LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics

Lecture #22
Dec 3rd, 2012

Announcements

- On Wednesday we wrap up everything, and then do course response forms in the last 15 minutes of class time.
- Any questions or issues on your LAPs?

Transition from last class

- **Historical linguistics** is mainly concerned with establishing genetic relationships between different languages and the reconstruction of earlier languages from which these related languages descended.
- **Reconstruction** proceeds via the **comparative method** through looking at **cognates** to reconstruct **proto-forms**. A reconstructed language is a **proto-language**.
- **Proto-Indo-European** (PIE) is the most well-studied proto-language in historical linguistics, instigated by Sir William Jones’ in 1786.

The discovery of Proto-Indo-European

- Thirty years after Jones’ initial remark, a young Danish scholar, named Rasmus Rask, postulated general correspondences between the consonants of Germanic languages and those of Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin.
- He noted, for example, that where the ancient languages showed a [p] sound, the corresponding words in the Germanic languages showed an [f].

The discovery of Proto-Indo-European

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pitar-</td>
<td>pater</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pad-</td>
<td>ped-</td>
<td>foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>piscis</td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasu</td>
<td>pecu</td>
<td>fee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1822, a German scholar, named Jakob Grimm, extended Rask’s observations and provided a detailed exposition of the Germanic consonant shift that came to be known as Grimm’s Law.

The crucial observation was that where ancient languages showed a voiceless stop [p, t, k], Germanic languages like English and Gothic showed a corresponding fricative [f, θ, h].

A puzzle: Some words in English were not affected by Grimm’s Law:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ped-</td>
<td>pedestrian (no p → f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenuis</td>
<td>tenuos (no t → θ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canalis</td>
<td>canal (no k → h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?
The second Germanic consonant shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern English</th>
<th>Modern German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>offen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>path</td>
<td>pfad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bite</td>
<td>beissen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>zu (z = ts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>Buch (ch = x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>kommen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ride</td>
<td>reiten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door</td>
<td>Tür</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, how do we decide on the proto-form?

- Reconstruction of proto-forms makes use of two main strategies:
  a. the phonetic plausibility strategy
  b. the majority rules strategy

- When both strategies lead to a tie, the data may point to a more logical change than another.

The phonetic plausibility strategy

- The phonetic plausibility strategy requires that any sound changes posited to account for differences between proto-forms and later forms must be phonetically plausible.

Some phonetically plausible sound changes

- Voiceless consonants become voiced between vowels and before voiced consonants.
- Stops become fricatives, particularly between vowels.
- Consonants become palatalized before front vowels.
- Consonants become voiceless at the end of words.
- Oral vowels become nasalized before nasals.
- Fricatives become [h].
- [h] deletes between vowels.

The majority rules strategy

- The majority rules strategy stipulates that if no phonetically plausible change can account for the observed differences, then the sound found in the majority of cognates should be assumed to be the proto-sound.

Romance cognates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Portuguese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cher</td>
<td>caro</td>
<td>caro</td>
<td>“dear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>champ</td>
<td>campo</td>
<td>campo</td>
<td>campo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chandelle</td>
<td>candela</td>
<td>candela</td>
<td>candela  “candle”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The regular sound correspondence for the initial sound is /k-/-k-
- Two hypotheses: (a) k → f, or (b) f → k.
  - By phonetic plausibility, (a) wins.
  - By majority rules, also (a) wins.
- Then, we do the same for every other sound in the cognates.
38. Proto-Uto-Aztecans

Creating language out of thin air: The case of Pidgins and Creoles

Language contact

Emergence of Pidgins and Creoles

How about we listen to this English-based speech variety?

How much did you understand?

Maybe we can try reading. Not sure it’ll help, but let’s try.

A pidgin is a system of communication used by people who do not know each other's languages but need to communicate with one another for trading or other purposes.

By definition, then, a pidgin is not a natural language. It’s a made-up “makeshift” language. Notice, crucially, that it does not have native speakers.

Middle Chinese

For this exercise, we have simplified the Chinese data somewhat.

Mandarin (Beijing) | Hakka (Huizhou) | Gloss
---|---|---
[a] (tān) | [kān] | ‘zither’
[b] (lā) | [lā] | ‘spicy hot’
[c] (mŏ) | [mō] | ‘lonely’
[d] (lān) | [lān] | ‘baskert’
[e] (tā) | [tō] | ‘worry’
[f] (tān) | [tàn] | ‘lazzy’
[g] (sā) | [sō] | ‘fear’
Pidginization areas

The lexicons of Pidgins are typically based on some dominant language
- While a pidgin is used by speakers of different languages, it is typically based on the lexicon of what is called a “dominant” language in the area where it is spoken.
- Dominant languages were typically those of the European colonialists, e.g., French, English, Dutch, etc.
- The dominant language is called the lexifier, or the superstratum language. The native languages of pidgin users are called substratum languages.

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems
- As you should expect, pidgins are very simple in their linguistic properties.
- Lexicon:
  a. Words from lexifier languages;
  b. Words belong to open classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives);
  c. No or few closed class words (prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, etc.)

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems
- Since pidgin vocabulary is pretty limited, meanings are extended (remember semantic broadening?)
- So, stick is not only used for sticks, but also for trees, in Solomon Islands Pidgin.
- In Korean Bamboo English, gross is used in “gras bilong head” to mean “hair”, and in “gras bilong mouth” to mean “moustache”.
- Compounds are also frequent, e.g., dog baby for “puppy”, or “Him cow pig have kittens?”

Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems
- Phonology:
  a. Phoneme inventory: Consonants and vowels that are phonetically easy.
  b. Syllable structure: Typically CV or CVC.
  c. Stress: fixed stress location.
- Morphology:
  Pretty much none. No plural, tense or aspect marking. No agreement, either.
- Syntax:
  Variable word order, influenced by the user’s native language.
  Sentences are simple and short with no embedding.

A pidgin example
- Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE), ignoring pronunciation:
  - You see, I got wood there; plenty men here no job, come steal.
  - Honolulu come; plenty more come; too much pineapple there.
  - No can. I try hard get good ones. Before, plenty duck; now, no more.
  - All ’ight, all ’ight, I go; all same, by’n bye Honolulu all Japanese.
Kids?

- Suppose you’re a child born in a speech community where a pidgin is spoken (either by your parents or by the other kids in the neighborhood).
- The pidgin utterances are your primary linguistic data (PLD).
- But remember that a pidgin is not a natural language.
- So, what language are you going to end up learning on the basis of these PLD?

Creole: The birth of a language

- As it turns out, kids impose **structure** on the language input they receive, ending up with a language that has prepositions, articles, tense marking, aspect morphology, embedded sentences, etc.
- When a pidgin is acquired as a first language by a generation of children, it becomes a **creole**. A creole thus, unlike a pidgin, is a natural language.

HPE vs. HCE

a. *Pidgin:*  
No, the men, ah–pau [finished] work–they go, make garden. Plant this, ah, cabbage, like that. Plant potato, like that. And then–all that one–all right, sit down. Make lily bit story.

b. *Creole:*  
When work pau [is finished] da guys they stay go make ‘are going to make’ garden for plant potato an’ cabbage an’ after little while they go sit down talk story ['shoot the breeze'].

Next class agenda

- Finishing our discussion of pidgins and creoles.
- Revisiting language and thought. Read Chapter 1, pp. 29-34. Also read Crystal’s discussion of “Language and thought”, pp. 14-15 in the Encyclopedia on reserve.
- Course response forms.