

WORKSHOP: APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE VARIATION AND CHANGE IN INDIGENOUS MINORITY LANGUAGES (ASIMIL)

April 3rd, 2019, Leiden University, 11:00 - 14:00 hrs

Sponsored by the Language in Interaction consortium

Event description

For the past six decades, the study of language variation has been mainly concerned with change occurring in WEIRD societies (Labov 1972, 1966, 1990; Trudgill 1986, 1972; Milroy and Milroy 1978; Eckert 1989; van Hout 1999). Lately, however, more and more efforts concerning minoritised and indigenous languages are coming out (e.g. Lüpke 2016b, 2016a, 2017; Mansfield and Stanford 2017; Yang, Stanford, and Yang 2015; Zariquiey 2015; Epps and Stenzel 2013; Stenzel and Khoo 2016), shedding light on the complex dynamics and the role of the construction of individual personae in ongoing language change.

Conversely, the study of language change has touched upon almost every corner of the world. Following the traditional comparative method, several large language families have been identified, such as Proto-Indo-European (q.v. Beekes 2011), Proto-Finno-Ugric (q.v. Salminen 2001), Proto-Pama-Nyungan (q.v. Evans 1988), Proto-Arawak (q.v. Payne 1991), Proto-Quechua (q.v. Parker 2013), *inter alia*. In addition, complex contact scenarios have been identified, yielding interesting insights on mixed-languages (e.g. Muysken 1981 for Media Lengua; Meakins 2012 for Gurindji Kriol), creoloids (q.v. Chien and Sanada 2010 for Yilan Creole; Cabral 1995; Cabral and Rodrigues 2003 for Kukama), and so-called isolates.

This workshop touches upon these topics. However, rather than seeing them as mutually exclusive, i.e. from a *static perspective*, it assumes a *dynamic perspective* (Bailey 1973), focusing on the omnipresence of mixing in language “emergence” and change (Schuchardt 1885), the history of linguistic elements at the subsystematic level (*lingueme* level) (Croft 2000; Enfield 2014), and the existence of a polylectal internally dynamic competence (Bailey 1973; Seuren 1982) underlying the observable output.

Programme

Introduction	11:00
Jacob Lesage (LLACAN, Paris)	11:20
Jeremy Collins (MPI-Nijmegen)	11:40
Lunch break	12:00 - 12:45
Andrés Napurí (Oxford University)	12:45
George Saad (Leiden University)	13:05
Break	13:25
Rita Eloranta (HSE-Helsinki)	13:40
Luis Miguel Rojas-Berscia (LiI & UQ-SLC)	14:00
Round table (Mily Crevels, Willem Adelaar, Pieter Muysken)	14:20

Abstracts

The position of Kam (Central-Eastern Nigeria) within Niger-Congo and the overestimation of genealogical uniformity in African languages

Jakob Lesage

(LLACAN, Paris)

In his seminal content-wide genealogical classification of African languages, Greenberg (1963) identified four indigenous super-families, the largest of which was Niger-Congo, in its current incarnation counting over 1,400 languages. Until today, this classification still enjoys much popularity and wide acceptance in the Africanist community, despite the disputability of his methods, and despite the fact that much more data has become available in past decades. While practically useful, this classification has proven more damaging in other ways, presenting a picture of African languages and cultures as less diverse and more homogeneous than they actually are (Güldemann 2018).

Kam (or $\text{ni}^{\prime} \tilde{\omega}^{\wedge} \text{m}$), a previously undescribed central-eastern Nigerian language, has since Greenberg (1963) always been considered a Niger-Congo language belonging to the Adamawa subfamily, without any challenges over the years. In this talk, I will consider the arguments for including Kam in the little understood Adamawa family, and in the Niger-Congo family more generally. I will examine a selection of comparative issues (hypothetically retained lexicon, issues in the numeral system of Kam, the structure of nouns, the presence of labial-velar stops), which I will consider from an areal perspective (both at a macro-areal level and at a micro-areal one) as opposed to a purely genealogical perspective. As such, I intend to use the case of Kam to illustrate our currently poor understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity and uniformity in Africa in general and in central-eastern Nigeria in specific, an area that is characterized until today by a 'majority' of people belonging to minority ethnicities rather than to majority groups.

The picture that emerges of Kam is that of a potential high-level Niger-Congo isolate, with the question of how solid our basis is for accepting Kam as a Niger-Congo language. At the same time, some structural features Kam shares with other languages of the area have to be interpreted as a result of intense historical contact with different groups over the past centuries.

Greenberg, J. H. (1963). *The Languages of Africa*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Güldemann, T. (2018). 2. Historical linguistics and genealogical language classification in Africa. In T. Güldemann (Ed.), *The Languages and Linguistics of Africa* (pp. 58–444). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.

Language Contact and Verb-Subject Order in Austroasiatic

Jeremy Collins

(MPI-Nijmegen)

I present data showing variation in order of verb and subject in dialects of Wa (Austroasiatic) in Southwest China. I present evidence that Wa has been moving from verb-subject order to subject-verb order because of contact with Tai-Kadai languages. I then test the hypothesis that Austroasiatic as a whole may have been shifting in the order of verb and subject due to language contact. I outline a method of reconstructing ancestral word order states using phylogenetics (e.g. Dunn et al., Nature 2011), but altered so that the probability of changing to a particular word order depends on what languages are nearby, therefore providing a model of language contact. This method shows that Austroasiatic as a whole is more likely to have had ancestral verb-subject order than is ordinarily assumed, and that the prevalence of subject-verb order in modern Austroasiatic languages is likely due to contact with other languages in Southeast Asia.

Dunn, M., Greenhill, S. J., Levinson, S. C., & Gray, R. D. (2011). Evolved structure of language shows lineage-specific trends in word-order universals. *Nature*, 473, 79-82. doi:10.1038/nature09923

Some Comments on ‘enemy’ and the Backdrop of Otherness

Andrés Napurí Espejo

(Oxford University)

Ethnographic studies in the Amazon have led to escape classical dichotomies, including the opposition of *people* and *other* as neat entities to describe Amazonian indigenous paradigms of organisation. These oppositions were also problematised after contact of Western societies with indigenous communities—a new *other* appeared, and indigenous people needed to inscribe him into their ontology. For instance, the words used for *enemy* might have a different relationship with other words in the Amazonian language i.e. *the other* can be understood specifically as an ‘indigenous person’ or as ‘different people who also live in the forest’. As such, the presence of ‘white people’ required different solutions or categories. Such cases have been observed in Yanomaman and Boran languages. In the first case, the word used to name this new enemy did not resemble a ‘person’ i.e. it was a complete ‘outsider’. In Boran languages, the words used for ‘white people’ relates with the Amazon Rubber Boom and their people’s enslaving process.

Descola, P. (1996). Constructing nature: symbolic ecology and social practice. In P. Descola & G. Palsson (Eds.), *Nature & Society: Anthropological Perspectives* (pp. 82–102). London, New York: Routledge.

Fausto, C. (1999). Of Enemies and Pets: Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia. *American Ethnologist*, 26(4), 933–956. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1999.26.4.933>

Frank, E. H. (1994). Los Uni. In F. Santos-Granero & F. Barclay (Eds.), *Guía Etnográfica de la Alta Amazonía* (Vol. 2, pp. 129–237). Quito: FLACSO & IFEA.

Kopenawa, D., & Albert, B. (2013). *The Falling Sky. Word of a Yanimami Shaman*. (N. Elliot & A. Dundy, Trans.). Cambridge, London: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). Do Dual Organizations Exist? In *Structural Anthropology* (pp. 132–163). New York: Basic Books.

Panduro, W. (2016). *Relatos orales bora: relatos de origen y otros relatos del pueblo bora* (Vols 1–2). Lima: Ministerio de Educación

Viveiros de Castro, E. (1992). *From the Enemy's Point of View*. (C. V. Howard, Trans.). Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Viveiros de Castro, E. (1998). Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4(3), 469–488. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3034157>

Semantic variation in a bilingual Abui/Malay community

George Saad

(Leiden University)

Generalization is a semantic change in which a word with specific semantics becomes more generic (Traugott and Dasher 2001). In Abui (Timor-Alor-Pantar), generalization is taking place due to contact with the language of wider communication, Alor Malay (Austronesian). There is currently much variation in how speakers use particular verbs, with older speakers (age 40+) using very specific semantics, and younger ones applying generic semantics. In this paper, I argue, as put forth by (Ross 2013), that by studying semantic variation in Abui among four age-groups, we can get a crucial window into incipient semantic change as well as the processes behind it.

In this case study, I investigate among which group of speakers semantic generalization a) is most widespread and b) first emerged. Understanding the distribution of this variation in conjunction with sociolinguistic data allows us to make a more articulated model of how exactly these processes have helped shape an on-going change. What is interesting about the Abui situation is that children are raised mostly in Malay but acquire passive knowledge of Abui. They only become active speakers of Abui after adolescence – an under-described socialization process that is argued to be widespread in Indonesia (e.g. Bowden 2002). This bilingualism setting appears to strongly favour generalization.

Comparing the lexical semantics of the two languages in question, there are a number of Abui verbs in certain semantic domains that do not have direct translation equivalents in Alor Malay. For example, in the domain of ‘visual perception’, Abui uses a narrow

system, distinguishing between *wahai* ‘look at’ and *-ien-* ‘see’. Alor Malay uses a wide system, consisting of one generic verb *lihat* ‘visually perceive’. Typically, when speakers of a language with a wide system (such as Malay) learn languages with a narrow system (such as Abui), they have problems learning both verbs because they have not established the language specific mental representations and rely on the conceptualizations of the L1 (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008). Since many younger speakers are more dominant in Malay, we expect them to generalize one of the verbs at the expense of the other, on the model of Malay.

This is indeed what we find when examining both production and comprehension data. We observe extensive generalization in Group A (9-16 years) and to a lesser extent in Group B (17-25 years). We see a few tokens of generalization in Group C (26-34 years) and none in the control group of Abui L1 speakers (40-75 years). This data suggests that a) generalization is most highly distributed among Group A (9-16 years) and b) the innovations initially emerged in what is now Group C (26-34 years). Factoring in the sociolinguistic data about speakers only becoming active speakers of Abui around adolescence, it is likely that group C probably initiated this innovation in their adolescence, some 20-25 years ago. In line with Ross (2013), both findings point to (pre-)adolescents as being the agents of change.

This study concludes by arguing that a) this language socialization process is having a rapid effect on semantic change, b) throughout Indonesia, a similar language socialization process is widespread, yet heavily under-described, c) detailed variationist sociolinguistic studies offer insights in the field of language change by shedding light on how changes emerge and spread.

Bowden, John. 2002. “The Impact of Malay on Taba a Type of Incipient Language Death or Incipient Death of a Language Type.” In *Language Endangerment and Language Maintenance*, edited by David Bradley and Bradley Maya. London; New York: Routledge Curzon.

Jarvis, Scott, and Aneta Pavlenko. 2008. *Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*. New York: Routledge.

Ross, Malcolm. 2013. “Diagnosing Contact Processes from Their Outcomes: The Importance of Life Stages.” *Journal of Language Contact* 6 (1): 5–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/19552629-006001002>.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs, and Richard B. Dasher. 2001. *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Mayan component of the Mochica language

Rita Eloranta Barrera-Virhuez

(Leiden Universiteit/Hanken School of Economics-Helsinki)

Mochica constitutes an enigma for Amerindian Linguistics when it is compared to the surrounding languages spoken in the region due to its highly unusual typological

features. Many features of Mochica, such as numeral classifiers, recurrent use of passive constructions, personal reference markers, and some lexical items are reminiscent of the Mayan languages in Mesoamerica (Stark 1968, 1972; Adelaar [2004] 2007).

There have been several attempts to relate Mochica genetically, but the only serious attempt is that of Stark (1968, 1972), who compared Mochica to a Cholan Mayan language, Ch'ol, suggesting that some lexical and grammatical similarities between these two languages could be evidence for a genetic relationship between them. The main difference between Stark (1968) and (1972) is that the latter version includes a few Proto-Mayan forms that became available only after her first study appeared. Whereas some of the aspects of Stark's (1968, 1972) proposals certainly need to be revised, it is evident that there are indeed some parallels between Mochica and Mayan languages. In this respect, the intention of this presentation is to revisit Stark's hypothesis and present the results of my own comparisons.

Adelaar, Willem. [2004]2007. The Mochica language. In: Adelaar, Willem with the collaboration of Pieter C. Muysken. *The Languages of the Andes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 319-350.

Stark, Louisa. 1968. *Mayan Affinities with Yunga of Peru*. New York: NY University.

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The Carib, Arawak and Jivaroan components of Kawapanan

Luis Miguel Rojas-Berscia

(Language in Interaction Research Consortium/

SLC-University of Queensland)

South America's great linguistic diversity is an everyday challenge to static views of language. Although many major languages families have been identified, e.g Arawak (Payne 1991), Quechua (Parker 2013), or Chonan (Viegas Barros 1997), linguists are progressively conceiving the coming about of many modern South American languages as a product of recursive mixing (q.v. Muysken 2009; O'Connor and Muysken 2014). Here I focus on Kawapanan, a small language family located in the contemporary Peruvian regions of Loreto and San Martín.

The efforts to clade together the Kawapanan languages (Shawi (chay1248) and Shiwilu (jebe1250)) with other adjacent (Suárez 1974) or distant languages (Kaufman 1994) have not gained much support in the academic community. However, recent surveys that show how Kawapanan displays features common both to Andean and prototypical Amazonian languages (Valenzuela 2015) — a commonly observed characteristic in the languages of the so-called eastern flanks of the Andes (q.v. Wise 1999, 2011) — have shed

light on possible pre-Hispanic language contact scenarios that could have engendered these typological similarities. In addition, the massive lexical comparison carried out in Jolkesky (2016) revealed the existence of an important Carib and Arawak lexical component in Kawapanan.

This talk engages with the findings of Jolkesky (2016) and argues that a dynamic approach (Bailey 1973) provides a better account of the phenomena at hand. As such, Kawapanan languages seem to have undergone a progressive *mixing*, the layers of which can be found both in the grammar and in the lexicon. Here, I particularly focus on the “core” lexicon of the language — which seems to be of Carib origin —, the domains of cultural vocabulary, valency change, and inalienable possession — which could be easily attributed to Arawak —, and more recent processes occurring in the Cahuapanas lects of Shawi, which display an undeniable Jivaroan signal.

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Jolkesky, Marcelo. 2016. ‘Estudo arqueo-ecolinguístico das terras tropicais sul-americanas’. Tese de Doutorado, Brasília, DF: Universidade de Brasília.

Kaufman, Terence. 1994. ‘The Native Languages of South America’. In *Atlas of the World’s Languages*, edited by C. Mosley and R.E. Asher, 46–76. London: Routledge.

Muysken, Pieter C. 2009. ‘Gradual Restructuring in Ecuadorian Quechua’. In *Gradual Creolization*. Creole Language Library (CLL) 34. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://benjamins.com/catalog/cll.34.09muy>.

O’Connor, Loretta, and Pieter C. Muysken. 2014. *The Native Languages of South America Origins, Development, Typology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parker, Gary J. 2013. *Trabajos de Lingüística Histórica Quechua*. Edited by Rodolfo Cerrón-Palomino. Lima: Fondo Editorial, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

Payne, David L. 1991. ‘A Classification of Maipuran (Arawakan) Languages Based on Shared Lexical Retentions’. In *Handbook of Amazonian Languages*, edited by Desmond C. Derbyshire and Geoffrey K. Pullum, 3:354–499. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Suárez, Jorge. 1974. ‘South American Indian Languages’. In *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (15th Edition)*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.

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Viegas Barros, J.P. 1997. ‘Aspectos de la fonología del proto-chon: consonantes labiales, dentales, alveolares y palatales’. In *Etnolingüística. Actas Jornadas de Antropología de la Cuenca del Plata y II Jornadas de Etnolingüística*, I:221–28. Rosario: Escuela de Antropología. Facultad de Humanidades y Artes. Universidad de Rosario.

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<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954394500000338>.

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Zariquiey, Roberto. 2015. 'Diferencias Intergeneracionales En El Uso de Construcciones de Cambio de Referencia Entre Hablantes de Kakataibo (Pano, Perú)'. In *Proceedings of the Conference of Indigenous Languages of Latin America VII*. Austin: The University of Texas at Austin.