to use on computers. In 1992, a group of developers, led by Evan Kirshenbaum, also started creating a system which mapped IPA to ASCII characters. Like SAMPA, they used the existing IPA alphabet when possible, linking each phonetic character to a single keyboard character. Then they would apply extra ASCII characters for IPA diacritics.

As a comparison between the three, we can use the Swedish “Sj” sound. It is a voiceless fricative phoneme and represented in IPA by [ʃ]. This is not a character which is available on a keyboard, so in X-SAMPA and Kirshenbaum, it would be written as /x\ and /x^/, respectively. Note that IPA is normally enclosed in brackets ([]) while SAMPA is surrounded by slashes (/ /).

Phonetic Equivalence

Now, if you are like me, neither IPA nor SAMPA are going to be of much use to you when you still do not understand how to match those phonology terms to the way you move your mouth. Most people who are attempting to learn a language do not want to learn a whole other system just so they can properly pronounce “cappuccino”.

For this reason, many phrasebooks and pronunciation charts depend on “phonetic equivalencies” to describe how a letter is pronounced. What they do is attempt to tell the reader what the sound is like or similar to in their own language and,

IPA Symbol	ARPabet Symbol	Word	IPA Transcription	ARPabet Transcription
[p]	[p]	parsley	[ˈpɑːsli]	[p aa r s l iy]
[t]	[t]	tarragon	[ˈtærəɡən]	[t ae r ax g aa n]
[k]	[k]	catnip	[ˈkætnɪp]	[k ae t n ix p]
[b]	[b]	bay	[beɪ]	[b ey]
[d]	[d]	dill	[dɪl]	[d ih l]
[g]	[g]	garlic	[ˈɡɑːrlɪk]	[g aa r l ix k]
[m]	[m]	mint	[mɪnt]	[m ih n t]
[n]	[n]	nutmeg	[ˈnʌtmeg]	[n ah t m eh g]
[ŋ]	[ng]	ginseng	[ˈdʒɪnsɪŋ]	[j h ih n s ix ng]
[f]	[f]	fennel	[ˈfɛnəl]	[f eh n el]
[v]	[v]	clove	[kloʊv]	[k l ow v]
[θ]	[th]	thistle	[ˈθɪsəl]	[th ih s el]
[ð]	[dh]	heather	[ˈhɛðə]	[h eh dh axr]
[s]	[s]	sage	[seɪdʒ]	[s ey jh]
[z]	[z]	hazelnut	[ˈheɪzlnʌt]	[h ey z el n ah t]
[ʃ]	[sh]	squash	[skwɑːʃ]	[s k w a sh]
[ʒ]	[zh]	ambrosia	[æmˈbrɒʒiə]	[ae m b row zh ax]
[tʃ]	[ch]	chicory	[ˈtʃɪkəri]	[ch ih k axr iy]
[dʒ]	[jh]	sage	[seɪdʒ]	[s ey jh]
[l]	[l]	licorice	[ˈlɪkəriʃ]	[l ih k axr ix sh]
[w]	[w]	kiwi	[ˈkiwi]	[k iy w iy]
[r]	[r]	parsley	[ˈpɑːsli]	[p aa r s l iy]
[j]	[y]	yew	[juː]	[y uw]
[h]	[h]	horseradish	[ˈhɔːsrædɪʃ]	[h ao r s r ae d ih sh]
[ʔ]	[q]	uh-oh	[ʔɑːoʊ]	[q ah q ow]
[ɹ]	[dx]	butter	[ˈbʌtə]	[b ah dx axr]
[ɹ]	[nx]	wintergreen	[ˈwɪntəˈɡriːn]	[w ih nx axr g r i n]
[θ]	[el]	thistle	[ˈθɪsəl]	[th ih s el]

Table showing both IPA and Arpabet transcriptions for sounds.

when there is a difference, approximate the sound using examples.

Taking the example of “cappuccino”, you could look at an Italian pronunciation chart to see how to say the letter “c”. IPA would list it as “[tʃ]” and “[k]” (it can have two sounds) and SAMPA would list it as “/tʃ/” and “/k/”.

The sounds could be described as “voiceless postalveolar affricate” and “voiceless velar plosive”. That is all fine, if you understand those meanings or the symbols. The average person who

has just picked up a phrasebook for their trip to Italy is not likely to.

In that case, the phrasebook is more likely to describe the sound (assuming it is an Italian phrasebook for English speakers, since equivalencies are based upon the person’s native language) as something like

- When followed by “e” or “i”, as “ch” in English “cherry”
- When followed by “a”, “o”, “u”, or a consonant, as “c” in English “cook”

This method of approximation is not going to be as accurate as IPA or SAMPA, especially since those English words might be spoken differently depending on region and dialect. However, for most people, it is a start, and will give them the confidence to try to pronounce the language. And isn't that the important thing?

Some phrasebooks and learning books would also use a phonetic system to show how entire words should be pronounced. "Cappuccino" could be represented by "cap-poo-CHEE-noh" or "kahppootcheenoa", with each syllable being spelled out in English phonetics. Notice how much of a difference there is between the examples; there is no standard method for writing things phonetically.

While the IPA methods might scare a learner, a native speaker or IPA user would be laughing at the phonetic equivalencies.

Arpabet

Getting a person to properly pronounce the sounds of a language is a complicated task. It gets even more difficult to teach a computer how to speak. Believe it or not, there was another phonetic representation system devised to map English language sounds to ASCII, but this one was not based upon IPA.

As part of the Speech Understanding Project (1971–1976), the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) matched each sound with one or two capital letters. Digits were also added,



Old computer with speech synthesizer, designed to approximate human pronunciation

indicating stress by being placed at the end of the stressed syllabic vowel. Even punctuation marks were included, used similarly to the written language, which helped to show intonation changes, like at the end of sentences and clauses.

When home computers became available in the 1980s, Arpabet became the method of programming speech synthesizers for various machines, including the Commodore 64, the Amiga, and the IBM PC. It is still in use today in the CMU Pronouncing Dictionary, a public domain pronouncing dictionary created by Carnegie Mellon University.

Lahst Werd

Given all the problems involved in representing pronunciation in writing, when you are learning the sounds of a new language, the best advice is to find a native speaker and hope they have

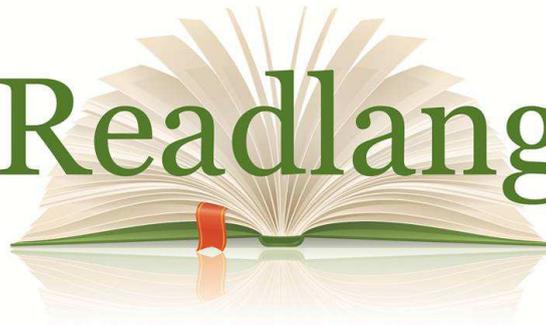
the patience to let you practise on them. If that is not possible, you should invest in some kind of audio course or guide.

All of the written methods have their purposes, strengths and weaknesses, and will continue to be used in phrasebooks and course books. Perhaps some newer methods will be created in the future, hopefully one that uses simpler symbols and descriptions than IPA without the wild variations that exist with phonetic equivalences.

Then maybe I can finally order that cappuccino! **PT**



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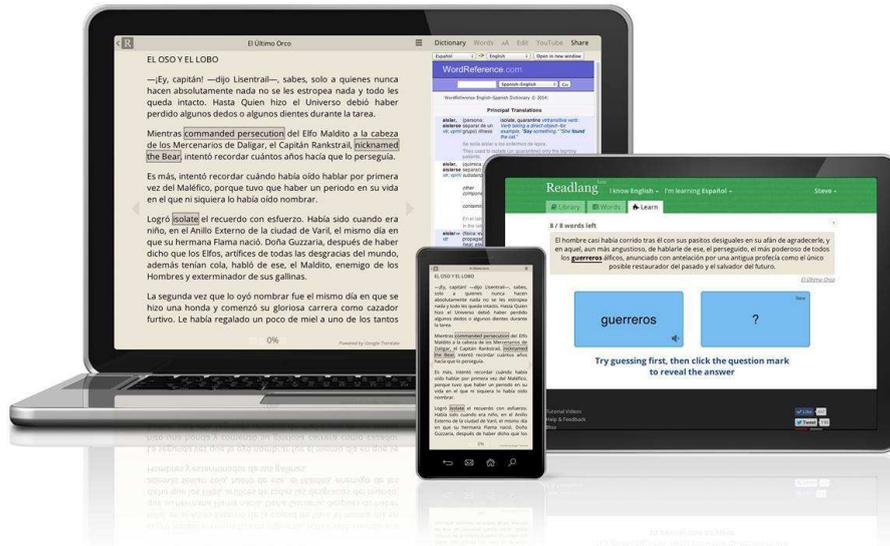


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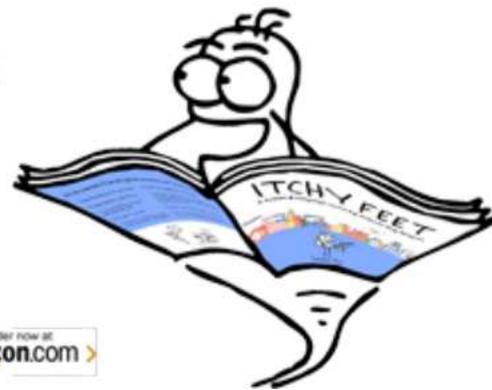
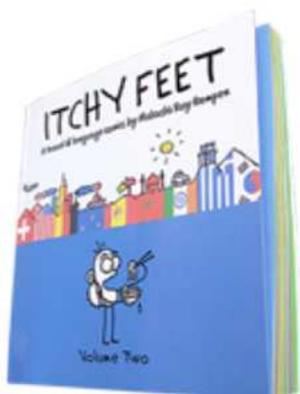
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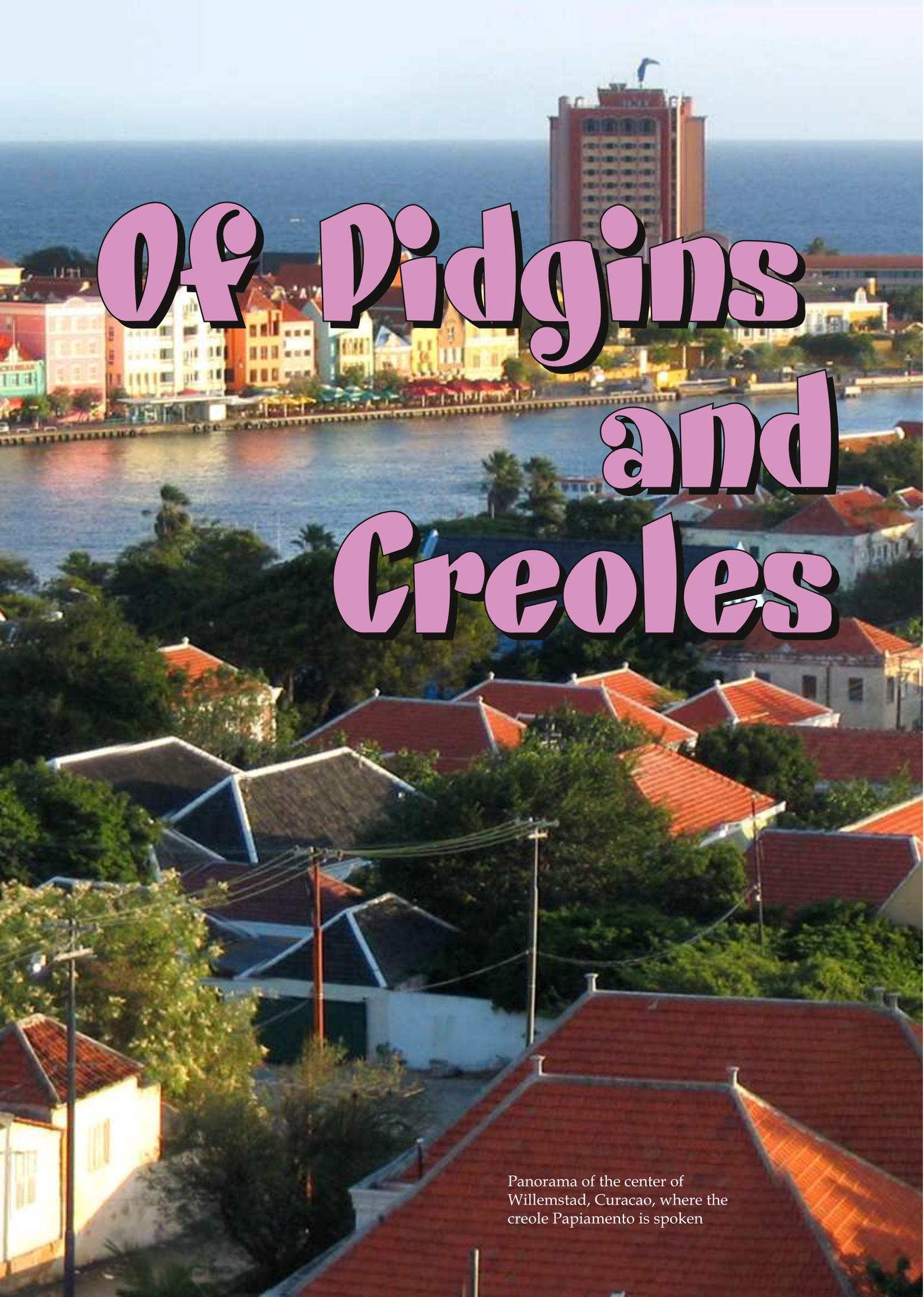
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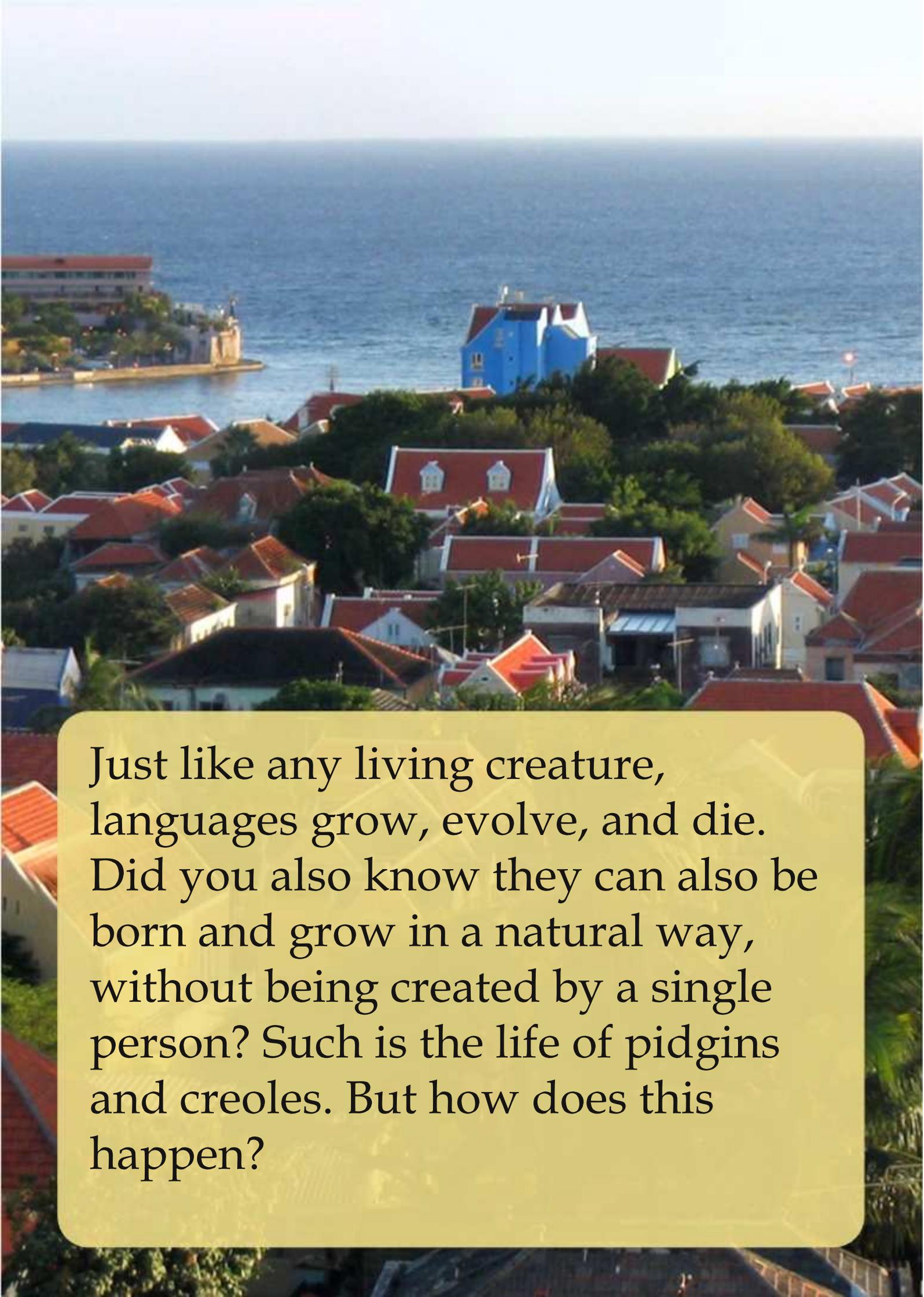
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Of Pidgins and Creoles

Panorama of the center of
Willemstad, Curacao, where the
creole Papiamentu is spoken

An aerial photograph of a coastal town. The foreground is filled with numerous houses featuring red-tiled roofs. A prominent blue building with a white roof is situated on a hillside. In the background, the ocean stretches to the horizon under a clear sky. A yellow text box is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Just like any living creature, languages grow, evolve, and die. Did you also know they can also be born and grow in a natural way, without being created by a single person? Such is the life of pidgins and creoles. But how does this happen?

There are several thousand living languages in the world, most of which have evolved over long periods of time rather naturally. Some of these became isolated and developed very differently from their related languages. Other were influenced by the neighbouring languages, taking on different grammar and vocabulary, to diverge into varied dialects or even completely new languages.

There is one kind of language evolution that is more similar to two or more languages creating an offspring which later becomes an “adult” language. When two languages meet and merge, they create pidgins and creoles. These are completely organic creatures, which then evolve in their own ways, taking traits from both parents, similar to a child.

The Terms

The terms *pidgin* and *creole* are technical terms used to distinguish between two stages of this language growth. Creole refers to the product of creolization, which is the mix of people, cultures, or languages. You can see this easily in culture through music, art, and food when aspects of the existing culture and an overlaying culture, perhaps due to migration or invasion, combine into something new.

One of the best known examples of this mixing exists in the southern United States area of Louisiana. Before the country was formed, Louisiana was a French colony, and slaves from Africa were brought in

to work the land. During that time, much of the African and French cultures merged, forming a unique mix of religion, food, and music. Cultural aspects from other groups became part of it later, such as Amerindian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Caribbean.

A very popular example of this mix of foods is the dish *gumbo*. It comes in numerous variants, combining the culinary practices of the French, the Spanish, Native American tribes, and Africa. There are also aspects of Italian and German cuisine.

French settlers learned new ways of cooking and how to use local edible plants from the native tribes of the New World. When slave ships started arriving in 1719, they brought rice as well as men who knew how to grow and cook it. When German settlers arrived in 1721,

they brought with them the art of making sausages. All these ingredients and more combined in many ways to form the now traditional gumbo. It has also become a metaphor itself for the mixing of cultures in Louisiana.

That new culture is a creole, but many people mistakenly assume then that “creole” refers *only* to that - the French and African mix.

The term “pidgin”, sometimes spelled “pigion”, originally referred to Chinese Pidgin English. After English came to China in the 1630s, a need for a shared language arose in order to conduct trade. Local workers communicated with their English-speaking counterparts through broken English, which developed its own patterns and forms. Most likely, the word is the Chinese pronunciation of the English word “busi-



Creole women in traditional costumes during Carnival in French Guiana

ness”. Eventually, the term became used for all pidgin languages.

A more fanciful idea is that it derives from the name of the bird, “pigeon” in English, which was once used for carrying messages between people.

Sometimes, people confuse the terms with languages that have incorporated them into their names. Some examples are *Kriol*, an Australian creole language, *Haitian Creole*, the language used in Haiti, and *Hawaiian Pidgin*. The description of the language has become part of the name, if not replacing it entirely.

Pidgins

The most basic definition of a pidgin is “a simplified form of speech formed from one or more existing languages, used by people who have no other language in common”. As was mentioned above, the original pidgin languages was developed out of the need for two groups of people to communicate. This is most commonly used for business and trade purposes, when it is beneficial to both sides.

A pidgin will develop its own basic grammar and vocabulary, but in rather simplified ways compared to the “parent” languages. Normally, the majority of the vocabulary is from the target or larger language (often English), and most of the sounds, grammar, and syntax comes from the local language. Most pidgins remain small and specialized, being called “trade languages”. Pidgins do



Creole food of Louisiana cuisine

not normally arise just from two languages existing next to each other.

Perhaps the best way to explain pidgin languages is by example. Let us look at *West African Pidgin English*. It was developed during the late 17th century, when the British were running a slave trade in the Atlantic. The sailors and slave traders spoke English between themselves while being in constant contact with African villagers, who spoke a number of West African Niger–Congo languages.

Since both sides needed to communicate for business purposes, they started trying to learn each others language and met in the middle. Once a basic system was developed and became adopted, it spread to other areas needing it for the same purposes. As the British travelled inland,

the pidgin spread and developed.

Then it started to diverge and become more specialized, like regular languages do, depending on which languages were mixing with the English. These became *Gambian Pidgin English* (Aku), *Sierra Leone Pidgin English* (Krio), *Liberian Pidgin English*, *Ghanaian Pidgin English*, *Nigerian Pidgin English*, and *Cameroon Pidgin English* (Kamtok).

When using a pidgin, it is often rather simple to understand what is being said if you already know the stronger language, like English. You just simplify your hearing on it, looking for the most basic words and elements.

An example in *Nigerian Pidgin English* would be the question “How you dey?”, which can easily be understood to mean “How are

you doing today?”. The words are the same or shortened, making them easier to learn, and the extraneous ones are removed. Spelling can also be simplified, such as “I no no” for “I do not know”. The first “no” is used to imply the negative with the second one being a phonetic spelling of “know”. A few more examples are:

“Gi mi.” = “Give it to me.”
 “I dey fine.” = “I’m fine. I’m doing well.”

“I no sabi.” = “I don’t understand.”
 “Wetin dey happen?” = “What’s going on? What’s happening?”
 “Listen well well” = “Pay attention”
 “Troway” = waste, throw away

The most obvious change from English to the pidgin here is how some sounds are simplified. “Give” is shorted to just “gi”. “Throw away” gets compressed and the “th”

sound is shortened to a “t” sound.

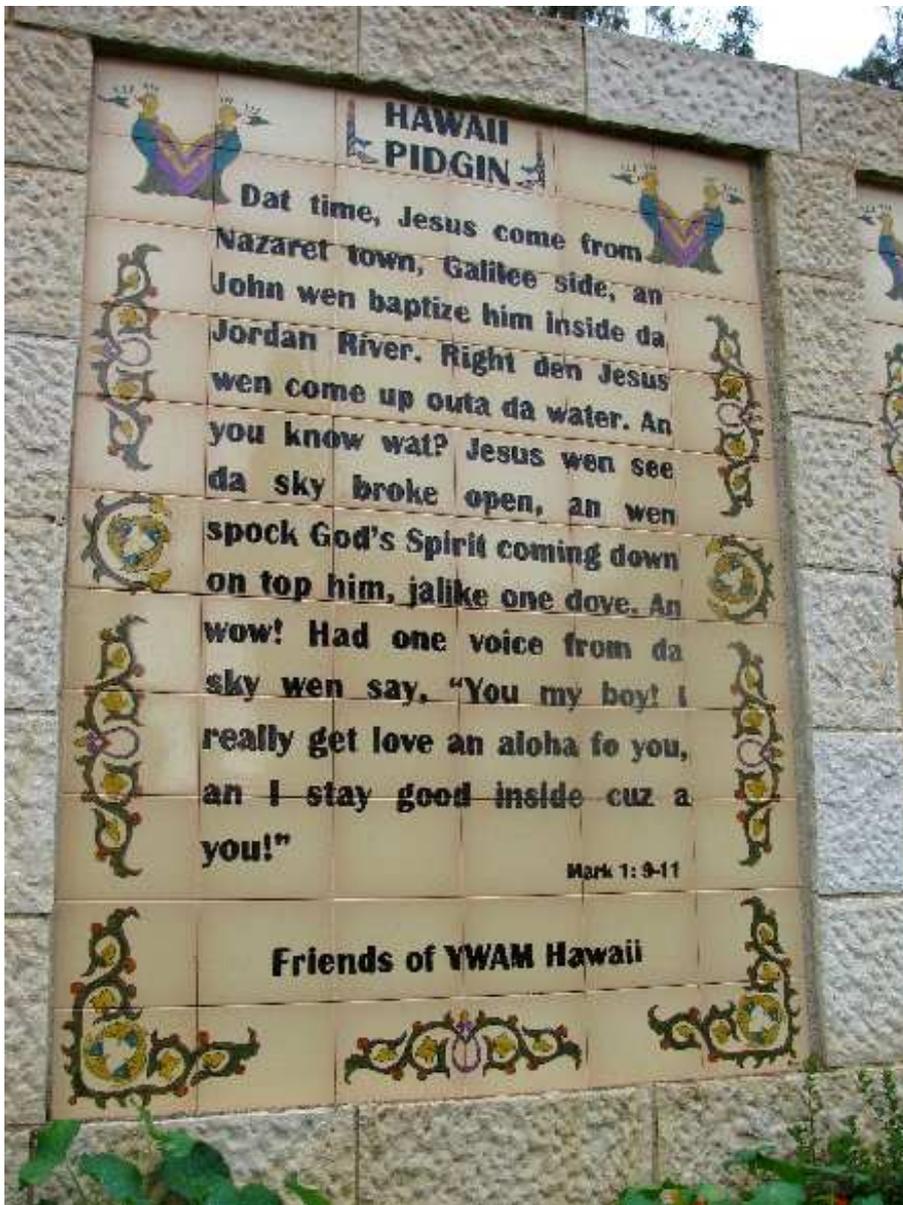
Other words get replaced with something completely different, perhaps coming from another language instead of the target one. In this case, “dey” is a replacement for “is” and “be”. “Sabi”, meaning “to know”, is actually coming from Spanish and Portuguese influences with the word “saber”.

Sometimes, the meaning might be a little more hidden, coming about because of an idea rather than the literal meaning. “Comot!” means “Get out of here!”, which might be a corruption of “come out” or “go out”, depending on the pronunciation. It might also come from “come on”. “Abeg” means “please”, coming from “I beg you”.

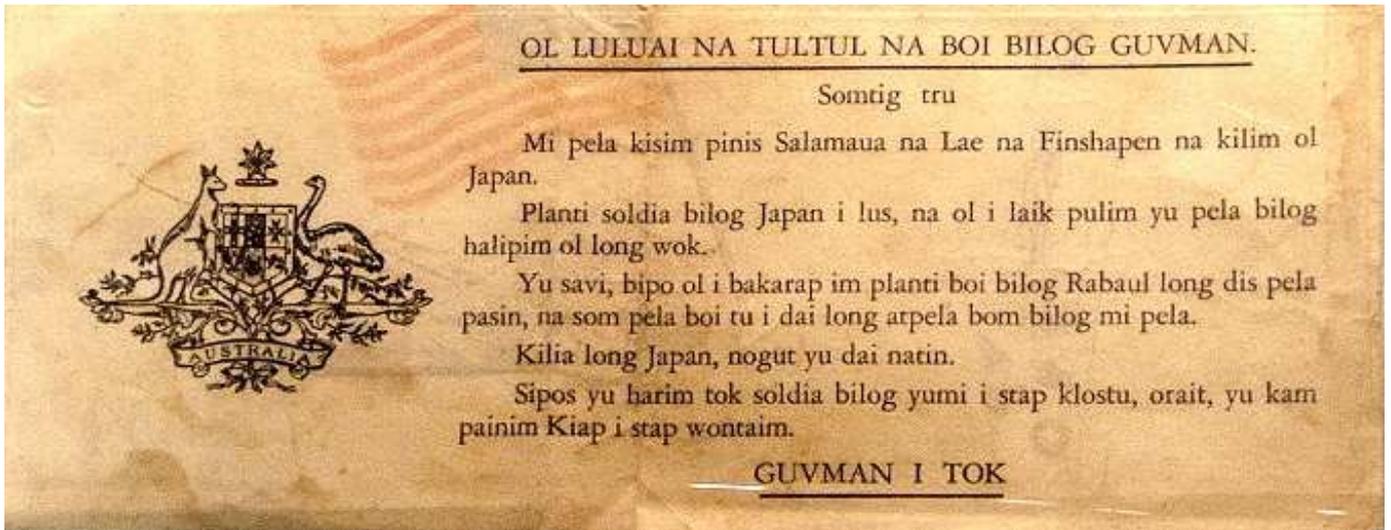
Another common aspect of a pidgin is the repeating of words to emphasize a meaning. “listen well well” means “listen very well” or “pay attention”. Note that this is different from “I no no”, which is using a different spelling, not repetition.

Since pidgins normally developed when major colonial powers moved into less developed areas, they were mixed with the languages of those powers, mainly English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French.

So now you know how two languages can produce a new one which has traits of both, like a baby. But what happens when that baby pidgin grows up?



Hawaii Pidgin inscriptions on a wall. It is a quote from the Bible



Pidgin English leaflet, which was dropped over New Guinea from Allied aircraft during WWII.

ALL LULUAI, TULTULS AND GOVERNMENT BOYS.

We have defeated the Japanese and gained control of Salamaua, Lae and Finschafen. Most of the Japanese soldiers are marooned and they want to force you to help them and work for them. You know that in the past they have hurt and abused many locals from Rabaul in the manner, also some locals have been by our powerful bombs. Keep away from the Japanese, there is no need for you to be killed for nothing. If you get this message out soldiers are nearby, so some and fine the Patrol Officer who is with them. The Government says this.

Creoles

Nobody speaks a pidgin as their first language. People who speak a pidgin also speak another language as their native tongue. Most pidgins are short term languages, existing only for a few years or decades during the time in which they are needed. If a pidgin does manage to remain in use, or survive, for longer than that, it might develop into a *creole*.

Creoles are the languages that are developed by the children of pidgin speakers. When the children of the adults speaking the pidgin start learning it as their first language, it has proven itself to be a stable language. Then, as the children grow up, they expand the vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

While pidgins are often limited to a vocabulary of around 300 words, creoles typically have at least 1000 to 3000 words. In a sense, the young language grows up along with the children. We consider this generation to be native speakers of the creole language. This process is called *nativization*.

It may sound a bit strange to describe the changes in a language as similar to those of a person, but the comparison is not so far off. An odd occurrence which linguistic scholars have noticed is that creoles tend to share more grammatical similarities with other creoles than they do with the parent languages, much the same way children brought up in the same environment can develop the same

habits, even when they have different parents and backgrounds.

There is no widely accepted theory on how or why this happens. One theory is that the formation of creoles reflects the most basic grammatical structure the human mind can invent, so they are all going to be developed with that baseline. More elaborate grammars takes a much longer time to develop, being influenced by the situation of the speakers and the older languages nearby.

One of the most spoken creoles is *Tok Pisin*. It is spoken by over five million people, primarily in Papua New Guinea, where it is the official language. Over one million people are taught it as a first language. Most people there speak it to a

certain degree, but not necessarily fluently.

The name comes from the English words “talk” and “pidgin”, and in true pidgin manner, those words became simplified into *Tok Pisin*. The vocabulary is mostly Indo-European, coming mainly from English, German, Portuguese, and Latin, while the rest comes from Malayo-Polynesian and Trans-New-Guinea languages. The grammar structure is mostly Austronesian based.

Tok Pisin can be easy for a native English speaker to understand with many of the words being simplifications, such as *go-het* (go ahead), *hariup* (hurry up), *kamaut* (come

out), and *sidaun* (sit down).

An interesting aspect of Tok Pisin is its usage of *inclusive* and *exclusive* forms of pronouns. Western languages normally just have a singular and plural forms (I, we), while Tok Pisin also has a dual and triple form, which are used to define exactly who is involved. They are constructed by adding the words “tu” and “tri” into the pronoun forms.

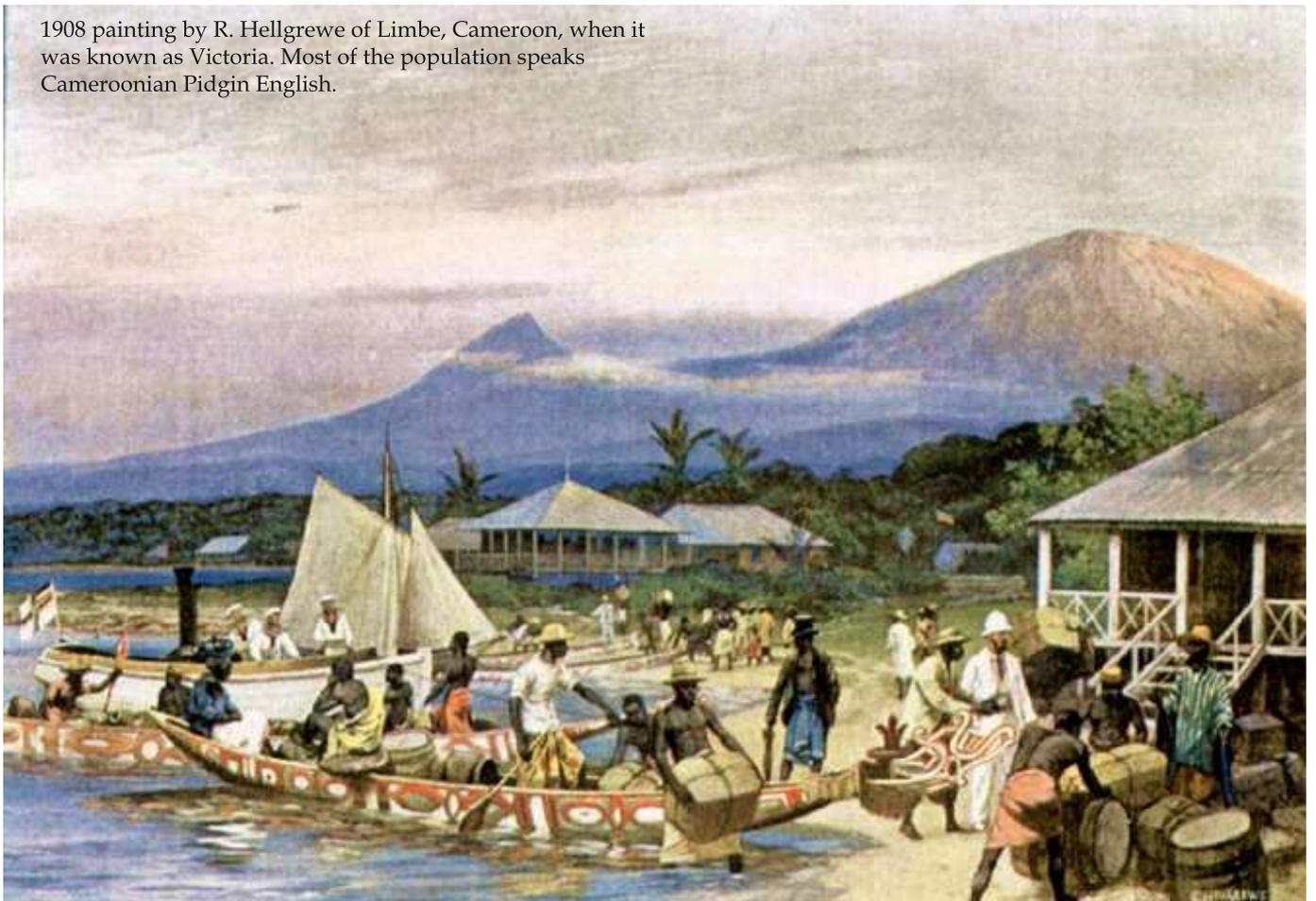
Tok Pisin also utilizes *reduplication*, mainly to distinguish between different words. For example, the word for “ship” is “sip”, but since that might also sound like a corruption of “sheep”, it is doubled, so “sheep” is “sipsip”.

Some other examples of

reduplication are “lukluk” meaning “look after; watch” compared to “luk” for “look”, “singsing” (dance, celebrate) compare to “sing” (to sing), “tingting” (thoughts, opinion) compared to “ting” (think), “waswas” (bathe, swim) compared to “was” (to wash something), and “toktok” (talk, conversation) compared to “tok” (say).

Papiamentu is another creole, spoken mainly on the Caribbean ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao). It was developed by mixing English, Spanish, Portuguese, some indigenous languages, and some Dutch (mainly for the names of the months). This one has evolved a little differently, having two dia-

1908 painting by R. Hellgrewe of Limbe, Cameroon, when it was known as Victoria. Most of the population speaks Cameroonian Pidgin English.



lects, which is a result of developing on three separated islands. The dialects also have differences in spelling, and this extends even to the name of the language, which can be spelled as *Papiamentu* or *Papiamento*.

Papiamento is more Portuguese based than English, while also containing a mix from the various languages. From Portuguese comes *sapatu* (shoe) from *sapato*, *kachó* (dog) from *cachorro*, and *galiña* (chicken) from *galinha*. From Spanish comes *hòmber* (man) from *hombre* and *siudat* (city) from *ciudad*. Dutch gives it *apel* (apple) from *appel* and *buki* (book) from *boekje*. English contributes as well, like *bèk* (back).

For a comparison of phrases, there is “Bon bini” (Welcome) in Papiamento with “Bem vindo” in Portuguese. Likewise, *bon suerte* (good luck) to *boa sorte* and *mi ta comprende* (I understand) to *comprendo*.

There are no accurate numbers on just how many creole languages exist, but it is estimated that around one hundred creole languages have “been born” since 1500, mostly due to European colonization. The creole with the greatest number of speakers is Haitian Creole, with over ten million native speakers.

Oddities

Weird as it may sound, not all creoles develop from pidgins, and they are not always easily recognizable. One



"Kapú" (Keep out in Hawaiian pidgin) - a familiar sign on the island of Lanai, most of which is owned by a single pineapple-producing company

example is the language of *Afrikaans*, spoken in parts of Africa, which developed when the Dutch settlers arrived there during the 17th century. Sometimes it is referred to as a dialect of Dutch, though it has adopted words from other languages, like Malay, Portuguese and Bantu. As a result, there are arguments, sometimes rather heated, about whether Afrikaans is an independent language, a dialect of Dutch, or a Dutch creole.

Even rarer, sometimes a merger results in a creole that becomes so popular, it is elevated to being the dominant language, forcing out the original language. A case of this occurred on the island of Rama Cay, off the coast of Nicaragua, where the indigenous language of the Rama people became mixed with English, creating *Rama Cay Creole*. As the natives switched to using this, the parent language of Rama became abandoned and is

now on the edge of extinction. Sadly, Rama Cay Creole is struggling to survive as well.

All Grown Up

Born out of necessity and raised among human children, pidgins and creoles are fascinating creatures. They not only act as a bridge between languages and cultures, but they also give us insight into how languages develop, since they are created and brought to adulthood in a relatively short time.

To me, they are the true auxiliary languages, ones that are agreed upon and accepted naturally. They are also a testament that while languages can decline and die out, they can also be born and flourish into full languages, even becoming the official languages of a country. I hope you take some time to consider learning one the next time you are looking for a new language. **PT**

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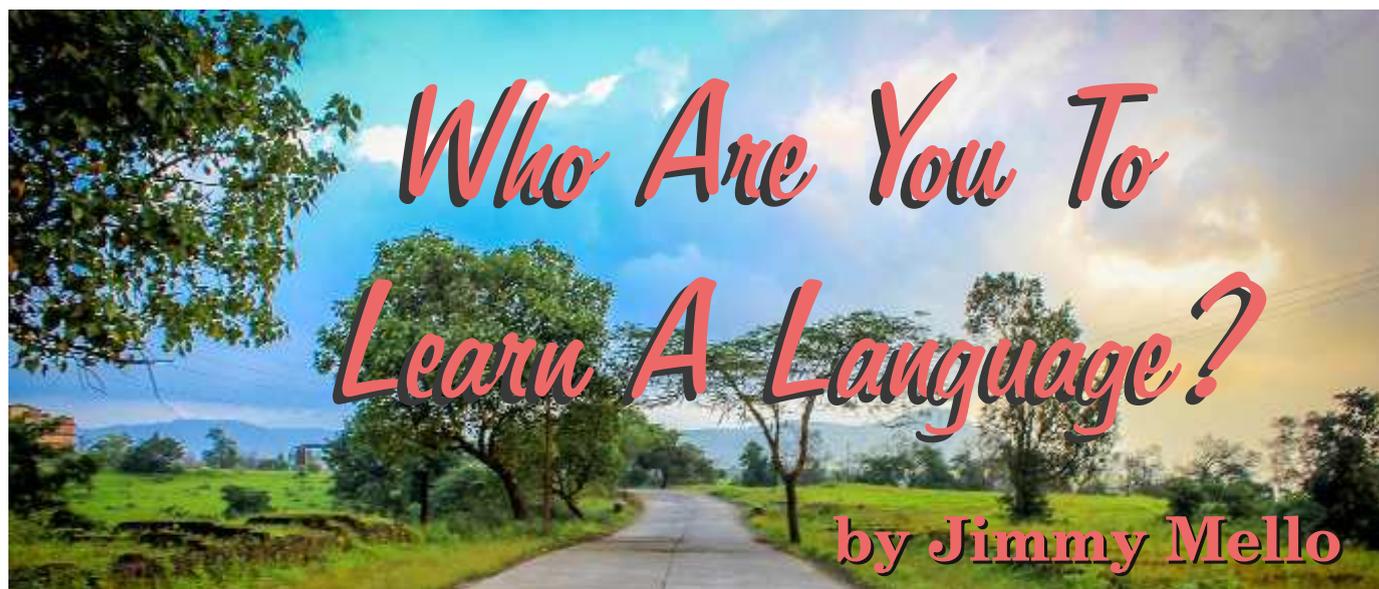
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Before getting into the article, let me propose some scenarios:

Studying languages nowadays is a very popular thing, we have lots of free or paid programs and apps, from the famous ones like free Duolingo to the controversial and expensive Rosetta Stone. Do they really work? If so, will they always work no matter what and who uses them?

We have also a new scenario: polyglots from all over the world are appearing and showing their fabulous skills. If they can learn 5, 10 and 30 languages, the question is can we reproduce their results on other people? If, so how can we do that?

Common people, I mean non-polyglots or language learners, can't even imagine this Polyglot Scenario. I grew up in huge monolingual country, Brazil. Here we do not need any language other than Portuguese. We have everything in Portuguese, TV, radio, books, the internet; even with the country being surrounded by Spanish speakers, the population doesn't really care about learning it. English, being an international language, attracts more people's attention, especially with the "Americanization". American films and singers are quite popular among us, so this really attracts people's attention. This scenario is not only in Brazil, but in Russia, Italy, Poland, Spain and others. Those people can't still really believe that they can learn a new lan-

guage - a polyglot in Brazil is like a "Mythical Creature". The issue is: how can we help them to overcome this barrier and misconception? And beyond that, how can we help them to learn a language?

When we decide to learn a language, one of the first things we think about is where and how should we start. This is surely a good question, but not the best question! That's because if you don't know who you are, this can be very difficult. That is, are you only studying languages because it's fashionable, are you a trained polyglot, or a person that believes that you will never learn anything? Do you think you are the kind of committed enough person to study a language by yourself or do you need a teacher and a language school?

Hmmm...
Curiouser and
curiouser...



These questions can seem silly, but believe me, if you don't know exactly what kind of person you are, you WILL NOT reach your goals. If you are a trained polyglot and decide attending a course with 10-15 students that are learning because of their jobs or because it's fashionable, and if you are doing it in a traditional school full of grammar, and in a long term course, you will inevitable fail. And the same will happen if you are a person who believes in your own "incapacity" and "inability" to learn languages yet decide to buy a book with CDs and try to study alone, you will probably find everything difficult and this will only reinforce your ideas of impossibility.

So, YES, there is a perfect form to learn a language, but this is a subjective issue, and it will depend on how you are supposed to act and how you prefer learning. Maybe you don't know what kind of person you are; maybe you need an external help or point of view!

As a Linguist, Scientist of Education, and NLP Master, I can assure you that if one person can learn 30 languages, you can do the same, following the same patterns, but adapting them to your personal style!

Ok, ok, I guess you are still wanting a definitive answer, aren't you? I will give you a definite answer: there is no magic pill, there are no shortcuts, there is no perfect method, but there is one thing that can take you to your goals, and one thing that can stop you. This only thing is your mind! It can be your best friend and your worst enemy.

Being a polyglot has nothing to do with numbers of languages, not even with A, B or C levels. It is not a competition. For me, it is a way of living. How many languages do you love? How many languages have you tried and failed? In how many languages have you already tried a conversation? For me, the best polyglot is the one who loves languages! The best question is "How many languages should I have in my heart to be a polyglot?". If you follow this idea, start to get off the "self-running race", discover your way of learning, and give up the search for the magic pill, you will learn a language. **PT**



Jimmy Mello is a neurolinguist and holds two degrees: one in Linguistics and other in Educational Science. He is a polyglot and has been learning and teaching languages for over 20 years. He is fluent in English, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, and he can also speak Catalan, French, German, Dutch and Polish at different levels. He has developed a new method suitable for teaching any foreign language. He currently lives in Brazil where he runs his own language school, which he established in 1995. Find him at: www.mellomethod.com, www.mypolyglot.com, [Twitter.com/jimmymello](https://twitter.com/jimmymello), and www.facebook.com/jimmymelloreal.

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At the Cinema



Dil Chahta Hai
183 min
Comedy / Drama
24 July 2001 (India)

Country: India
Language: Hindi / English / Urdu

The film is a true work of art, mixing comedy and drama so beautifully that you cannot help feeling for all the characters.

This month, I am reviewing the 2001 Bollywood film *Dil Chahta Hai*. It is about three inseparable friends who all approach, and find, love in their own ways.

I can start by saying this is one of my favourite films of all time. I first saw it somewhere around 2004 when a film channel was having a “Bollywood Month” and showed three films every week. This was among them, and I instantly loved it.

The three friends all are very distinct in personalities. Sameer is awkward and is constantly “falling in love”, although he is absolutely clueless about how to deal with women and usually ends up getting rather used by them. Akash treats everything as a joke and does not believe that people really fall in love. He considers any relationship a trap. Siddharth, perhaps the most mature of the trio, is an artist and prefers to paint then get involved in trivial relation-

ships. He is looking for the “deep love”.

After they graduate from college, their lives seem to increase in intensity. After Akash engineers a break-up between Sameer and his current girlfriend (Akash is convinced he is helping him, and considering how controlling the girlfriend is, he might be), they take a trip to seaside Goa. While Akash flees the infatuation pursuit of Deepa, a girl from their college, Sameer finds another girl who he “falls in love” with and tells the others he is going to stay in Goa a little longer with her, so the other two return home.

Sameer’s newest love turns out to be a thief who ties him up while her accomplice takes all his money, luggage, and passport. He manages to get a ride back home, where he relates the story to Sid and Akash, who immediately burst out laughing.

His troubles seem to worsen when he finds his parents have



The three friends, having a good time together

arranged a marriage for him, which he is completely against. However, after he meets the lovely Pooja, he is sure she is “the one”. When he tells her he is against arranged marriages, she happily agrees, and Sameer discovers that she already has a boyfriend. He does not let that deter him, though, and begins to work his way into their lives.

Meanwhile, Sid has met and become romantically involved with Tara, an older woman who has moved into a nearby house. She has a tragic life story of an abusive ex-husband and it has left her an alcoholic. She loves Sid’s paintings and she and him grow closer, but she is fearful of Sid’s attachment to her.

When Sid professes his love for her to the others, his mother is shocked and considers it scandalous. At the same time, Akash makes fun of it, implying Sid is after something else and an offensive comment causes a rift between the two. When Tara finds out all of this, she feels she has ruined Sid’s life and refuses to see him anymore. Heartbroken, Sid goes to his Uncle’s house to get away from everyone and be allowed to paint in peace.

Akash has his own troubles. His parents decide he needs to mature and get some direction in his life, so they send him to Sydney, Australia, to take over the running of a branch of the families business. On his trip there, he meets Shalini, a girl from his college who he jokingly proposed to after graduation before getting punched by her boyfriend, Rohit, to whom she is now engaged.

Akash apologizes to Shalini for his earlier prank, and asks her to show him around Sydney, where she is currently staying with her Uncle. She agrees, and they soon find they enjoy each other’s company.

They clash over the idea of love, however. While Akash claims that love is false, Shalini tries to convince him it is real and to get him



Sid and Tara, discussing Sid's paintings

to open up his true feelings. She finally has to return to India to marry Rohit, who is a controlling egotist she had agreed to marry to repay his parents who raised her after she lost her own parents. After she leaves, they both realize they are in love with each other and fall into depression.

When Akash’s parents discover the emotional state of Akash, they have him return to India as well. When he returns, he finds out that Tara is in the hospital, her alcoholism having finally caught up with her. Sid and Sameer are there with her, but Akash refuses to join them.

What happens next? Will these three friends find the love they are seeking? Will they be able to put the past behind and become friends again?

The film is a true work of art, mixing comedy and drama so beautifully that you cannot help feeling for all the characters. It is much more modern than most other Bollywood films of the time and introduces some changes to the music and dance scenes, which are the hallmark of Bollywood films. About half the songs are integrated with the characters singing and dancing, the other half are done as music over the storytelling.

One example is the way Sameer and Pooja are shown to be falling in love. The two enter into a theatre, where they see themselves in the movie, singing and dancing, in the styles reflective of Bollywood cinema over the dec-



Sameer and Pooja, realizing their feelings for each other



Akash and Shalini, meeting again on the airplane to Sydney

At the Cinema - Dil Chahta Hai

ades. It is a fun tribute and as they watch it, they realize that they really do love each other.

On the other end of the emotional spectrum, the song *Tanhayee* is sung over scenes showing how Akash and Shalini are lost and depressed without each other. We see them becoming unable to deal with the world around them, so great is their loss. It is the most emotionally charged song in the film, yet the characters never sing a note or dance a step.

The title translates into English as “What the Heart Wants”, but the film is more commonly distributed as “Do Your Thing”. I am terrible with remembering Bollywood film titles, but I always remember *Dil Chahta Hai*.

The language of the film is Hindi with the normal mix of English. As I often say in these reviews, this is not an action film. There are no car chases or explosions, and there only a few instances of fists being used. Although I

do not really like the idea, I would say this is something like a “chic flick” for guys. While the female characters are critical to the plot, we really do not get to know them as much as the male leads, since the film is about them. Perhaps in that is my one minor complaint with the movie: there is not enough of Shalini, who is played by the beautiful and talented Preity Zinta.

I would definitely encourage anyone to see this film. It is funny, touching, and inspiring, and so I give it a firm 5/5. **PT**



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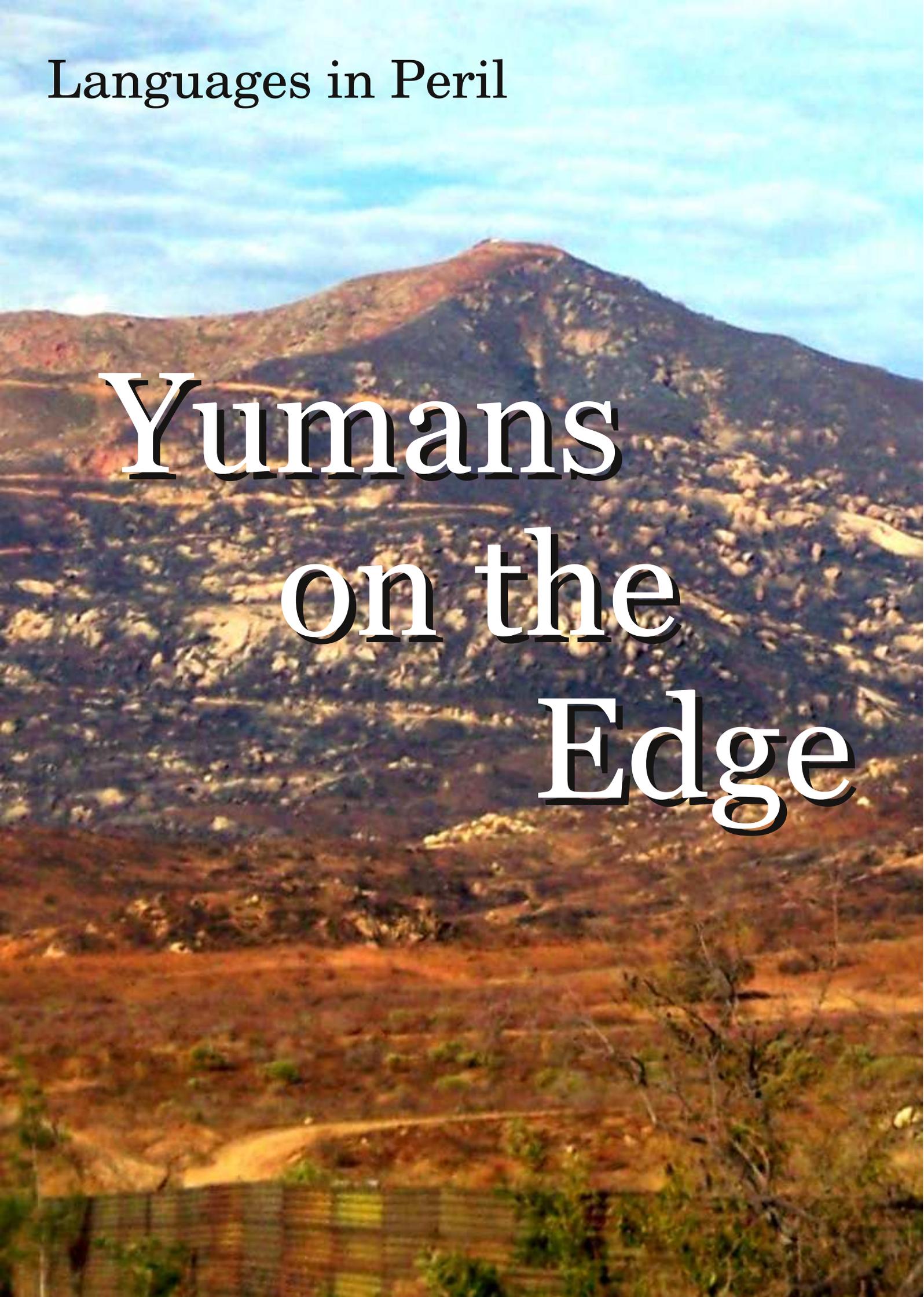
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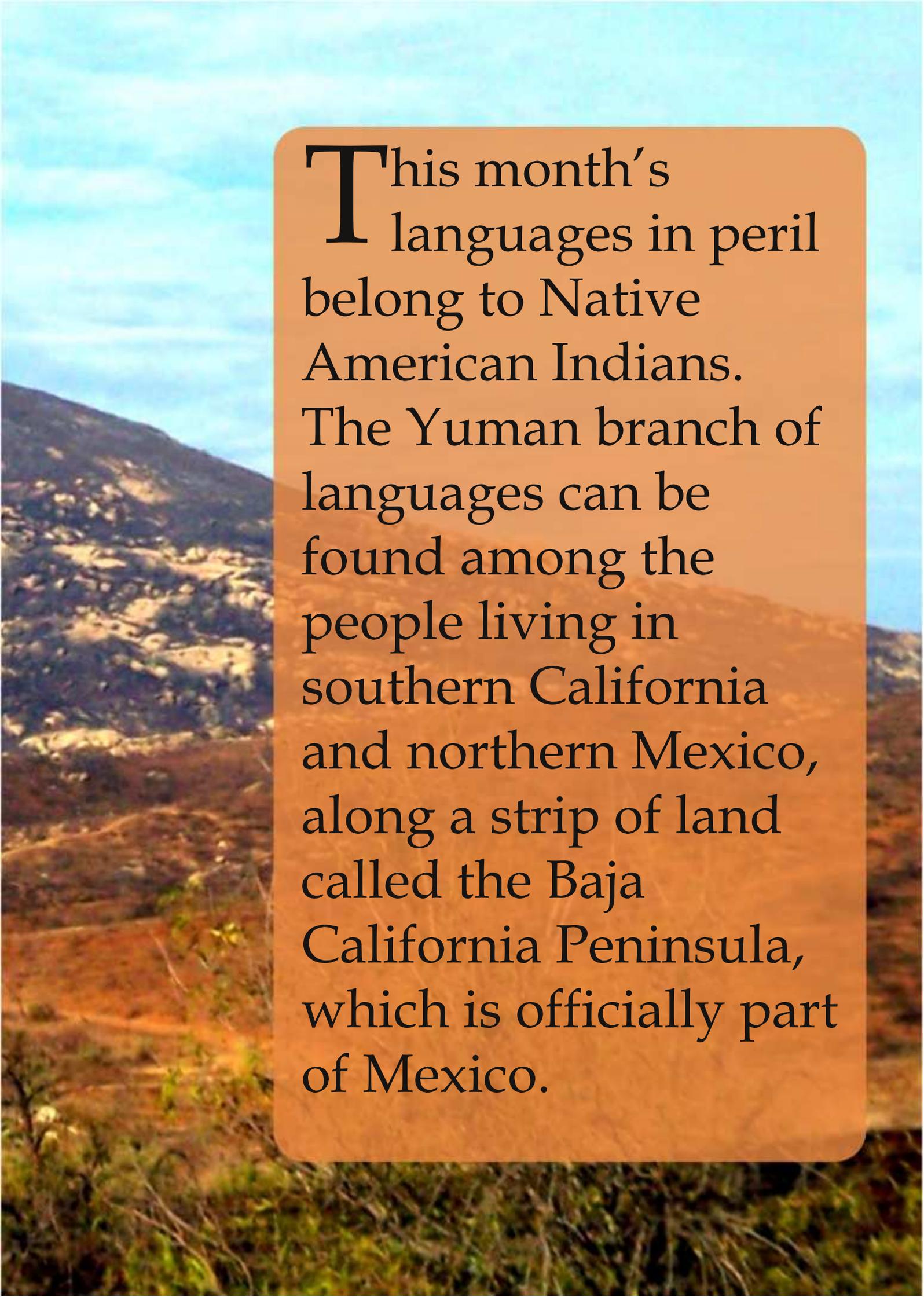
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Languages in Peril

Yumans
on the
Edge



The background of the image shows a vast landscape of rolling hills and mountains. The foreground is filled with green and brown vegetation, possibly a field or a forest edge. The middle ground features a valley with patches of yellow and brown, suggesting a semi-arid environment. In the distance, a range of dark, forested mountains rises against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. A semi-transparent orange rectangular box is positioned in the center-right of the image, containing text in a black serif font.

This month's
languages in peril
belong to Native
American Indians.
The Yuman branch of
languages can be
found among the
people living in
southern California
and northern Mexico,
along a strip of land
called the Baja
California Peninsula,
which is officially part
of Mexico.

The languages here can be broken into what is called “Core Yuman” and two other languages - the now extinct Cochimi and the endangered Kiliwa. Core Yuman is divided into the three groups of Delta-California Yuman, River Yuman, and Pai.

Most of these languages are endangered, but we will be focusing on just Kiliwa, Paipai, Kumeyaay, and Cocopah. They have been around for thousands of years, but suffered when the Spanish started settling the New World.

Kiliwa

The first on our list of Yuman languages is Kiliwa. Spoken by the Kiliwa people in Baja California, it is the most southern of the Yuman languages. It is also the most distinct from the others. Kiliwa is also on the edge of extinction, with less than 50 speakers.

Very little is known about the Kiliwa people before their first recorded European contact with Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542. Cabrillo had been working his way up the



coast with three ships, finding and naming new regions while sometimes having conflicts with the indigenous tribes. During one of these skirmishes, Cabrillo was hurt and later died, after which his fleet returned to Navidad, Spain, with the results of his explorations going unnoticed.

Little further contact was made until Wenceslaus Linck, the last remaining Jesuit missionary explorer in Baja California arrived. He travelled overland and entered into Kiliwa territory in 1766.

Mission Santo Domingo was founded a few years later in 1775, being placed among the Kiliwa people. As so often happens when explorers mixed with indigenous people, the natives were not immune to the diseases that were brought in, and the Kiliwa population quickly declined. Ironically, this decline led to the mission being used less and less, and it was finally abandoned in 1821. The settlers had wiped out the very people they were trying to convert.

Peveril Meigs, an American geographer, studied the surviving Indian groups of northern Baja California. He estimated that the Kiliwa population has originally been approximately 1300. By 1929, Meigs reported that only 36 adult Kiliwa people were still alive in three small settlements of the area. In another twenty years, that number had dropped to just 30.

There is some debate by linguistic prehistorians about the origins of the people. Some believe they migrated to the Baja California Peninsula from the north, separate from the other members of the Yuman group. Others claim that they were natives of the region and had simply become differentiated from the other tribes around 2000-3000 years ago.

There were never many Kiliwa people to begin with, and the settling of Europeans into their region practically destroyed them. Now, according to the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity, there could be just under 10 native speakers still alive, placing

Kiliwa on the critically endangered list, with almost no hope of it being saved.

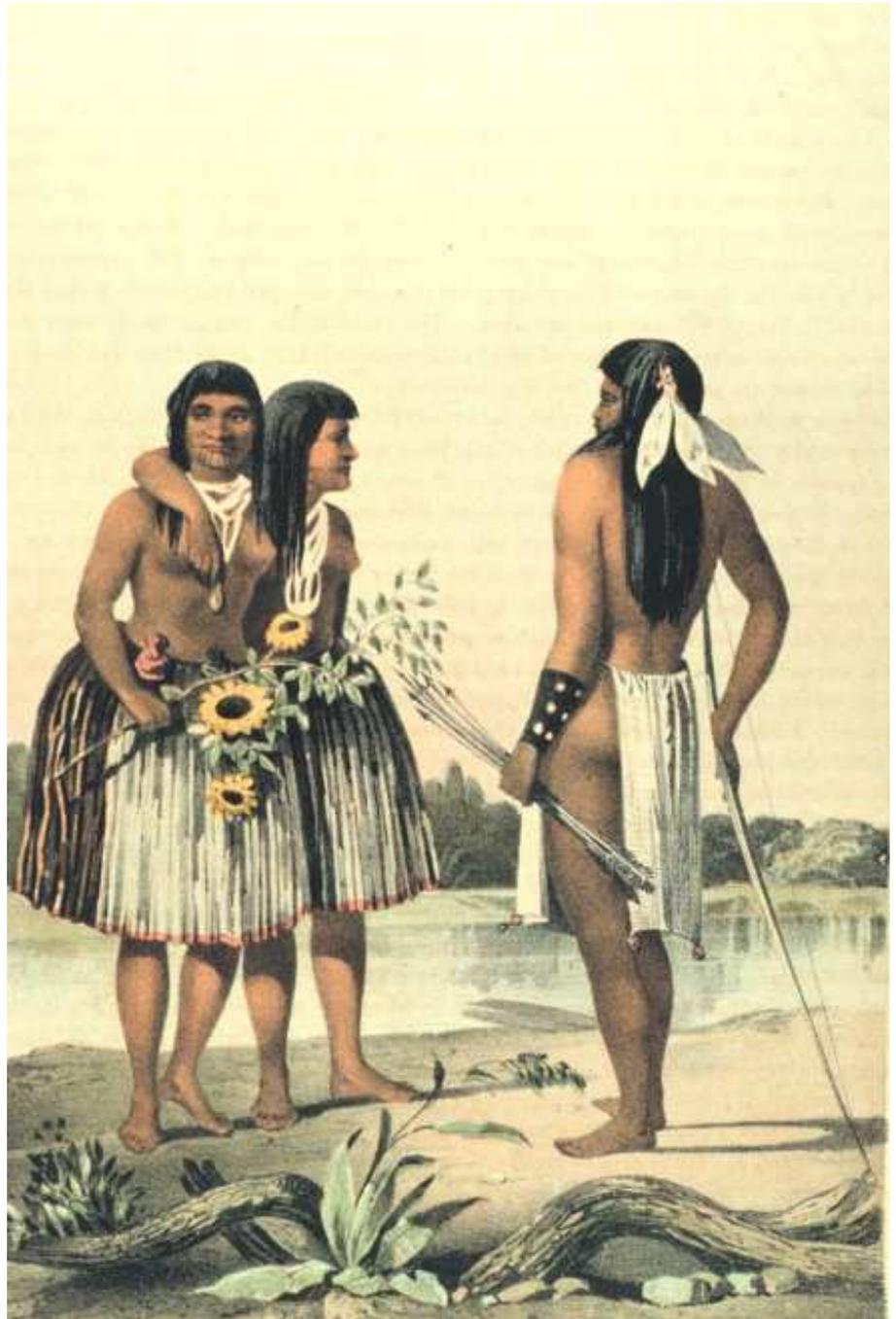
Paipai

Moving up the coast, we find the Paipai people, whose language is also called Paipai. Paipai belongs to the Pai branch of the Yuman family, but it likely separated from the Northern Pai languages (Yavapai and Upland Yuman) many years ago, and the Pai branch itself separated from the other branches of Core Yuman between 1000 and 1700 years ago.

The Paipai language has been documented by Judith Joël and Mauricio J. Mixco, who also published texts and studies of syntax. Even though it has separated from the Upland Yuman language, it is still very similar to it.

The first European encounter with the Paipai people was not with Cabrillo, but with Spanish explorer Sebastián Vizcaíno when he was leading an expedition to map the northwest coast of Baja California in 1602. Spanish settlements were setup in the region in 1769 when another expedition, led by Gaspar de Portolà and Junípero Serra, came in.

Like the Mission Santo Domingo and the Kiliwa, the Dominican mission of San Vicente was founded in 1780 near the coast, in Paipai territory. It was a centre for the Spanish administration and military control of that region, and another mission, Santa Catarina, was established in 1797, near the border of Paipai and Kumeyaay territories. However, that one was



Native Americans of the Lower Colorado River Valley in Native Americans in 1857

eventually destroyed by some of the indigenous tribes in 1840.

Based upon Meigs observations, it is estimated that there was a population of around 1800 Paipai natives during the time of these missions. Now, there are less than 200 speakers, with little hope of that improving, since the new generations are not

learning the language. The remaining Paipai people live in a settlement called Santa Catarina (same as the destroyed mission, but not the same as Santa Catarina in Guanajuato), which they share with Kumeyaay and Kiliwa people. Paipai is considered to be severely endangered.

Kumeyaay

Continuing north, we come to the Kumeyaay people. Kumeyaay is one of the languages of Core Yuman. At one point, it was believed that Kumeyaay along with two other languages near it, Ipai and Tipai, were all simply dialects of a single language called Diegueño (after the mission of San Diego), but as late as 1990 they were identified as three distinct languages.

There is still confusion now about how to call the people. Sometimes, Kumeyaay refers to both Ipai and Tipai together, other times as a separate tribe. The name Kumeyaay means “those who face the water from a cliff”, while both names Ipai and Tipai mean “people”.

There is evidence of human settlements going back as far as 12,000 years ago in the area that is now Kumeyaay territory. At one time, their land extended from the Pacific Ocean to Ensenada, Mexico, then



A modern day Mexican couple. The man is Mestizo and the woman is Paipai

from the Colorado River to Oceanside. They also probably lived in what is now Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve.

By the time of their first European encounter, there were about 30 clans of Kumeyaay people. Their first encounter was with Cabrillo in 1542, when a group of the explorers approached a

gathering of them. All but three of the Kumeyaay ran away. To these, the men gave small gifts, hoping it would make them friends. Later, however, when another group came ashore to fish, the Kumeyaay saw this as a threat and attacked them with arrows.

When Vizcaíno came to the Kumeyaay territory in November 1603, he named the area “San Diego”, after one of his ships. After travelling a short way inland, his men also encountered the Kumeyaay people, but the meeting went peacefully.

When the Spaniards began setting up their missions in the later 1700s, they established Mission San Diego de Alcalá, and the local tribes got the name Diegueños. They also brought with them new flora and animals, which damaged the current ecology of the region.

Mexico took over the land from the Spanish in the



Some of the remains of the San Vicente mission

1830s, but American settlers started unlawfully claiming the land for themselves in 1870. American President Ulysses Grant created reservations in 1875, and the Act for the Relief of Mission Indians was passed in 1891 to protect the surviving members of the Kumeyaay, Ipai, and Tipai.

There is no clear idea of how many Kumeyaay there were before the Spanish arrived. The estimates range from 3,000 to between 16,000 - 19,000. By the end of the 18th century, there were only between 3,000 and 9,000, and by 1828, that had dropped drastically to just 1711 Kumeyaay in the mission. Their numbers continued to dwindle rapidly, down to 1571 in 1860, then 1200 in 1900. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a total of 1322 was said to be living by 1968.

Some efforts are being made to save the language and culture. A series of



Kumeyaay woman in front of her traditional house at Campo

reservations for the Kumeyaay is collectively known as the Kumeyaay Diegueño Nation, and there is the Kumeyaay Community College there to help promote and support cultural identity and sovereignty. The main focus is on the Kumeyaay language, philosophy and art.

It might be helping. As of 2010, there are an estimated 3000 Kumeyaay in the reservations, but the actual number of fluent speakers is much fewer, with between 40 and 50 as of 2011. This puts Kumeyaay on the critically endangered list.

What is a mission?

The word “mission” has two basic meanings. The first refers to a task or objective, as in “He was on a mission to retrieve the secret documents”.

The second meaning, which is the one used in this article when referring to exploration, is “a ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith or carry on humanitarian work”.

When settlers moved into a region already inhabited by indigenous people, they would normally establish a place where priests and specific members of the church, called “missionaries” would live.

From there, they would try to convert the local population to their religion, usually Christianity.

The idea among the church followers was that they could “save” these people by making them accept their own beliefs. The view of the conquerors was that this would help control the population by replacing the tribal beliefs and culture. Part of this often included suppressing the local language.

As can be expected, this conversion process was often met with violence, making missionary work dangerous. All too often, the missions were destroyed and the settlers there driven out or killed.

Cocopah

On the border of both Kumeyaay and Paipai territories is the region of the Cocopah people. The Cocopah language is part of the same branch as Kumeyaay but is not mixed in with the same group as Ipai-Kumeyaay-Tipai. The Cocopah people call themselves “Xawill kwñchawaay” or “Those Who Live on the River”, referring to the Colorado River.

The first contact with the Cocopah people with Europeans is attributed to Spanish explorer Hernando de Alarcón when he sailed into the Colorado River delta in 1540. He was actually attempting to meet up with another explorer, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado’s, but that did not happen because Coronado never arrived.

The Cocopah were also mentioned specifically in the records of another expedition led by Juan de Oñate in 1605. The purpose of this, his last expedition, was to find a

supply port for New Mexico, as an alternative to having to transport everything overland.

Oñate encountered numerous tribes during his explorations, many of which were chronicled in Historia de

A group of the explorers approached a gathering of them. All but three of the Kumeyaay ran away. To these, the men gave small gifts, hoping it would make them friends.

la Nueva México (“The History of New Mexico”), one of the first travel journals to be published, in the form of an epic poem about Oñate’s activities.

Today, the Cocopah people of the United States are part of the Cocopah Indian Tribe, living mainly on the Cocopah Reservation, which was established in 1917. There, they established their first Constitution and Tribal Council in 1964.

Of all these languages, Cocopah perhaps has the

best chance of surviving due to the amount of effort being put into its revival. By the end of the 1990s, it was spoken by fewer than 900 people, and so the Cocopah Museum began offering language classes.

Until the 1970s, Cocopah had no alphabet, so a student created one as part of a university dissertation. It proved to be inadequate, however, and so another created by the tribe at the start of the 21st century. New words have had to be added to the language for modern objects.

By 2010, according to the US Census, there were around 1,000 members living and working in the Reservation. Even with the current attempts to save the culture and languages, Cocopah is considered an endangered language.

On the Edge

Whenever Europeans have moved into territories already inhabited by native tribes, it is the indigenous people that suffer for it. The population of the people listed were already small before contact with the Spanish, and after that, they found themselves brought to the edge of extinction. Sadly, as it is with most endangered languages, they are not likely to be revived enough to survive, and will likely be totally gone within the next twenty years. **PT**



Mission San Diego de Alcalá

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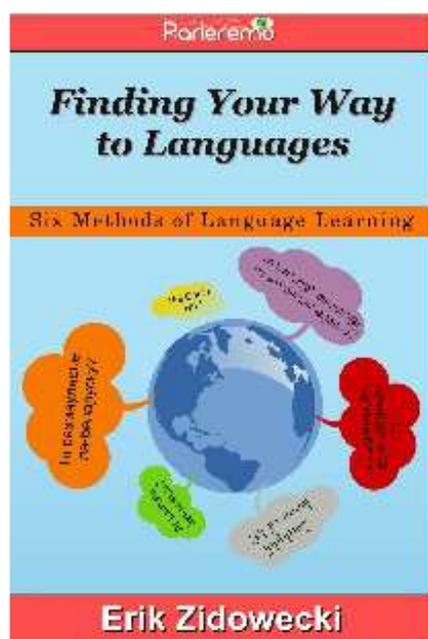


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landofmaybe.wordpress.com

Corner of a grocery store with several shelves displaying cartons of eggs for sale.



Words in Your Mouth

Egg

Like eggs, etymologies can also be scrambled sometimes.

When I started asking for translations of this month's word "egg", I was asked what kind I was referring to. Most of the time in English, we use "egg" to refer to a chicken, using other words to be more specific, like fish eggs, ostrich eggs, etc. It is the chicken egg word I am trying to focus on in this article.

In biological terms, an egg is "the female sex cell, or gamete." In zoology, the Latin term "ovum" is normally used to refer to the single cell, while the word "egg" can be applied to the entire specialized structure that consists of the ovum, its various protective membranes, and any accompanying materials. Personally, when eating eggs, I prefer NOT to think of them in this manner, but rather something a chicken laid.

The word "egg" in English comes directly from the Old Norse "egg". However, linguistically, it's the newer version in English. Prior to

around the 16th century, English used the word "eye" (pl. *eyren*), from the Old English *ǣg*. During the 14th and 15th centuries, Norse immigrants brought in the word "egg", and for over a century, the two words were used interchangeably.

Both the Old English and the Norse words were actually taken from the Prehistoric German "ajjaz", which is the source of the German (*Ei*) and Dutch (*ei*).

The Slavic forms seem to also taken from "ajjaz", but slightly rearranged, as in Russian (*яйцо* [*jajco*]), Polish (*jajko*), and Serbian (*jaje*).

The Italic forms are taken from the Latin "ovum", such as Italian (*uovo*), Spanish (*huevo*), Portuguese (*ovo*), and the French (*œuf*).

Surprisingly, the Prehistoric German and Latin forms, as well as the Ancient



An egg omelette being cooked in a pan



The mother of all eggs: the chicken

Greek “*ōión*” (now *avγó* [avgó] in the modern form), come from a common Proto-Indo-European word: *ōwo*. This, in turn, may have from a base for “bird” in Ancient Sanskrit.

“Egg” as a verb

In English, we also use “egg” as a verb in some instances. The most basic is easily seen when referring to damage done when someone throws one of these little balls at a person’s property. To “egg one’s house” means, literally, to have thrown eggs at it, thus creating a horrible mess. This is a common prank. A more obscure reference is “egging a person on”, meaning to push them verbally. “He wanted to stop, but his friends egged him on.”

Slang

We use “egg” in several other manners. It can be a reference to someone who is immature, as a master might address his student as an “egg”. This could have a fond or a contemptuous connotation. “Egg” is also used to

refer to a person, as in him being a “bad egg” or a “good egg”. It can also denote intellect, referring to a very smart person as an “egghead”. When a person has made a mistake, or shown himself to be a fool, we say he “has egg on his face”. When a person totally fails, they have “laid an egg”.

A “nest egg” refers to something of value, usually a collection of money, to which

someone is keeping safe. Another usage refers to a cause-and-effect dilemma: “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” The idea is that a chicken is born from an egg, so an egg must have existed first, but if the egg came from a chicken, then a chicken must have existed first.

Being literally minded, I always point out that eggs existed long before chickens, in the forms of insect eggs, fish eggs, and even dinosaur eggs. Also, since a chicken did not suddenly spring up in its modern form, but rather evolved over time, one has to define what they mean by “chicken”. It’s about this time that the person’s eyes have glazed over, or he has simply walked away in disgust.

Conclusion

All yolks aside, we cracked open this topic and found several twists and turns in the evolution of the egg, in more ways than one. I hope you found this educational and “egg-citing”. **PT**



Traditional English breakfast of sausages, mushrooms, hash brown, bacon, eggs, and a tomato

Other pictures related to eggs

From top left, clockwise: Chick hatching out of egg; Basket of freshly gathered eggs; Romaninan painted Easter eggs; Pressack, a dish made of sausage, onions, cucumbers, and eggs; Young girl hunting for Easter eggs; Eggs on display in at a vendor in China



GERMANIC

Western

Afrikaans:	eier
Dutch:	ei
English:	egg
Flemish:	ei
Frisian:	aai
German:	Ei
Limburgian:	eij
Luxembourgish:	Ee

Northern

Danish:	æg
Faeroese:	egg
Icelandic:	egg
Norwegian:	egg
Swedish:	ägg

SLAVIC

Western

Czech:	vejce
Polish:	jajko
Slovak:	vajce

Eastern

Byelorussian:	яйка [jajka]
Russian:	яйцо [jajco]
Ukrainian:	яйце [jajce]

Southern

Bulgarian:	яйце [jajce]
Croatian:	jaje
Serbian:	jaje
Slovenian:	jajce

ITALIC

Aragonese:	güego
Asturian:	güevu
Caló:	anró / albaire / pelé
Catalan:	ou
French:	œuf
Furlan:	ûv
Galician:	ovo
Italian:	uovo
Judeo-Spanish:	guevo / uevo
Ladino:	û
Latin:	ovum
Neapolitan:	uóvo
Occitan:	uòu
Portuguese:	ovo
Roman:	ovo
Romanian:	ou
Romansh:	ov
Spanish:	huevo
Walloon:	oû

ITALIAN DIALECTS

Bergamasco:	öf
Bolognese:	ôv
Bresciano:	óf
Calabrese:	uavu / ovu
Ferrarese:	ov
Leonese:	güevu
Lombardo	
Occidentale:	oeuv
Mantuan:	oeuv / ov
Marchigiano:	òo
Mudnés:	ov
Parmigiano:	ov
Piemontese:	euv
Pugliese:	úave
Reggiano:	ov
Romagnolo:	òv
Sardinian (Limba Sarda Unificada):	ou
Sardinian	
Logudoresu:	obu / ovu
Sicilian:	ovu
Triestino:	ovo
Venetian:	ovo / coco / vovo / vuovo
Viestano:	ov'
Zeneize:	euvo

CELTIC

Goidelic

Irish:	ubh
Scots Gaelic:	ugh

Brythonic

Breton:	ui
Cornish:	oy
Welsh:	ŵy

ALBANIAN

Albanian:	vezë
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GREEK

Greek:	αυγό [avgo]
Old Greek:	ῶν [ōon]

INDO-IRANIAN

Hindi:	अंडा [aṇḍā]
Kurdish Kurmanji:	hêk
Persian:	تخم [tokhm]

OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN

Griko Salentino:	agguò
Sanskrit:	अण्ड
Urdu:	اُنڈ

INDIAN LANGUAGES

Bengali; Bangla: ডীম
 Konknni: तांतिया
 Marathi: अंडे
 Punjabi: ਅੰਡਾ

ALTAIC

Korean: 달걀 [dalgyal]
 Mongolian: өндөг [öndög]

TURKIC

Azeri (Latin Script): yumurta
 Turkish: yumurta

INDEPENDENT

Basque: arrautza
 Japanese: 卵 [tamago]

FINNO-UGRIC

Estonian: muna
 Finnish: muna
 Hungarian: tojás
 Saami: monni

CAUCASIAN

Chechen: kho'

MALAYO-POLYNESIAN

Indonesian: telur / telor
 Malagasy: atody
 Malay: telur
 Tetun: manu-tolu

EAST POLYNESIAN

Māori - Tahitic

Reo Māori (CI): `Uāmoa
 Reo Māori (NZ): hēki / hua manu
 Reo Mā`ohi: Hua

Rapanui

Vānanga Rapa Nui: mamari

WEST POLYNESIAN

Sāmoic

Samoan: fua]

MESO-PHILIPPINE

Tagalog: itlog

SEMITIC

Arabic: بَيْض
 Hebrew: ביצה
 Maltese: bajda

SINO-TIBETAN

Chinese: 蛋 [dàn]

BALTIC

Lithuanian: kiaušinis

KADAI

Thai: ไก่ [khai]

NIGER-KHORDOFANIAN

Shona: zai
 Swahili: yai

ANDEAN-EQUATORIAL

Aymara: k'awna
 Quechua: runtu
 Quichua: lulun

TUPI

Guarani: tupi'a
 Tupi: upiá

CREOLES

Papiamentu: webu

CONSTRUCTED

Esperanto: ovo / frajo

OTHER

Chamorro: chadaa
 Dzorotâi: âo
 Ferrarese: ov
 Furlan: ûv
 Griko Salentino: agguò
 Gujarati: ઈડુ
 Hmong: qe
 Kalasha: ayukun
 Khowar: ayukun
 Lingala: likei
 Luganda: magi (plural)
 Mapunzugun: kuram
 Marchigiano: òo
 Maasai: emosoorri
 Nuristani: puduk
 Roman: ovo
 Pashtu: hu
 Pugliese: úave
 Sicilian: ovu
 Somali: ugax / ukun
 Sranan: eksi
 Tok Pisin: kiau
 Yucatec: he', je'



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Where Are You?

Our place this month is the largest city of the country, as well as its capital. With a population of over 2 million, it is the 7th largest city in the European union. It was also the largest German speaking city in the world at the end of the 19th century. Often regarded as the "City of Music", it is also renowned in the psychology field for one of its famous citizens.

The city has roots in Celtic and Roman settlements. As far back as 500 BC, the Celts founded the city and the Romans built it in a larger city a few hundred years later, to guard against Germanic tribes.

During the 10th century, the city became the centre of a huge dynasty, and it eventually became the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. It was invaded by other countries over the centuries, being occupied by Hungary and attacked by the Ottomans. It also had its population drastically ravaged by a plague in 1679.

The name of the city actually comes from Italian. Today, it is a popular tourist stop, with its rich music history and art centre. Almost equally famous are its fine cakes and desserts along with its small sausages, which are named after the city. **PT**

Can you name this location and country?

Last month's answer: Buenos Aires, Argentina



Book Look

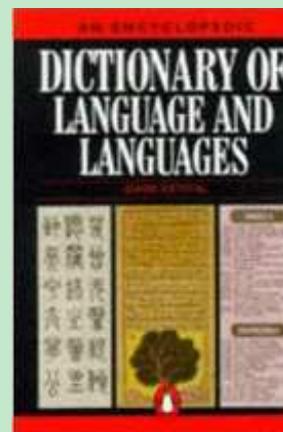
An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages

by David Crystal

Language: English

Item Rating: ★★★★★

ISBN-10: 0140512349 - ISBN-13: 978-0140512342



To be honest, I don't know when or where I picked this book up. I feel like I have always had it. While the cover is appealing, it doesn't appear imposing, as if it is going to unlock some great secrets. It's not a large book, nor is it glossy or flashy. Yet I find it one of my most "comfortable" books on languages in my collection.

The title may seem a little odd, sounding like it's both an encyclopedia and a dictionary. However, that is what it is. The entries are very straightforward, so you won't be tangled in a lot of unnecessary knowledge. At the same time, when appropriate, the entries are longer, to make sure the topic is covered.

And the topics have a wide range. Opening randomly, I can read down the entries for "Bloomfield, Leonard", "body language", "Bokmål", and "bold", referring to, respectively, a linguist, a communication method, a language and a writing format. It's very easy to pick up this book and start reading each entry, learning something new with almost each entry. Terms are drawn from various fields of language study, including stylistics, language teaching, typography, and lexicography, as well as from basic topics such as figures of speech, basic phonetics and grammar.

Just about anything you can think of regarding languages seems to be listed. There are language trees, alphabet listings and samples of several entries, although

perhaps not as many as one would like. For example, it shows a Runic alphabet, but not the Greek one; it has a table of kinesics (symbols representing body and face movements), but not of diacritics.

What the book does have is a sense of humour. Scattered throughout the dictionary are various cartoons depicting language humour. One such cartoon shows two tribesmen sitting facing each other. The first one is attempting to communicate using a string of consonants: "Zgbt nrvlb rsktdgm pqv ftnz." The second one is seen to be thinking "VOWELS! THAT'S what we need!".

The dictionary is not an exhaustive work for all things linguistic. It does, however, do an excellent job at covering the basics on a very wide range of language topics. When I come across a term I don't recognize, this is the first book I turn to, and it's also sometimes the only one that will contain any information on what I am looking for. While my copy is now over 20 years old (having been published in 1994), I believe most of the information to still be highly relevant. This remains one of the most used and most loved books in my library of language materials. I think others would feel the same. I give it a 5/5.

PT

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Letter From the Editor

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Petey: Woman in cafe

How Do You Say It? - A look at sound notation systems

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

ish_ishwar: Diagram of mouth

Nohat: IPA chart

lumix2004: Tiles of letter pairs

jixue: Entries in dictionary

Wikipedia: Table showing X-SAMPA, IPA

Yiddophile: Old computer with speech synthesizer

Petey: Girl studying; Men forming his mouth; Schoolbook used by emperor Puyi; Table showing IPA, Arpabet; Cappuccino

Of Pidgins and Creoles - A look at how some languages are born

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Ghettocash: Panorama of Curacao (title)

Didwin973: Creole women in costumes

Petey: Creole food of Louisiana cuisine; Hawaii Pidgin inscriptions; Pidgin English leaflet; Painting of Limbe, Cameroon; Kapu sign on island of Lanai

Who Are You To Learn A Language?

Writer: Jimmy Mello

Images:

Petey: Landscape (title); Alice; Alice and Caterpillar

At The Cinema - Dil Chahta Hai

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Sources:

• "Dil Chahta Hai" Internet Movie Database <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0292490/>>

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Languages in Peril - Yumans on the Edge

Writer: Lucille Martin

Images:

Gabriel Flores Romero: Cerro Cuchumá, Kumeyaay refuge area (title)

ish ishwar: Yuman-Cochimi language map

RhymeNotStutter: Paipai map

Rodrigo Gardea: Mexican young people

Ken Lund: Mission San Diego de Alcalá

Petey: Yuman Native Americans in 1857; San Vicente remains; Kumeyaay woman in front house

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Words in Your Mouth - Egg

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images:

Petey: Shelves of cartons of eggs (splash page); Eggs in carton (title); Omelette in pan; Chicken; Traditional English breakfast; Chick hatching; Basket of eggs; Romanian painted Easter eggs; Pressack, egg dish; Young girl with Easter eggs; Eggs on display in China

Where Are You?

Writer: Sonja Krüger

Images:

Petey: Mystery image

Book Look

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

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