Lingua Franca - Chinook Jargon

Code: MID: LA, SS

Traditionally, the Chinookan people of the Lower Columbia River were traders even before Euro-Americans arrived on the Pacific coast. The Chinookan people traded with many other Native people whose cultures did not speak Chinookan dialects. A simplified form of verbal communication developed from the combination of many Native languages used by Northwest Native people during trading. This trade language is known today as Chinook Jargon. Chinook Jargon is a pidgin language based on Lower Chinook and other Indian languages, French, and English. At one time it was used as a lingua franca (any of various hybrid or other languages that are used over a wide area as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech) in the Northwest U.S. and on the Pacific coast of Canada and Alaska.

This is the tongue spoken by a few in each of the tribes residing in the middle and lower divisions of Oregon Territory. It was also used by the French, and nearly all old settlers in the country. It is the tongue that Young Chief Joseph used to make his surrender speech at the Bear Paw Battle.

Rationale:
This activity provides an opportunity for students: 1) to learn what Chinook Jargon is, 2) to think about how Chinook Jargon can transfer culture identity.

<u>Vocabulary</u>
Chinook Jargon

<u>Objective</u>
During this activity students will see how this was an efficient means of communication between groups of people who spoke different languages. Bridging the communication gap.

Directions:
Use the information below and let students experiment with the Chinook Jargon language. Then have the class split into groups and have one student compose a sentence and try to communicate it to each group using the Chinook Jargon. The students who interpret the Chinook Jargon correctly can take a turn in front of the entire class.

1. Have the students work with the selected Chinook Jargon words and phrases.

2. The students will explain Chinook Jargon to the rest of the class and teach them several words and phrases. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a trade jargon. Is the English language used as a lingua franca today? Explain: Lingua franca is an agreed upon language used as a medium or communication between people who speak different languages.

3. What French, English, Spanish or Russian words do you see or hear in the Chinook Jargon? Do they mean the same in jargon as they do in their original language?

4. Play the "telephone game" again by passing several messages along to each team in Chinook Jargon. What happens to the message this time?

Variations
a. If there are bilingual students in the class, have them whisper a partial translation to the next member of their team. What happened to the message this time?
b. Try this game in your Spanish, French or German language classes. The students will be passing on the message and its meaning this time?

Chinook Jargon	English	Chinook Jargon	English
Chawko	Come	Ekik	Fish-hook
Chee	New	Esil	Corn
Chuck	Water	Hous	House
Aha	Yes	Ochwet	Bear
Oth-lu-el or Ituel	Meat, Flesh	Klat-a-wah	Go, Walk
Is-kum	Take	Ik-ta	What
Kah	Horse	Ka-nim	Canoe
Ko-pet	Done, Finished	Kah-wah-we	All
K-macks	Dog	Ka-ta	Why
Ko	Arrived	Klone-ass	I don't understand
Kutt	Hard	Kom-suck	Beads
Klose	Good	Lop-sta	Who
La-cope	White	No-kah	Buy
Ni-ka	You	Ni-Ka	I, Me
Kla-hi-you	How do you do?	Neim	Name
O-lo	Hungary	Pi-yah	Fire
Poston	Americans	Much-a-much	Provisions, Eat
Kla-hum	Good-bye	Potlatch	Trade
Ya-ha-la	Name	Te-ko-ep	Tomorrow
Col	Cold	Dolla	Dollar
He-he	Laughter	Huy	Hand
Hyas	Great, Large	Illahee	Land
Klip	Deep, To sink	Koko	To knock
Kumtux	Understand	Kwata	Quarter
Lacaset	Bag	Leseezo	Scissors
Lope	Rope	Masshie	Thank you
Man	Man	Moon	Month
Muckamuck	Food	Musket	Gun
Pepah	Paper	Pish	Fish
Salt	Salt	Sammon	Salmon
Shantie	To sing	She-lokum	Mirror
Sick, sic	Sick	Skin	Hide
Skookum	Strong	Stick or stik	Wood, Tree
Sun	Sun, Day	Tenas	Little, Small
Tik-tik	Watch, Clock	Tillikum	People
Tomolla	Tomorrow	Tukmtum	Heart
Tyee	Head man	Waum	Warm