

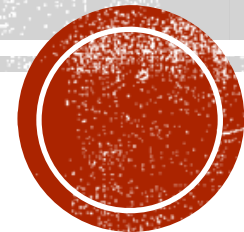
# LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

William M. Cotter

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Center for Middle East Studies – The University of Arizona



# WHAT IS LANGUAGE CONTACT?

- “The use of more than one language, in the same place, at the same time” (Thomason 2001: 1)
- Contact doesn't require fluency, bilingualism or multilingualism
- It requires contact between speakers of different languages
- Contact also doesn't necessarily require face-to-face contact between speakers of different languages
  - Ex. Use of religious resulted in language contact in some communities



# FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT

- However, language contact is most often a result of face-to-face communication between speakers of two or more languages in a specific area
  - Ex. economic migration, trade, slavery
- Language contact always has some kind of social history (even if we don't know it)
- Language contact always has social consequences



# WHERE DOES CONTACT HAPPEN?

- Everywhere!
  - There are really no languages that develop in total isolation
- However, language contact is more intense at certain times and in certain locations
- Some situations of language contact are more stable than others
- Language contact is the norm



# OUTCOMES OF CONTACT

- Three primary outcomes:
  - Contact induced language change
  - Language mixture
    - Pidgins
    - Creoles
    - Mixed languages
  - Language Death



# CONTACT INDUCED LANGUAGE CHANGE

- What kind of change counts as contact induced?
  - “any linguistic change that would have been less likely to occur outside a particular contact situation is due at least in part to language contact” (Thomason 2001:62)
- There are two primary types of contact induced change:
  - Direct importations from a source language
  - Indirect effects of contact
    - Attrition that sometimes take place in dying languages
    - Changes that were initially triggered by an importation
- Caveat: change of this type typically has more than one factor causing it



# LANGUAGE MIXTURE

- Three main types of language mixture in contact situations:
  - Pidgins
  - Creoles
  - Mixed languages
- Leads to the idea of a ‘contact language’
  - ‘any new language that arises in a contact situation. Linguistically a contact language is identifiable by the fact that its lexicon and grammatical structures cannot all be traced back primarily to the same source language” (Thomason 2001: 158)



# PIDGINS & CREOLES

- Pidgins and Creoles naturally go together, at least to some extent
- They develop in social situations where there isn't significant bi or multilingualism between the languages used by speakers
- Situations where people of different linguistic backgrounds need to talk to each other regularly





# PIDGINS

- Typically arise in situations involving speakers of more than two language groups
- They have no shared language, but they need to communicate, often for economic reasons
  - Ex. Trade
- But they don't learn each others language, instead a pidgin develops
- The vocabulary of a pidgin is often largely from one of the languages
- However, the grammar doesn't come from any one language



# CREOLES

- A creole DOES become someone's native language
- But, like pidgins:
  - They arise in contact situations where there are speakers of more than two languages
  - They typically draw their lexicon from one language
  - They draw their grammar from multiple languages that are in contact
- Some pidgins evolve into full fledged creoles
- But not all creoles went through stages where they were pidgins



# MIXED LANGUAGES

- Arise in situations of bi or multilingualism
  - But typically in cases where that bi/multilingualism goes only in one direction
  - Some members of a group are able to use the language that is the dominant means of communication in a community
  - So there's no need to develop an entirely new language for communication
- The development of a mixed language often serves other social functions:
  - The desire/need for an in-group language
  - Keeping conversation secret
  - Serving as an identity symbol for one group within a community



# LANGUAGE DEATH

- “Every loss of a language deprives us of a window into the human mind and the human spirit; every language that dies deprives us of a unique repository of human experience and thought. Loss of a language deprives its speech community of much more, because a large part of a culture must inevitably vanish with the language” (Thomason 2001: 223)
- A language dies when it is no longer used for regular spoken communication within a community
- Problems with this:
  - What if there's one speaker left?
  - Who constitutes a speaker?
  - What about language revival?



# APPROACHES TO STUDYING CONTACT

- “A central debate in contact linguistics surrounds the question of whether linguistic factors or social factors primarily predict the outcomes of contact.” (Ravindranath 2015: 244)
- Different scholars treat different factors with varying levels of importance when investigating language contact, but most agree that it’s a collection of factors which have an effect in language contact
  - Sankoff (2002)



# WHAT FACTORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT?

- Linguistic factors (King 2002)
  - “community studies give us reliable data as to the (social) status of an innovation...[but] an analysis of grammatical change must be responsible to a theory of grammar.” (Ravindranath 2015:244)
- Social factors (Thomason 2008)
  - “the social relations between the two speech communities, not the structures of their languages, determine the direction and the extent of influence” (Ravindranath 2015:244)
- Asking whether change as a result of contact is a given (Poplack and Levey 2010)
  - “contact-induced change is not an inevitable, nor possibly even a common, outcome of language contact” (Ravindranath 2015:244)



# CASE STUDY: ARABIC AND HEBREW

Palestinian Sub-districts According to British Mandate Administration (1917 - 1948 CE)



# CONTACT SETTING

- Pre 1948 – Arabic, Hebrew, and English used as official languages
- Post 1948 – Shift towards Hebrew dominance
- Today: Government, education, correctional, and economic systems in Israel are conducted largely in Hebrew
- Speakers of Palestinian Arabic in Israel are often bilingual (at least functionally) in Arabic and Hebrew, and some report being more comfortable using Hebrew (Horesh 2014)
- This system of Hebrew dominance has resulted in change in Palestinian Arabic





# INFLUENCE OF HEBREW ON ARABIC

- Lenition
  - Modern Hebrew lacks the voiced pharyngeal fricative (Arabic 'ayn - ع)
  - As a result of contact between the two languages, Arabic speakers appear to be losing this sound in their varieties of Arabic (Horesh 2014)
- Depharyngealization
  - The Arabic 'emphatics' may be 'losing their emphatic'
  - ط, ظ, ص, ض
- Borrowings
  - Hebrew words are replacing common words in Palestinian Arabic



# INFLUENCE OF ARABIC ON HEBREW

- Influence of Arabic on Hebrew is notably more limited
- Some borrowing of Arabic words into Hebrew (ex. 'yalla')
  - Mostly slang and vernacular
- Structural borrowing from Arabic is limited
- The lack of influence of Arabic on Hebrew reflects the directionality of bilingualism in Israel, as well as the dominant status of Hebrew (Henkin 2011)



# CONCLUSIONS

- Language contact is a complex process
- There is virtually always more than one source of contact induced change
- And there are numerous different outcomes of contact, depending on the conditions under which that contact takes place
- Finally, there are a number of different ways that scholars have investigated contact, and there is substantial debate about what should be considered the primary factor(s) that influence contact



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