

Hijacked constructions in untutored Second Language Acquisition: implications for SLM

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Most creolists accept that there is a cline between creole and non-creole. SLM's position in the typology of contact varieties is a matter of current debate and the main *raison d'être* of this workshop. The processes of grammar development in contact-languages and non-contact languages may lead to similar results (cf. the debate over Dravidian influence in Old Indo-Aryan). It is therefore not surprising that within the category of languages that have developed through contact, differences are even harder to discern. Creoles are now recognized to involve processes of second language acquisition (Siegel 2008), in which influence flows from the L1 of the (untutored) learner to the L2 being learnt/created. One (complex) process involved in contact-induced language developments is the mapping of categories from one language onto structures abduced from the other language (Smith 1984, Lefebvre & Lumsden 1994). A significant distinction must be drawn between L1 to L2 influence and L2 to L1 influence. (This distinction cuts across the social categories of sub-, super- and adstrate.) Because speakers are more familiar with their L1, structures influenced by an L2 are more likely to display grammatical and semantic consistency with their L2 models. In SLA, however, especially untutored SLA, unfamiliarity with the L2 means that structures influenced by the L1 are more likely to be "hijacked" – grammatically and semantically incongruent constructions chosen by abductive leaps of faith to represent L1 categories. This paper focuses on the development of the nominalized verb in three languages in contact with Tamil: Sinhala, Sourashtra, Sri Lanka Malay & Sri Lanka Portuguese. The former two exhibit calqued constructions, while the latter two exhibit hijacked constructions. On the basis of this narrow study, untutored SLA has played a larger role in the development of Sri Lanka Malay & Sri Lanka Portuguese, than in Sourashtra and Sinhala.