

Review article

Dialect contact and koineization

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Peter Trudgill: *Dialects in Contact*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

Peter Trudgill's book is about the linguistic change resulting from language contact. But it deals primarily with contact between linguistic subsystems, such as regional dialects and sociolects, rather than contact between distinct languages. The author examines data on the consequences of contact between dialects of many languages. These include dialects of English, Norwegian, and Swedish *in situ*, and also dialects of English transplanted in Australia, Canada, and the Falkland Islands, and dialects of Hindi in Fiji, Trinidad, and Mauritius. On the basis of this data, he attempts to make generalizations about the linguistic processes involved and begins to develop a theory of dialect contact.

This review starts off with a detailed summary of this important and influential work and then goes on to a critical examination of the author's generalizations and theory, especially with regard to koineization.

Summary

The book is divided into four chapters, the first three gradually developing a theory of the consequences of dialect contact, and the last applying this theory to explain the development of some major overseas English dialects.

Chapter 1, "Accommodation between dialects," examines face-to-face contact between people speaking different but mutually intelligible dialects. Trudgill notes that individuals often modify their speech to be more like that of the person they are talking to, even though this makes no difference in the degree of intelligibility. He makes use of the speech accommodation theory from social psychology (Giles 1977), now also called communication accommodation theory (Gallois et al. 1988), to account for these modifications. According to this theory, people may