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.

How unique is Sri Lanka Malay? Recent work on SLM in the context of language contact studies

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Sri Lanka Malay was a relatively unknown language just a few decades ago – unknown to linguists, that is. In the past ten years or so, much more has become known, both with regards to the structural properties (language description) and the social history of the speakers. In addition to that, people other than specialists have developed an interest in it, apparently considering SLM a special case in the linguistic world.

I will discuss some recent work on the language in the context of study of contact languages. Some people have considered the language to be a creole, others a converted language, the result of convergence, an ex-creole and again others a language undistinguishable from other languages, to mention just a few labels. To some extent this is a question of one's definitions. In my view, the language does show a remarkable transformation and a significant break with its past, so that one can indeed speak of language genesis here.

How unique is the process that formed Sri Lanka Malay, and its twin Sri Lanka Portuguese? Both of these languages are the results of rapid language change (whether in the 18th, 19th or 20th century). Similar processes, however, have been observed in other parts of the world as well. In those other cases, we usually lack any information on a time dimension, and often cases of convergence are considered to have taken place over an extremely long period. Two questions remain especially intriguing, and those are (1) whether we can observe the same speed of the processs elsewhere, and (2) whether we can identify the precise social circumstances under which the transformation to SLM came about. A comparative approach can help us link the social with the linguistic dimension.

Known, inferable, and discoverable in Sri Lankan Malay research

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As specialists in contact languages and in Malay dialectology know, research on the development of unwritten vernaculars is a great challenge, the importance of which should not be overlooked, in spite of the relative lack of hard empirical evidence in the form of attestations. This is doubly true in the case of Sri Lankan Malay, since its diachrony is so unusual and so potentially illuminating for several linguistic subdisciplines. Synchronically, it is a language that resembles other languages spoken in the region, albeit one with mostly Austronesian etyma. Nevertheless, many synchronic facts about the grammar of SLM remain to be investigated.

In spite of considerable recent interest and efforts, the actual mechanisms behind the development of SLM are still imperfectly understood, there is little consensus among researchers, and there are differences of opinion as to the extent of Sinhala influence. I will present historical and linguistic arguments based on what is known and on what can be inferred.

With respect to what is discoverable, I will briefly present desiderata for future SLM research. Strong claims have been made about sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors relevant to (1) the language's development, (2) synchronic variation in the language, and (3) the language's present and projected vitality. Ultimately, such claims need to be based on empirical research in order to be beneficial to linguistic science and to the SLM communities, consequently, much remains to be done.

Abstract

Language Contact Issues in the Development of the Lexicon of Sri Lanka Malay
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   Various issues arise when two languages come into contact, depending upon variables including the number of speakers of each language involved, power relations between the two communities, the type and degree of cultural contact between communities, and the degree of language shift involved. In the case of Sri Lanka Malay, these factors came into play in a fashion which created a new language under the influence of unique forces.

   An earlier study (Paauw 2004) has shown that the lexicon of Sri Lanka Malay has to a great extent retained the vocabulary of Vehicular Malay which was part of the language from its earliest days in Sri Lanka in the 17th century, even while the syntax and morphology of the language have undergone extensive changes through the influence of the linguistic ecology of Sri Lanka.

   This study specifically examines the lexicon of Sri Lanka Malay, through an analysis of available data sets, to determine the degree of lexical borrowing which has taken place over time in the Lankan environment, the types of vocabulary which were borrowed, and the sources of borrowing. The sociohistorical forces, including colonial policies under the Dutch and British as well as national policies since independence, along with communal traditions and alliances, which influenced this environment are discussed.

Malay/Indonesian Dialect Geography and the Sources of Sri Lankan Malay

David Gil

Sri Lankan Malay is obviously an offshoot of the Malay language spoken in Southeast Asia. But it is equally clear that the Southeast Asian source of Sri Lanka Malay is not some version of what is now referred to as Standard Malay/Indonesian but rather one or more of the myriad diverse colloquial varieties of Malay/Indonesian spoken throughout the archipelago. Unfortunately, most of these colloquial varieties remain understudied, and this gap in our knowledge is even more acute when it comes to the various koinés and contact varieties of Malay/Indonesian which, on sociolinguistic grounds, are the most likely to have played a role in the development of Sri Lankan Malay. As a result, our understanding of the Malay component in the lexicon and structure of Sri Lankan Malay remains biased towards the standard varieties of Malay/Indonesian. This paper attempts to rectify this bias by situating Sri Lankan Malay within the context of Malay/Indonesian dialect geography.

The first part of this paper presents some preliminary results from an ongoing dialect survey mapping over 300 linguistic features as found in several dozen koinés and contact varieties of colloquial Malay and Indonesian spoken throughout the archipelago. The major finding is that rather than a binary split corresponding to the political border between Malaysia and Indonesia, many linguistic features support the existence of a tripartite division between Northwestern, Southwestern and Eastern varieties, centered respectively around three geographical focal points: Malaka, Java and Maluku.

The second part of this paper shows how Sri Lankan Malay fits into this tripartite scheme. In general, Sri Lankan Malay tends to bear the closest resemblance to Eastern varieties of Malay/Indonesian: among the specifically Eastern features of Sri Lankan Malay are (a) the presence of final *[k]* in the word *[bodok]* 'stupid'; (b) the word *kakkàrlath* 'cockroach''; (c) the presence of the (original) involuntary prefix in the word *thàrthaava* 'laugh'; and (d) use of existential *ada* to mark the progressive. However, Sri Lankan Malay also exhibits a smaller number of features whose provenance is specifically Southwestern, including (a) the word *kuuping* 'ear'; and (b) the presence of the (original) agent marking prefix *N-* in the word *nangis* 'cry'. The results of this study this provide empirical support for the view whereby Sri Lankan Malay has its roots in Eastern varieties of Malay/Indonesian, but, on its way out to the Indian Ocean, picked up various additional linguistic features characteristic of the Java region.

METATYPIC EFFECTS IN LANGUAGE GENESIS

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This paper applies the notion of metatypy to the genesis of contact languages based on a number of Asian case studies, in particular in Sri Lanka Malay, Baba Malay and Cocos Malay. Metatypy is a process of typological congruence known to occur in prolonged and intense situations of contact due to wide-spread multilingualism. In this process, contact-induced language transfer leads to the evolution of grammatical patterns that emerge as syntactic compromises between the actual grammars in contact (Ross 1996, 2006). In this paper I show that metatypy efficiently explains the evolution of a new language – Sri Lanka Malay – as the outcome of the contact between Sinhala, Lankan Tamil and Trade Malay. The grammar of Sri Lanka Malay shows an extremely high degree of syntactic compromise, due to a language shift caused by contact-induced transfer of Sinhala and Lankan Tamil in the everyday usage of Trade Malay. This is first and foremost illustrated for the nominal domain, where Sri Lanka Malay exhibits a typical Lankan case system, though the verbal domain is also tocuhed upon to highlight metatypic effects. In addition, metatypic effects can account for what is retained and what is lost in the recombination of features that typically occurs in contact language formation. This is shown through examples from Baba Malay and Cocos Malay grammars. In accounting for a majority of the features of Sri Lanka Malay grammar, as well as making sense of strong of congruence patterns in other contact environments, metatypy emerges as a powerful framework among accounts of language genesis (Ansaldo 2009). Metatypy also sheds light on the reasons for the evolution of a new language, relying on the principles of second/third language transfer and contact-induced cognitive compromise known to occur in metatypic ecologies.

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Studying contemporary usage of and attitudes to the SLM language: a preliminary discussion

Although there has been a general consensus that the Sri Lanka Malay (SLM) language is facing a degree of endangerment, the members of the community are divided as to what measures should be taken to arrest the issue of language loss. While some segments of the community are of the opinion that the SLM language must be encouraged, taught and thus strengthened, others are of the opinion that Malaysian or Indonesian Malay should be taught as a means of revitalising SL Malay by converging it with a more 'standard' variety.

As part of the fieldwork for my doctoral thesis, I administered 193 questionnaires and interviewed 45 members of the SLM community regarding their attitudes to their language and its vitality. My participants were from four provinces of Sri Lanka and represent a cross-section of the SLM community. Using the data from the questionnaires, I provide statistical evidence of the language range of the contemporary SLM community and examine the community's views regarding which variety of Malay should be used. As the views of the participants reflect their notions of language and identity, I explore the construction of identity through language among the larger SLM community.

The genesis of Sri Lanka Malay as a multi-layered process

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Preceding discussions have tried to account for the current shape of Sri Lankan Malay by drawing on different processes of language contact: convergence, creolization, metatypy. In this talk, I want to propose that Sri Lanka Malay is not the result of any one of these processes alone, but rather the result of a succession of several steps taking place at different (possibly overlapping) periods of its formation. These periods are

0.		- 1550 :	pidgin formation back in Indonesia
1.	1550	- 1811 :	dialect levelling
2.	before 1800	- today :	substrate reinforcement
3.	??	- ?? :	creolization, convergence, metatypy?
4.	1953	- today:	attrition, convergence towards Sinhala

The period of pidgin formation pre-dates the coming of the Malays to Sri Lanka and will not be dealt with here in detail, although it is in part responsible for the shape of SLM, e.g. the loss of morphology. In the period of dialect levelling, the different forms of the pidgin which came to Batavia and Sri Lanka merged and the differences were levelled out. Evidence for this comes from the relative dialectal homogeneity of Sri Lanka Malay, where Moluccan features and Batavian features coexist. This period was finished before Malays from the peninsula arrived in the beginning of the 19th century since close to no peninsular features are found in SLM. Period 2, substrate reinforcement, covers the rise to prominence of structures in SLM which were marginally present in some of the historical varieties but got a boost due to contact with Sinhala and/or Tamil. This includes phonemicization of the dental/alveolar contrast, the plain/prenasal contrast and the plain/geminate contrast as well as some word order features. In Period 3, the features which are definitely not Malay in origin, like postpositions or the accusative, arose. It is difficult to establish the extent and correct processes for this period. Period 4 finally covers attrition and convergence towards Sinhala as a result of the language policies following independence.

Periods 0,1, and 4 are uncontroversial, and Period 2 probably is as well. In this talk, I will discuss to what extent the shape of Sri Lanka Malay can be explained based on the uncontroversial steps, and what is the remainder which must be attributed to Period 3. I will then discuss what processes are most likely to have led to the changes we observe in Period 3.

The Semantics of Verb-sequencing in Sri Lanka Malay (SLM)

I shall examine multi-verb constructions, using Nordhoff (2009, 2010) as a starting point, and attempt to bring further insights into the semantic import of various verb sequences in contemporary SLM.

I shall look into the ubiquitous *ambel* [ambil, 'take'] and its role as a vector in conveying particular shades of meaning. I shall then go on to examine some other verb combinations that instantiate the rich and varied range of idiomatic expressions in SLM, which seem to have been shaped by the Lankan adstrates, notably Tamil or, rather, its Muslim dialect (popularly known as "Shonam" within the Sri Lankan Moor community).

I will argue that the range of meanings instantiated in some of these constructions is difficult to summarize under a single semantic label. Indeed, on the surface they appear to reflect the type of idiosyncrasy that McWhorter (1998 and elsewhere) argues is typical of older languages. However, in the case of SLM, much of the idiosyncrasy is derived from the substrate languages on which these combinations are calqued.

Where appropriate, I will show that there are instances which suggest that the semantics of SLM verb combinations were determined by Tamil rather than Sinhala.

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