LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics

Lingu-ist-ic-s
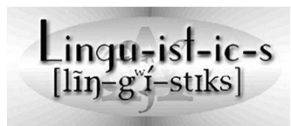[lin-gʷĭ-stɪks]

Last Lecture
Dec 5th, 2012

Announcements

- I posted the solutions for the syntax part of HW5.
- I updated the score sheet with HW5 scores and overall homework percentages.
- Believe it or not, we've made it. Today we arrive at the finish line.
- A list of the topics covered in this class, as well as target learning skills. Final exam will be mainly on issues from syntax on.
- Some photos for history!

Today's agenda

- Finish our discussion of creolization.
- Discussion of language and thought.
- Course response forms in the last 15 minutes. I need two volunteers to deliver the forms to the drop box on the first floor of Old Chapel.

Pidgins and creoles

- A **pidgin** is a linguistically simplified contact language without any native speakers.
- Children impose linguistic organization on a pidgin and turn it into a full-fledged language, a **creole**.
- We saw an example in the differences between Hawaiian Pidgin English and Hawaiian Creole English.

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 lilly 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'].

When a pidgin becomes a creole, …

- Compare the linguistic properties of Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE) and Hawaiian Creole English (HCE).
- Word order:
  HPE: S is always before O, but position of verb varies.

  HCE: SVO, and allows other orders for pragmatic use.

When a pidgin becomes a creole, …

- Articles:

  HPE: definite/indefinite articles, if existent at all, are used fairly randomly.

  HCE: Definite *da* used for all and only known specific references. Indefinite *wan* used for all and only unknown specific references. Other NPs have no article.

7

When a pidgin becomes a creole, …

- HCE: *bin* marks tense, *go* marks modality, *stei* marks aspect.

  Wail wi stei paedl, jaen stei put wata insaid da kanu—hei, da san av a gan haed sink!
  "While we were paddling, John was letting water into the canoe—hey, the son-of-a-gun had sunk it!"

  As tu bin get had taim reizing dag.
  "The two of us used to have a hard time raising dogs."

8

When a pidgin becomes a creole, …

- HCE: complementizers *fo* vs. *go*, where the former is used with hypothetical events, and the latter with events that actually happened. Notice the embedding as well.

  a. Mo beta a bin go hanalulu fo bai maiself.
  "It would have been better if I'd gone to Honolulu to buy it myself."

  b. Ai gata go haia wan kapinta go fiks da fom.
  "I had to hire a carpenter to fix the form."

9

Cross-creole similarities

- Interestingly enough, many creole languages exhibit the same linguistic properties that we noted for HCE.
- For example, they all use fronting for emphasis or contrastive focus, as shown in the following examples from Guyanese Creole (GC):
  a. Jan bin sii wan uman.
     'John had seen a woman.'
  b. A Jan bin sii wan uman.
     'It was John who had seen a woman.'
  c. A wan uman Jan bin sii
     'It was a woman that John had seen.'

10

Cross-creole similarities

- Creoles also show similar patterns for articles, as noted for HCE.
- Consider these data from GC for illustration:
  a. Jan bai di buk   'John bought the book (that you already know about).'
  b. Jan bai wan buk 'John bought a (particular) book.'
  c. Jan bai buk   'John bought a book or books.'

11

Cross-creole similarities

- Similarities also appear in the tense-modality-aspect system of creole languages, where preverbal free morphemes (e.g., *bin, go, stei*) are typically used.

- Complementizers are also typically of two kinds: one for realized events, and the other for hypotheticals, as already seen in HCE and on the next slide from French-based Mauritian Creole.

12

Cross-creole similarities

- Mauritian Creole (MC): **al** (realized; or ∅), **pu** (unrealized; or *pu al*)

  a. li   desid   **al**   met posoh ladah
     she decide go put fish in-it
     'She decided to put a fish in (the pool).'

  b. li ti pe ale aswar **pu al** bril lakaz sa garsoh-la me lor sime
     ban dayin fin atake li
     he TNS MOD go evening for go burn house that boy-the but
     on path PL witch COMP attack him
     'He would have gone that evening to burn the boy's house,
     but on the way he was attacked by witches.'

13

Where do pidgins and creoles come from, then?

14

Polygenesis

- One view is that every creole is a unique independent development, a product of language contact in a particular area.
- The problem with this **polygenesis** approach is that it does not account for the fact that creole languages around the world share a lot of similarities with regard to their linguistic properties.

15

Monogenesis

- Perhaps pidgins and creoles all came from the same ancestor language then?
- This is the **monogenesis** view. A candidate for common origin has actually been suggested: a 15th-century Portuguese pidgin, which may have in turn descended from the Mediterranean lingua franca known as **Sabir**.
- Evidence for this view comes from the fact that there is a considerable number of Portuguese words in the pidgins and creoles of the world.

16

Monogenesis

- Main Problem for the monogenesis view is that there are pidgins and creoles that do not seem to have any Portuguese effect of any kind, e.g., Chinook Jargon in the Pacific Northwest in the USA.

17

Bickerton's bioprogram theory

- Creoles are similar because they reflect the universality of language.
- Bickerton's view is that creolization provides strong evidence for a **bioprogram** for language.
- Kids learn a language even in the face of a non-language input. This is an extreme case of the *poverty of the stimulus*.
- Under this approach, a creole is as close a reflection of the bioprogram for language as possible.

18

The post-creolization situation

- Creoles tend to co-exist with their lexifier languages in the same speech community. Since they are based on these languages, at least lexically, they come to be viewed as "nonstandard" varieties of the lexifier language.
- As we noted a couple of weeks ago, under desires for overt prestige, some speakers start to move away from their own creole to the standard lexifier language, in what is often called **decreolizatoin**.

19

The post-creole continuum

- As a result of decreolizatoin, a range of creole varieties exist in a continuum. The variety closest to the standard language is called the **acrolect**, the one least like the standard is called the **basilect**, and in between these two is a range of creole varieties that are called **mesolects**:

<--->

Acrolect   Mesolects   Basilect

20

What does that mean?

Mɪ bɪn gi: æm wan.

21

The post-creole continuum
The sentence '*I gave him one*' in Guyanese

Pidgin and Creole Languages
Table 3.1 A Guyanese continuum
Source: Bell (1976, p. 136)

22

The post-creole continuum

- Samples of Hawaiian Creole about President Obama and Thanksgiving (should be a piece of cake compared to Tok Pisin):
- http://www.mauimagazine.net/Maui-Magazine/January-February-2009/Dear-Prezadent-Obama/
- http://www.mauimagazine.net/Maui-Magazine/November-December-2012/Tanks-Eh/

23

Language and thought

- The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (aka as **linguistic relativity**).
  > "..we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages … by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that … is codified in the patterns of our language."
  >
  > *(Whorf 1940, pp213-214)*

24

Basic colors terms

- Compare *light blue* with *dark blue* in English.

- Ask Matvey what he calls each in Russian.

- Studies on color terms has typically given conflicting results, some showing an effect of one's language on perception of color, and some showing no such effect.

25

Color and Shape (Carroll and Cassagrande 1958)

- Navajo has verb prefixes based on the 'shape' features of an object:
  - long and flat (paper, leaf): *šańléh*
  - long and rigid (stick, pole): *šańtííh*
  - long and flexible (snake, rope, hose): *šańitcóós*
- Question: Since sensitivity to shape is necessary would Navajo-speaking children be more sensitive to shape, than say color, than English-speaking children?

Color and Shape

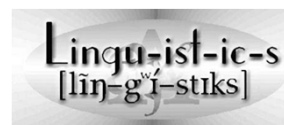White Rope   Red Rope   Red Stick
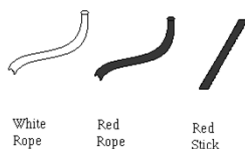
27

The results

- They found that shape was more salient in young Navaho speakers ages 3-5 than their English-speaking counterparts, but that by age 7, this difference had all but disappeared.
- Also, when this experiment was repeated on other groups of English speakers, they found that one group of middle-class children responded like the Navaho speakers, but one group of working class children still showed preference for color over shape.

So, …

- The jury is still out on the right way to characterize the relationship between language and thought.
- Perhaps one of you will help us rest the case one day.

29

It's been fun. I enjoyed it, and I hope you did too.

Lingu-ist-ic-s [lɪŋ-gʷɪ́-stɪks]

FAREWELL, EVERYONE!

30