Establishing language contact I

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Slides: github.com/sverhees/site
> teaching > MA research seminar > 2022

Language evolution

What is language?

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↓
What kind of languages are there?

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What kind of languages are there?
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How did they become the way they are?
↓
Which roles are played by genealogy and environment?

# Areal hypotheses

Pipeline № 1

- ▶ Study feature X in language Y
- ▶ Compare its specifics to those found in other languages
- ▶ Notice a correlation between structural similarity and geographic distribution
- ▶ ...

Areal hypotheses

Pipeline № 2

- ▶ Study the typology of feature X
- ▶ Select a genealogically and areally balanced sample of languages
- ▶ Compare the specifics of the feature in the sampled languages
- ▶ Notice a correlation between structural similarity and geographic distribution
- ▶ ...

But how to prove that the similarity indeed results from language contact, and not from apophenia?
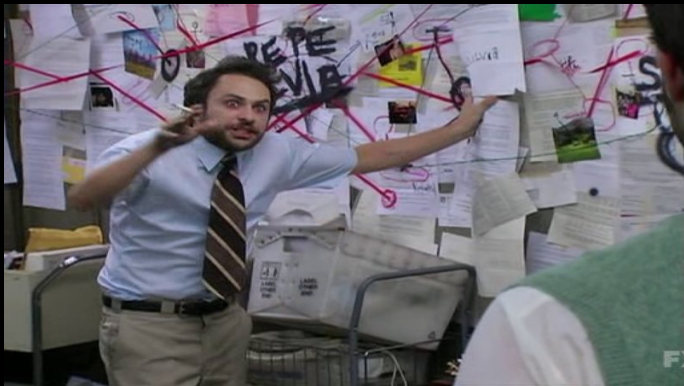
Spurious patterns?

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- **-m* accusative present / absent in different Mansi varieties > presence "could be a result of the influence of Samoyed languages" (Künnap 2000)

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▶ Yiddish is a Germanicized Slavic language (see discussion here)

▶ English is a relexified Nordic language, cf. (Bech & Walkden 2016)

Spurious patterns?

- ▶ *-m* accusative present / absent in different Mansi varieties > presence "could be a result of the influence of Samoyed languages" (Künnap 2000)
  (many similar examples for other language families)
- ▶ Yiddish is a Germanicized Slavic language (see discussion here)
- ▶ English is a relexified Nordic language, cf. (Bech & Walkden 2016)
- ▶ Enter a rabbit-hole of mixed-language theories contradicting everything we know about established language families...

Proving an areal hypothesis

The burden of proof is on the contact hypothesis.

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- ▶ Show that the development is not likely to have occurred in the absence of contact
- ▶ > related languages outside of the area lack it
- ▶ > it is not typologically expected
- ▶ Reverse engineer the sociolinguistic situation
- ▶ > data on bilingualism
- ▶ > traces of other contact phenomena

Plan

- ▶ Part I. Contact mechanisms
- ▶ Part II. Evidentiality in the Caucasus

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▶ Many different situations and outcomes

Contact situations

Contact situations

- ▶ Trade and collaborative work
- ▶ Cultural exchange (science, religion, art)
- ▶ Societal and political bonds (exogamy, migration)
- ▶ ?

Bilingualism

- ▶ Symmetric or asymmetric
- ▶ Presence of L2 native speakers (lingua franca, religious language)
- ▶ Portion of the population involved
- ▶ Proficiency
- ▶ Domains of use for each code
- ▶ Attitudes towards codes and their mixture

Bilingualism and change

- ▶ *Languages in contact* (Weinreich 1968 (1953))
- ▶ Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967), born in Vilnius (Poland at the time), specialist of Yiddish, educated in the US

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- ► *Languages in contact* (Weinreich 1968 (1953))
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- ► Bilinguals as the locus of language contact and contact-induced change

Interference

Based on a Saussurean view of language:

- The system (*langue*) is distinct from speech events (*parole*)
- Sign-meaning pairings are the building blocks of language

Interference

- ▶ Speakers look for equivalence of L2 signs with L1 signs, and use them accordingly
- ▶ L2 sign is used more narrowly or more broadly in bilingual speech than in the source language
- ▶ When confronted with a discrepancy, the bilingual may adjust their use of the L1 sign

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- ▶ When confronted with a discrepancy, the bilingual may adjust their use of the L1 sign
- ▶ Behavior of bilinguals takes time to become part of the language system

Factors of diffusion

- ▶ Structural compatibility
- ▶ Bilingual proficiency
- ▶ Enforcement of norms through education
- ▶ Presence of native speakers guarding norms
- ▶ Attitudes towards languages involved
- ▶ Social connotations of a linguistic feature

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- ▶ Social connotations of a linguistic feature
- ▶ Factors can override each other

Phonology

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- ▶ With realizations and contrastive features in place of meaning components
- ▶ SAE [l] for Russian /ɫ/ and /lʲ/
- ▶ Different properties are considered distinctive depending on the structure of the L1 system
- ▶ Substitution of English /ð, θ/ with [z, s] by French bilinguals and [d, t] for other L1s

Phonology

- ▶ Rhoticity in Dutch (simplified)
- ▶ Lots of variation and attested realizations, main "types" are alveolar and uvular, former is considered primary
- ▶ The latter prevalent in cities, likely in part due to influence of French as upper class language

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- ▶ Rapid rise of [ɻ] in codas in the Netherlands, spearheaded by young women in central urban environments

Phonology

► Rise of the voiced retroflex approximant in codas
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▶ Intense asymmetrical contact with English, in particular American English?

▶ General tendency to drop or vocalize rhotics in codas in Germanic

Phonology

- ▶ Initial resistance due to social factors in some areas of the Netherlands
- ▶ Phenomenon is absent in Belgium while other variants are not so restricted
- ▶ Continued resistance in one particular area of the Netherlands, where a strong uvular-prominent dialect is spoken

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▶ Combination of structural and social pressures?

Phonology

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► Sound [dˤ] in Alqosh Neo-Aramaic used to be an allophone of /d/ with pharyngealized segments, but became a phoneme due to borrowings

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- ▶ New sounds combine existing articulatory features, fill gaps (Uffmann 2015)

Phonology

- ▶ New sounds can be introduced without lexical borrowing as vehicle, if
- ▶ Phonetic pattern is perceptually salient
- ▶ Speakers of target language are sufficiently exposed (exposure to other languages changes the perception of phonemes)
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▶ Examples: ejectives and clicks

Loanwords

▶ Adaptation of a word (typically L2 > L1)

▶ May accompany the introduction of a new signifier (though not necessarily)

▶ Degree of integration into the target language system linked to bilingual proficiency and donor prestige (Lev-Ari, San Giacomo & Peperkamp 2014)

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- ▶ May accompany the introduction of a new signifier (though not necessarily)
- ▶ Degree of integration into the target language system linked to bilingual proficiency and donor prestige (Lev-Ari, San Giacomo & Peperkamp 2014)
- ▶ Lexical borrowing does not generally require direct or large-scale bilingualism
- ▶ (e.g. proliferation of English technical terms around the globe, the word 'robot')

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"The motivation for this surprising mapping lies in the regular correspondence between Russian /g/ and Ukrainian /h/ (and Belarusian [ɣ]). Russian speakers use this knowledge to analyse all instances of [h] as a variant realization of /g/." (Uffmann 2015: 22)

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► Also the most prolific, especially nouns

► Reconstructing the trajectory of a loan, however, can be challenging > Wanderwörter

Loanwords and bilingualism

▶ A high number of loanwords can be correlated with intensive bilingualism (Poplack, Sankoff & Miller 1988)

▶ But intensive bilingualism does not guarantee a high number of loanwords (Harvey 2011, Epps 2020)

Number of loanwords

- ▶ How to determine the number of loanwords in a language?

Number of loanwords

- ▶ How to determine the number of loanwords in a language?
- ▶ Dictionary authors as well as speakers can be motivated by language purism
- ▶ Bilingual *parole* can be very different
- ▶ Rise of bilingual corpora and quantitative contact research (Adamou 2016)
- ▶ How to distinguish between loanwords and "insertional" codeswitching?

Loan or codeswitch

– Вы, может быть, и правы, вы ведь Лизу помните?
– *Charmante enfant!*
– Но теперь уже не *enfant*, а женщина, и женщина с характером. Благородная и пылкая, и люблю в ней, что матери не спускает, доверчивой дуре. Тут из-за этого **кузена** чуть не вышла история.

Ф.М. Достоевский. "Бесы"

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- ► Many innovations of bilinguals never become frequent and disappear

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- ► Facilitate understanding?

Codeswitching

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▶ In such a case, monolingual knowledge of a word cannot be used as an indication of borrowing

▶ Multiple-word insertions can be a conventionalized part of discourse

▶ Requires a more complex evaluation of average switched utterance length, possible switch flags, word class, etc.

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- A special type of outcome from language contact
- Classic example are pidgins and creoles
- Other types include contact languages from conventionalized codeswitching, such as Gurindji Kriol (Bakker & Matras 2013)
- As well as ethnolects or multi-ethnolects – varieties spoken by specific ethnic groups and immigrant communities

Mixed languages

(1)   wreed *olmazmi*   **ah**   **sahbi**?
            great   would.be.NEG.Q VOC friend.my
            'Wouldn't that be great my friend?'

Example of a multi-ethnolect spoken in the Netherlands, with elements of *Turkish* and **Moroccan Arabic** from Nortier & Dorleijn (2013: 229).

Mixed languages

- ► Contact between language A and B results in a hybrid language C
- ► Subsequent influence of C on languages A and B?
- ► Or A ↔ B through C?

Loanwords

- ▶ Can cause changes in the phonological system
- ▶ And can bring along new grammatical elements:
- ▶ Yiddish borrowed plural forms from Hebrew in *-im* > started attaching *-im* to other bases as well, e.g. *doktójrim* (Weinreich 1968 (1953): 31)

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▶ Lexical patterns can also be borrowed in the form
of loan translations and loan "creations"
(Haspelmath 2009: 38–40), or colexifications
(François 2008)

Lexical interference

"One type of interference in which words are discarded
although no equivalents are transferred has been
described by M. [Haas (1951)]. She found Thai-English
bilinguals avoiding the use of certain innocuous Thai
words because of their phonic resemblance to obscene
words in English."
(Weinreich 1968 (1953): 55)

Borrowability scales

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▶ Some things are more borrowable than others
▶ Various borrowing scales, structure of hierarchy seems to depend on the language sample
▶ Generally lexemes > morphemes
▶ Nouns > other lexemes
▶ Derivation > inflection
▶ Free forms > bound morphemes
▶ Discourse markers are highly borrowable

Borrowability scales

▶ Preoccupation with matter borrowing, though see Matras (2007) for hierarchies of other borrowable material

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- ▶ More difficult to borrow = more intense contact?

Grammatical borrowing

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Grammatical borrowing

- Matter versus pattern borrowing (Sakel 2007)
- Pattern borrowing replicates the function, distribution, organization of a construction from a donor language with material from the target language
- As opposed to borrowing material and function
- Distinction is also relevant for other parts of language, but most often applied to grammatical constructions (Ibid.)

Matter borrowing

Similar linguistic structures and contact situations (dominant L2 > L1) with a different outcome

Tab. 5: Summary of copied suffixes in Sakha and Lamunkhin Ėven

	Sakha < Mongolic	Lamunkhin Ėven < Sakha
Derivational	11 nominalizers (of which 7 not productive anymore) 4 adjectivizers 2 adverbializers 1 verbalizer	1 ordinal suffix
Inflectional	1 plural (restricted use) 1 converb	5 forms of necessitative 5 forms of assertive 5 forms of indicative present tense 6 forms of hypothetical

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- ▶ Contact situations *seem* similar
- ▶ Even though they are situated in different time periods (before 13-14 century / present day)
- ▶ Genetic data show more intense social contact for the Lamunkhin Ėven-Sakha pair
- ▶ Intermarriage bias towards Sakha men with Ėven women
- ▶ Possible parallel with Copper Island Aleut? Maternal nouns and paternal verbs

Pattern borrowing

▶ Interference of L1 word order in L2 lingua franca?

Pattern borrowing

(Naccarato, Panova & Stoynova 2021)

- ▶ Interference of L1 word order in L2 lingua franca?
- ▶ Left-branching genitives are a feature of Dagestanian Russian (Daniel, Knyazev & Dobrushina 2010)
- ▶ Indigenous languages are left-branching

Pattern borrowing

(Naccarato, Panova & Stoynova 2021)

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- ▶ Pattern does not equally affect all constructions
- ▶ Strong bias towards kinship terms (general cognitive preference)
- ▶ Parallel in other corpora of non-standard Russian
- ▶ L1 influence strengthens more general tendencies?
- ▶ Or less pressure from prescriptive norms counteracting general typological and cognitive tendencies?

Contact-induced grammaticalization

(Heine & Kuteva 2005: 16)

Contact-induced grammaticalization

Relational noun 'with' > preposition > clause conjunction (Pipil, L2 Spanish)

(2)   Juan i-wan   Maria
        John her-with Mary
        'John and Mary' or 'John with Mary'

(3)   ne ta:_kat k-itskih   ne mich wan ki-kwah.
        the man   it-caught the fish   and it-ate
        'The man caught the fish and ate it.'

Selective copying

► Johanson (2002) Global code copying or wholesale matter borrowing

► Selective copying: "does not involve segmental units, but only selected structural – material, semantic, combinational or frequential – properties of foreign blocks" (Johanson 2002: 292)

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- ▶ Johanson (2002) Global code copying or wholesale matter borrowing
- ▶ Selective copying: "does not involve segmental units, but only selected structural – material, semantic, combinational or frequential – properties of foreign blocks" (Johanson 2002: 292)
- ▶ Matter borrowing may also be selective > Hungarian coordinators *meg* and *pëdig* in Selice Rumungro are strictly adversative

Pragmatics

Still from Mars Attacks! (1996)

Pragmatics

▶ The Martians in *Mars Attacks!* catch humanity off-guard by violating Grice's Maxim of Quality
▶ Contact pragmatics are usually less nefarious

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- Intonational patterns and "paralinguistic phenomena" like the namaste greeting (Andersen 2014)

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- Intonational patterns and "paralinguistic phenomena" like the namaste greeting (Andersen 2014)
- Pragmatic pattern borrowing?

Pragmatics

► Languages may also replicate discourse formulas
► Example: morning greetings in the languages of Dagestan

Morning greetings
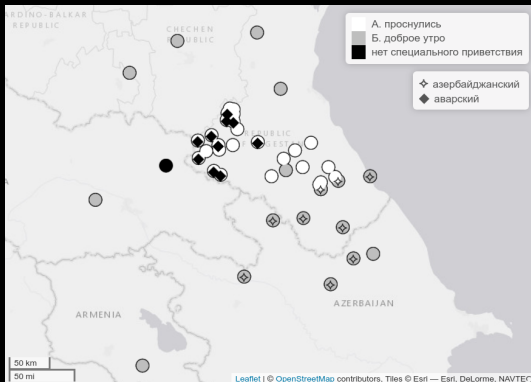
"Did you wake up?" as calque and direct copy.

Discourse formulas

▶ Not limited to morning greetings

▶ Ongoing research on wish-constructions in languages of Dagestan ('May an owl sit on you')

Discourse formulas

- ► Not limited to morning greetings
- ► Ongoing research on wish-constructions in languages of Dagestan ('May an owl sit on you')
- ► Morphological optatives are an areal feature of the Caucasus (Dobrushina 2020)
- ► Perhaps the result of shared cultural practice in a dense multilingual network

Structural convergence

- ▶ Linguistic areas or Sprachbünde are defined by shared structural features among neighboring languages (McMahon, Matras & Vincent 2006)
- ▶ (Though many authors take into account other features as well)
- ▶ Languages involved are not or only distantly related

Balkan Sprachbund

- ▶ presence of schwa
- ▶ prepositional cases
- ▶ postpositive definite articles
- ▶ dative/genitive merger
- ▶ location/ direction merger
- ▶ vocative case markers
- ▶ pronominal clitic doubling of objects
- ▶ loss of infinitive > subjunctive complements
- ▶ 'will'-future
- ▶ 'have'-perfect
- ▶ the modal category of evidentiality

Balkan Sprachbund

(Tomić 2011)

- ▶ Many features are also present in other languages outside of the area
- ▶ And are typologically common
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Balkan Sprachbund

(Tomić 2011)

- ▶ Many features are also present in other languages outside of the area
- ▶ And are typologically common
- ▶ Some seem to be shared with adjacent areas
- ▶ Core and peripheral languages
- ▶ Has a geographical rather than a linguistic epicenter (south of the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa)
- ▶ Areal proximity overrides phylogeny

East Nusantara

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▶ More subsequent research (Klamer 2004, Ewing & Klamer 2010)

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- ► More subsequent research (Klamer 2004, Ewing & Klamer 2010)
- ► East Nusantara > Wallacea? (Schapper 2015)

Next week

- ► Areal diffusion of evidentiality in Eurasia > the Caucasus
- ► Typologically not uncommon development with a suspicious areal distribution > including a micro-area of contact-induced absence?

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- Areal diffusion of evidentiality in Eurasia > the Caucasus
- Typologically not uncommon development with a suspicious areal distribution > including a micro-area of contact-induced absence?
- Alleged pattern borrowing and a lack of auxiliary data supporting a possible contact scenario
- Attempts to tackle this problem and some wild diachronic speculation

Assignment

Describe a contact phenomenon in a language you know or are working on. Summarize *all* the evidence you can find or come up with in favor of your proposed contact scenario.

(typological, structural, diachronic, sociological, etc.)

Send your assignments to jh.verhees@gmail.com. They will be discussed in class.

Abbreviations

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