# LNGT0101
## Introduction to Linguistics

Lingu-ist-ic-s
[lɪŋ-gʷɪ́-stɪks]
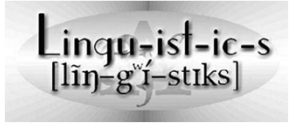
Lecture #24
Dec 7th, 2011

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## Announcements

- Solutions for HW4 are posted. I'll post the scores soon. Scores for HW5 are posted. There are really no solutions for HW5 since it was primarily a 'do-it' kind of homework.
- Believe it or not, we made it. Today we arrive at the finish line.
- A list of the topics covered in this class, as well as target learning skills.

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## Today's agenda

- Finish our discussion of creolization.
- Discussion of language and thought.
- Language endangerment and preservation.
- Course response forms in the last 15 minutes. I need two volunteers to deliver the forms to the drop box in the Carr Hall lounge.

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## 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.

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## 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'].

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## 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.'

## 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.'

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## 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.

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## Cross-creole similarities

- Mauritian Creole (MC): *al* (realized; or Ø), *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.'

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# Where do pidgins and creoles come from, then?

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## 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.

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## Monogenesis

- Perhaps pidgins and creoles all came from the same ancestor language then?
- This is the *monogenesis* view. A candidate 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.

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## 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.

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## Bickerton's bioprogram theory

- Creoles are similar because they reflect language universals.
- 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.

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## 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**.

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## 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**:

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Acrolect          Mesolects          Basilect
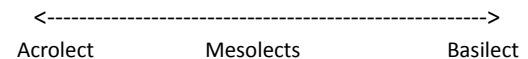
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## What does that mean?

Mɪ bɪn gi: æm wan.

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## 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)

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## The post-creole continuum

- Samples of Hawaiian Creole about President Obama and the Big Apple (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-2010/Da-Big-Ambrosia/

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## Language and thought

- The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.
- Linguistic determinism.
- Linguistic relativity.

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## Language endangerment and preservation

- A language can be either healthy, endangered, moribund, or dead.

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## Number of languages by countries
### (from Skutnabb-Kangas 2000)

| Papua New Guinea | 850 |
|---|---|
| Indonesia | 670 |
| Nigeria | 410 |
| India | 380 |
| Cameroon | 270 |
| Australia | 250 |
| Mexico | 240 |
| Zaïre | 210 |
| Brazil | 210 |

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## On their way to "dying": Moribund

"The Eyak language of Alaska now has two aged speakers; Mandan has 6; Osage 5, Abenaki-Penobscot 20, and Iowa has 5 fluent speakers. According to count in 1977, already 13 years ago, Coeur d'Alene had fewer than 20, Tuscarora fewer than 30, Menomini fewer than 50, Yokuts fewer than 10 … Sirenikski Eskimo has two speakers, Ainu is perhaps extinct. Ybykh, the Northwest Caucasian language with the most consonants, 80-some, is nearly extinct, with perhaps only one remaining speaker."

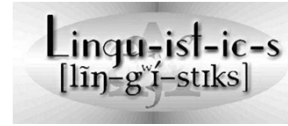Michael Krauss, *Language* (1992) Vol 68

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## Dying really fast

- Krauss argues that if we consider 100,000 speakers as a safety-in-numbers limit for languages, then we might perhaps put the number of "safe" languages at 600.
- But this means that the rest of the world's languages (6000 at least) are either moribund or endangered. In other words, the current century may actually witness the death or doom of 90% of human languages.

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- So, why should we care?

- And should we decide to care, what should we do?

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



FAREWELL, EVERYONE!

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