Language Contact

Areal phenomena revisited

Paamese influence on Vanuatu English grammar:

*This is the book which I read it yesterday*

c.f. Tus keke na-les-i nañanah keiek
book which I-read-it yesterday this
‘This is the book which I read yesterday.’

*He sat there and just listened to his kava.*

Preposition stranding in Quebec French:

Eng  *That’s the girl I go out with.*
Fr.  *C’est la fille avec qui je sors.*
That-is the girl with whom I go-out
‘That’s the girl with whom I go out.’

QFr.  *C’est la fille que je sors avec.*
That-is the girl that I go-out with
‘That’s the girl I go out with.’

Areal effects

Structural similarities shared among languages of a geographical area (where usually some of the languages are genetically unrelated or at least are not all close relatives)

*linguistic area* : a geographical area in which, due to borrowing and language contact, languages of a region come to share certain structural features

South Asia (Indian subcontinent)

languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Munda and Tibeto-Burman families.
- retroflex consonants, particularly retroflex stops;
- absence of prefixes (except in Munda);
- presence of a dative-subject construction;
- Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) basic word order, including postpositions;
- absence of a verb ‘to have’;
- morphological causatives;
- sound-symbolic (phonaesthetic) forms based on reduplication, often with *k* suffixed.
The Balkans

Greek, Albanian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Romanian, Romani, and Turkish

A central vowel /ɨ/ (or /ə/) (all but Greek and Macedonian).

Syncretism of dative and genitive

Romanian fata ‘girl’ → fetei ‘to the girl’ or ‘girl’s’

\[
\text{am data o carte } \underline{\text{fetei}} \quad \text{frate } \underline{\text{fetei}}
\]

‘I gave the letter to the girl’ ‘the girl’s brother’

Postposed articles (not in Greek);

Bulgarian: [məʒ] ‘man’ → [məʒət] ‘the man’

Periphrastic future (all but Bulgarian, Macedonian)

(futures signalled by an auxiliary verb corresponding to ‘want’ or ‘have’)

Romanian voi fuma ‘I will smoke’ (literally ‘I want smoke’)

\[
\text{am a cinta}\quad \text{‘I will sing’ (literally ‘I have sing’).}
\]

Absence of infinitives:

‘give me something to drink’ = ‘give me that I drink’
‘I want to leave’ = ‘I want that I leave’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Romanian} & \quad \text{da-mi} & \text{sa beau} & \text{veau sa plec} \\
\text{Bulgarian} & \quad \text{daj mi} & \text{da pij} & \text{iskam da otida} \\
\text{Albanian} & \quad \text{a-më} & \text{të pi} & \text{due te shkue} \\
\text{Greek} & \quad \text{dós mu} & \text{na pjó} & \text{thelo na pao} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Give-me that I-drink I-want that I-leave

In double object constructions, copy of pronoun for animate objects

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Romanian} & \quad i-am & \text{scris} & \text{lu} \text{ lon} \\
& & \text{to.him-I wrote him John} \\
& & \text{‘I wrote to John’} \\
\text{Greek} & \quad \text{ton} & \text{vlépo} & \text{ton} & \text{jáni} \\
& & \text{him.Acc I-see the/him.Acc John} \\
& & \text{‘I see John’}
\end{align*}
\]
The Northwest Coast of North America

Tlingit, Eyak, the Athabaskan languages of the region, Haida, Tsimshian, Wakashan, Chimakuan, Salishan, Alsea, Coosan, Kalapuyan, Takelma and Lower Chinook

Phonology:

- elaborate systems of consonants:
  - glottalised stops and affricates
  - labiovelars
  - multiple laterals (l, l̺, tl, tl’)
  - Several pharyngeals, e.g. [ʃ, h]
  - most have glottalised resonants and continuants.
  - Uvular/velar contrast
  - Relatively fewer labials
    (none in Tlingit and Tillamook; few in Eyak and most Athabaskan languages)
- a widely diffused sound change of *k → ʧ
  (Wakashan, Salishan, Chimakuan and others).
- Tone/pitch-accent
  (Tlingit, Haida, Bella Bella, Upriver Halkomelem, Quileute, Kalapuyan, Takelma).
- Small vowel systems:
  - only three vowels (i, a, o, or i, a, u) in several of the languages,
  - only four vowels in others.

Morphology

- extensive use of suffixes
- nearly complete absence of prefixes
- reduplication processes
  - (various functions, e.g., continuative, progressive, plural, collective);
  - verbal reduplication signifying distribution, repetition and so on;
  - nominal and verbal reduplication signalling the diminutive.
- pronominal plural
- nominal plural (distributive plural is optional)
- alienable/inalienable oppositions in nouns
- suffixation of tense-aspect markers in verbs
- masculine/feminine gender (shown in demonstratives and articles);
- visibility/invisibility opposition in demonstratives

Syntax

- All but Tlingit have passive-like constructions.
- The negative is initial element in a clause
- lexically paired singular and plural verb stems
- ‘Lexical suffixes’, to designate familiar objects e.g. body parts, geographical features, cultural artifacts and some abstract notions.
- Ergative case (Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, some Salishan languages, Sahaptin, Chinookan, Coosan)
Language contact 2: language genesis

Pidgins & Creoles

**Pidgin:** contact language with lexical items from other sources (aka lexifiers, superstrates)  
grammar: typically isolating, possibly with substratum features

Tok Pisin: PNG

*80% English lexical items*

dok  ‘dog’
aus  ‘house’
rot  ‘roat’
ren  ‘rain’
trausis  ‘trousers’

*20% Melanesian lexical items*
kakaruk  ‘chicken’
kiau  ‘egg’
buai  ‘betel nut’
kunai  ‘long grass’
kulau  ‘drinking coconut’

*rare, words from other languages*

rausim  ‘take out’  G heraus ‘get out’
beten  ‘pray’  G beten ‘pray’
pater  ‘priest’  Lat pater ‘father’
binatanj  ‘insect’  Malay binatang ‘animal’
pikinini  ‘child’  Port. pequenho ‘small’
kanaka  ‘bumpkin’  Hawaiian kanaka ‘man’
kaikai  ‘eat’  Maori kai ‘eat’
isolated words to mark tense

em i toktok
she predicate talk
‘She talks’

em i bin toktok
she predicate past talk

plural marking: optional, non-redundant, isolated morpheme

Dispela meri i singsing i stap
This/these woman/women predicate sing predicate continuous
‘This/these woman/women is/are singing’

Ol dispela meri i singsing i stap
Plural these women predicate sing predicate continuous
‘These women are singing’

predicate marker: from substrate?

Tolai
To Pipira i vana
article Pipira predicate go
‘Pipira is going’

Tok Posin
Pipira i go
Pipira predicate go
‘Pipira is going’
**Hiri Motu**: non English based pidgin, derived from Motu

Motu: suffixes to mark subjects and objects of verbs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Neg.Subj Objects</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3 e-</td>
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Hiri Motu: separate pronouns, no prefixes or suffixes

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Ia e-ita-mu
(s)he (s)he-see-you
‘(S)he saw you’
Asi-na-rakatani-mu
not-I-leave-you
‘I didn’t leave you’

Haitian creole Li
(s)he not past know
‘(S)he did not know’

**Emergent word order**

Tok Pisin
Em no bin save
Haitian creole Li
pa te kone
(s)he not past know
‘(S)he did not know’

compare
She did not know. (Eng.)
SUB TNS NEG VB
Elle ne connais pas. (Fr.)
SUB NEG VB NEG