

Workshop: Ecology and Language Evolution



23 October 2008
Lacito, CNRS-Paris

Khasi Merchant in Shillong
(Meghalaya, NE India)

Speakers will focus on

the link between

language evolution

and

the social and cultural context

An abrupt change...

Abrupt changes in a group's life such as:

- migrations (whether voluntary or not)
- deportations

show an impact on languages when the community's cohesion is affected.

On the contrary, exile can sometimes lead to a high conservatism.

Pidgins and creoles show a great variety of situations:

Thomason S. (ed.) 1996. *Contact Languages, a wider perspective*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Extraordinary cases of mixed languages are described in:

Bakker P. & Mous M. (eds.). 1994. *Mixed Languages, 15 case studies in language intertwining*. Amsterdam: IFOTT.

Bakker & Mous, 1994

Addresses of contributors

Peter Bakker & Maarten Mous
Introduction

Peter Bakker
*Michif, the Cree-French mixed language
of the Métis buffalo hunters in Canada*

Norbert Boretzky & Birgit Igla
Romani Mixed Dialects

Cor van Bree
The development of so-called Town Frisian

A.J. Drewes
Borrowing in Maltese

Evgenij Golovko
*Mednyj Aleut or Copper Island Aleut:
an Aleut-Russian mixed language*

Anthony Grant
*Shelta: the secret language of Irish Travellers
viewed as a mixed language*

Miel de Gruiter
*Javindo, a contact language
in pre-war Semarang.*

Berend Hoff
*Island Carib, an Arawakan language
which incorporated a lexical register
of Cariban origin, used to address men.*

Maarten Kossmann
Amarna-Akkadian as a mixed language

Maarten Mous
Ma'a or Mbugu

Pieter Muysken
Media Lengua

Pieter Muysken
Callahuaya

Derek Nurse
*South meets North:
Ilwana = Bantu + Cushitic on Kenya's Tana River*

Hadewych van Rheedden
*Petjo: the mixed language
of the Indos in Batavia*

Thilo C. Schadeberg
KiMwani at the southern fringe of KiSwahili

... and a 'normal' change.

In other cases,
the context's pressure on language evolution can be considered as 'normal'.

A comparison of those various settings is of high interest as well
in order to suggest a typology of factors.



For instance, the **density of population** can be seen as a relative parameter to language change:
the denser the population,
the faster a given change will be likely to spread.

Corelations to examine

External factors

- Centre and periphery
- Small and big communities (villages/cities)
- Ecology (mountain/ desert)
- Sedentary and nomads
- Religion
- Immigrants
- Isolated groups
- School education
- Monolingualism or multilingualism...

Internal factors

- Rapid or slow evolution
- Order of rise/loss of linguistic categories
- Impact on the system as a whole (limited/profound)
- Borrowability hierarchy and frequency (see Matras 2008)
- Degrees of integration

Panel:
'Ecology' and its importance
for the linguistic studies

S. Mufwene and three discussants will review the concept and its importance for the studies in language change.

Mufwene S. 2001. *The Ecology of Language Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- 2005. *Créoles, écologie sociale, évolution linguistique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- 2008. *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition and Change*. London/New York: Continuum.

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