

Jeudi 21 juin 2018
Programme Pidgins et Créoles en contact
Fédération Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques

9h30 accueil

10h00 Theresa Heyd - *Tchat-moi tous les ways! On the social meaning of metalinguistic items in digital West African contact varieties*

12h00 déjeuner sur place

13h00 Danae Perez - *On language shift and debasilectalization in Afro-Hispanic varieties*

Campus CNRS Paris-Villejuif, Salle 511, Bâtiment D, accès <http://www.vjf.cnrs.fr/sedyl/venir.php?langue=fr>

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Tchat-moi tous les ways! On the social meaning of metalinguistic items in digital West African contact varieties

Theresa Heyd (Univ. Greifswald)

This paper reports on the metacommunicative lexicon of two West African contact varieties: Nigerian Pidgin (previously described in Heyd 2015) and Camfranglais. Both varieties can be localized to West African usage in Nigeria and Cameroon, respectively. However, in terms of historical origin and linguistic structure, they are substantially different: while Nigerian Pidgin is considered to be one of the oldest West African contact languages, indeed predating English colonial contact (see Faraclas 1996), Camfranglais is a recent phenomenon, a form of language mixing associated with youth language (Schröder 2007) and recently described by Schneider (2016) as one of the globally emerging “hybrid Englishes”. Comparing these geographically close but structurally distinct varieties thus promises interesting insight with regard to the differing ontologies of language contact and its linguistic consequences.

Metalanguage, or language about language, here particularly concerns referring terms as they are used in a speech community to name, frame and reflect on linguistic practices. As Schieffelin and Doucet (1994) have argued, “(t)he metalinguistic terms of a speech communit(y) can serve as a starting point for investigating attitudes toward language varieties and the speakers associated with them” (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994: 428). It is assumed here that lexical repertoires which encode metalinguistic moves constitute more than just a conventional lexical field: they are instrumental in doing enregisterment talk, as they help to transport and reinforce speakers’ attitudes about linguistic belonging, legitimacy and authenticity. This is all the more relevant in globalized settings, in which contact varieties have become mobile through digital, deterritorialized and diasporic settings.

Based on the analysis of large-scale corpus data taken from Cameroonian and Nigerian discussion forums (see Mair and Pfänder 2013 for an overview), I isolate lexemes that are constitutive for Camfranglais and Nigerian Pidgin, respectively. After an overview on structural features (such as etymology and morphological patterns), I focus on dimensions of social meaning that are transported in the digital usage of terms such as *gramma* (n), *fone* (n) and *front* (v) for Nigerian Pidgin, *tchat* (v) *whitiser* (v) and *amerlogue* (n) for Camfranglais. What emerges through discourse-analytical close reading is the performance of enregisterment talk on two levels: how individual speakers position themselves in interaction; and how the overall language ecologies associated with Cameroon/Nigeria, and legitimate ways of navigating them as a speaker, are constructed.

By analyzing metalanguage in the digital diaspora, this paper contributes to our understanding of contact varieties in mediatized and mobile settings.

References

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On language shift and debasilectalization in Afro-Hispanic varieties

Danae Perez (Univ. Zurich)

Since McWhorter (2000) claimed that no originally Spanish-based creoles have emerged in the Atlantic area, many researchers have set out to unravel the history and evolution of restructured Afro-Hispanic speech varieties (cf. e.g. Díaz-Campos & Clements 2008 on Afro-Venezuelan Spanish). Among these recently studied varieties, only one seems to have been restructured to the degree of contradicting McWhorter's claim: Afro-Yungueño Spanish (AY). This small enclave variety spoken by fewer than 200 African-Bolivian speakers has recently been classified as an acrolectal creole that is related to other Afro-Iberian contact varieties (Perez ms.). The main input to AY were African (probably Bantu) and Afro-Portuguese substrates and a strong Aymara adstrate, and after initial contact it evolved in isolation between the 1730s and the 1950s (Perez 2015). Over the past few decades, however, the community has shifted from AY to Andean Spanish as speakers have abandoned the community and AY lost its function as an in-group code. The shift is hence occurring from one contact variety of Spanish to another, since Andean Spanish is itself highly influenced by Aymara and other Central Andean languages.

In this talk, I will look at the structural patterns of shift from AY to Andean Spanish. Drawing on Siegel's (2010) concept of debasilectalization, I will show what areas of grammar and the lexicon are affected the most by this shift. I will then look at other varieties that have been discarded from the list of candidates with an assumed creole ancestor. In particular, I will compare AY with Chocó Spanish (Schwegler 1991), for which previous creolization could have been expected due to the high proportion of African-descendant speakers. Given that AY and Chocó Spanish have certain features in common, such as variation in the use of reflexives and person–number agreement in the verb phrase, the decreolization of AY may also shed new light on possible decreolization paths in Chocó Spanish as well as other restructured varieties of Spanish. My aim is to explore whether the debates around the missing Spanish creoles should not yet be closed.

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