THE MIXED LANGUAGE DEBATE: WHAT IS TO BE DEBATED?

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Several issues demand attention. Here are some of them:

1) Are there such things as mixed languages? Can we come up with a definition of language mixture which would satisfy most linguists that a category which can be usefully described as 'mixed languages' exists? If so, which languages are they? (Michif? Mednyj Aleut? Berbice Dutch? Angolar? Chabacano?)

2) Are all these languages 'mixed' according to the same principles? (This is the basis of the language intertwining model of Bakker and Mous 1994.) If not, what patterns of mixture of elements from different languages are exhibited? (Note also the analysis of the prototype in Matras 2003 and Grant 2001. Thomason 2003's 'seven mechanisms' explore the question innovatively.)

3) Do actual morphemes from different languages have to be combined in order for the result to constitute a mixed language? (For instance, is Takia, with its strong typological influence from Waskia but with few Waskia morphemes in its inventory, a mixed language?) Do we require transfer of actual morphemes as well as transfer or copying of the ways in which these morphemes combine, that is both fabric and pattern transfer (cf. Heath 1978, 1979, 1984) to take place for a mixed language to be identified as such?

4) (A devil's advocate writes:) Isn't language mixture simply a matter of degree of mixture (some languages simply contain a greater number or proportion of elements from other languages, with the result that languages can be put on a scale of degree of mixture). If it isn't just a matter of degree, then what distinguishes the highly mixed languages from their less mixed counterparts?

5) Not all mixed languages are simply bilingual language mixtures (Thomason 1997) - Media Lengua and Mednyj Aleut may be but Ma'á certainly is not - what else is going on in some of them?

6) Are some mixed languages 'made' rather than 'born'? That is, can mixed languages with basic morphological and lexical components of differing origins emerge over time? If so, where (for example) does a potential mixed language such as Angloromani end and where do Romani and English begin respectively? And can they 'unmix' themselves?

7) What roles do other considerations play in understanding the nature of the composition of mixed languages? For instance, could it be the case that in some mixed languages the more simple or transparent parts of the contributory languages' inflectional morphologies have been taken over, as with Attuan Aleut nominal morphology (which has two cases versus Russian's six cases) and Russian verbal inflectional morphology (which is much simpler than that of Aleut) being brought together in Mednyj Aleut? And what about the emblematic role of mixed languages as badges of new speech communities wit their own identity?

8) Which parts of a language define what the source of each of the elements of a mixed language is going to be?   Finite verbal morphology? The verbal morphological system in general? Or is the division of elements in a mixed language motivated by non-linguistic (social) conditions? (Bound inflectional morphology from the language of the more sedentary component of the new mixed language community, for instance.)

9) What needs to be done in mixed language study in future years? (More descriptions on the solid lines of Mous 2003, for a start.)

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APPENDIX: How many ways are there of combining features from disparate languages within a language? A selection of linguistic combinations.

Below I give a list of the kinds of methods of blending elements and features from different languages which have been found in natural languages so far, with brief mention of some languages where such a pattern of blending is found. The component languages which bring these linguistic blends about in each example are represented here throughout as languages A, B, C and so on, but the component languages are identified in the discussions below. Not all strata of each language are discussed below, but the most numerous or salient elements in the various languages are highlighted. (In listing sources of information about particular languages, BM stands for chapters on these languages in Bakker and Mous eds., 1994, and T97 for chapters on these languages in Thomason (ed.) 1997).

- **1. Basic and much non-basic lexicon, segmental and canonical phonology, inflectional and derivational morphology, and syntax from A, less basic lexicon (and maybe some segmental phonology) also from B, C, D.**
  -Most "regular" languages, including English.

- **2. Lexicon from A, (at least) inflectional morphology from B:**
  -Media Lengua (A is Andean Spanish, B is Ecuadorean Quechua; the segmental phonology of this language is also typically Quechua; BM, T97);
  -Ma'á (A is a mixture of elements from Cushitic languages, B is Southern Pare Bantu, though this has diverse and 'stripped'[1] lexicon, with proportions of similar size from the major lexifiers, including 'unknown' elements and the secondary lexifier Maasai, both in basic and non-basic vocabulary; BM, T97);
  -to a lesser extent also Berbice Dutch (A is pidginised Dutch, B is an agglomeration of features from different forms of Eastern Ịjọ, and the language includes important overlays of Arawak and latterly Guyanese Creole English or 'Creolese', in addition to some items from other languages and some items of unknown origin; Kouwenberg 1994).

- **3. Basic lexicon (especially contentives) from A, morphosyntax, free grammatical forms and segmental phonology, plus much additional lexicon, from B:**
  -Angloromani (A is British Romani and B is English),
  -Scandoromani (A is Nordic Romani and B is Swedish/Norwegian; Hancock 1992)
  -this is also the profile for many secret and special in-group languages.

- **4. Basic lexicon, morphosyntax and phonology from A, less basic lexicon (sometimes totalling more than 50% of the language's lexicon) from B:**
  -there are many examples of this, for instance Kalderash Romani (A is Romani [including both Indic and other non-European lexical elements] and B is Rumanian, while C, D, etc would be further European languages such as Serbian and Hungarian; Boretzky 1994).

- **5. Basic lexicon, morphosyntax and segmental phonology from A, less basic lexicon, morphophonology and semantic structures from B:**
  -KiMwani (A is Swahili and B is Makonde; BM),
  -EKoti (A is Makhuwa and B is Swahili; Scahdeberg and Mucanheia 2000)

- **6. Basic lexicon and morphosyntax from A, less basic lexicon and increasing phonological and morphological congruence from B:**
  -Stedsk or Town Frisian (A is West Frisian and B is Dutch; BM).

- **7. Lexicon from A, inflectional morphology from B, with a stratum of lexicon from an otherwise unknown source C:**

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[1] I use the term 'stripping'' here in the sense in which it is used in British broadcasting. In British television, programmes are 'stripped' across a schedule if different editions of the same programme are put on at the same time for the same length on each day of (at least the working) week. I use the term 'stripping' to indicate a state of affairs in which the proportion of material in a given language which derives from a particular language A is of approximately the same size in both the basic and non-basic strata of the language.

-Eynu (A is Persian with some extraneous but basic lexicon which is of unknown origin yet which is found in all varieties of Eynu, B is one of several Turkic languages, such as Turkmen, Uzbek or Uygur; different forms of Eynu use the same kind of Farsi-derived lexicon and the same small stratum of mysterious lexicon; Ladstätter and Tietze 1994).

- **8. Lexicon from A, syntax and phonology from B:**
  -Petjo (A is Dutch and B is Malay; BM),
  -Javindo (A is Dutch and B is Ngoko Javanese; BM).

- **9. Roughly half the basic lexicon and the segmental phonology from A, the other half plus the inflectional morphology from B:**
  -Ndyuka-Trio Pidgin (A is Ndyuka Creole English, B is the Cariban language Trio/Tiriyo; T97),
  -also Ngatik Men's Language (where A is pidginised 1840s South Sea Jargon English and B is the Ngatikese dialect of the Nuclear Micronesian language Pohnpeian; Tryon 2000)

- **10. Basic lexicon and morphosyntax from A, cultural lexicon, syntactic typology and phonological and other areal influences from B:**
  -Salar (A is Eastern Turkic together with the loan influences –Tibetan, Mongolian - found in all Eastern Turkic languages and with the Arabic and Persian loans typical of Turkic languages spoken by Muslim groups such as the Salar, and B is Chinese, especially Putonghua; Dwyer 1998).

- **11. Basic lexicon and morphology from A, non-basic lexicon and the accompanying morphology, and also overall segmental phonology and clause-level syntax, from B:**
  -Kormakiti Arabic (A is Levantine Arabic, B is Cypriot Greek, plus a stratum of lexical material relating to religious topics from Syriac; Borg 2004),
  -to a lesser extent also Maltese (A is eastern Maghrebinian Arabic and B is Romance, especially Sicilian and Italian, and latterly English; BM).
  -Possibly Tadaksahak of Mali (A is a variety of Songhai, B is southern Tuareg Berber; Christiansen and Christiansen 2002).
  -Possibly Tasawaq of Niger (A is a form of Songhai, B is southern Tuareg, with accretions form Fulfulde and Arabic: Wolff and Alidou 2001).

- **12. Basic lexicon from A, less basic lexicon and the accompanying morphology from B, with portions of lexicon from C, D and E, and with a phonological system which is flexible enough so that it enables the salient and unshared (or at least undiffused) features of the phonologies of A and B to be preserved in those forms which derive from those particular languages:**
  -Callahuaya. (A is the extinct Puquina language, B is Quechua, C is Spanish, D is Aymara and E is Tacana; BM, T97.)

- **13. Basic morphosyntax reduced from A, which also provides some lexicon, basic lexicon is reduced or pidginised or koineised or levelled from B, with important secondary components from C and D; segmental phonology from A but the pronunciation of lexical items in this language is mediated through the phonological system of speakers of D:**
  -Broome Pearling Lugger Pidgin. (A is Japanese, B is Kupang Malay, C is Australian Aboriginal Pidgin English and D is Bardi or another Nyulnyulan language of northwestern Australia; Hosokawa 1987.)

- **14. Lexicon and segmental phonology from various sources (though originally A), including much contrived lexicon which has no true etymology, morphology, syntax and semantics from B:**
  -Shelta or Gammon. (A is Irish Gaelic, with the lexical elements from this source deliberately phonologicaly modified, and B is Hiberno-English; there are also some elements from English Cant and Angloromani, which were acquired when Shelta was brought to Britain; these last elements are not found in Shelta sources that were recorded in Ireland or that were collected from people who had acquired Shelta while they were living in Ireland; BM.)

- **15. Basic lexicon and the system of morphology from A, less basic lexicon and items of segmental phonology found in these lexical items from B (C, D…):**
  -Lake Miwok. (A is Western Miwok, the genealogical element, B is Hill Patwin, C is Wappo and D is Southeastern Pomo, while Spanish has also provided acculturational lexicon, as latterly has English; Callaghan 1965)

- **16. Basic lexicon from A, morphologically marked subsets of basic lexicon, plus less basic and more culturally-oriented lexicon, plus segmental phonology from B:**
  -Istro-Rumanian (A is 16th century Maramureş Daco-Rumanian and B is Cakavian Croatian; Hurren 1969.)
  -To some extent Domari (A is Indic and B is Arabic, though there are also phonological features in Domari which are typically Indic and un-Arabic, and there is also an important tranche of loans from C, Northern Kurdish, and there have also been some loans from Turkish; Matras 1999)

- **17. Lexicon, morphology, segmental phonology and syntax from A, canonical phonological constraints from B:**
  -Comox Salishan. (A is Coast Salishan and B is Nuuchahnulth or general Southern Wakashan: Davis 1971.)

- **18. Nouns and noun morphology from A, verbs and verb morphology from B (and with further accretions from C and D), a mixture of forms from either language for various groups of free grammatical morphs, and with a phonological system which keeps the phonologies of forms from A and from B separate:**
  -Michif. (A is Metis French and B is Northern Plains Cree, while C is Canadian English and D is Ojibwe; BM, T97.)
  -in regard to the basic noun/verb division, a mixed Igbo-I̱jo̱ language of Okrika in eastern Nigeria documented by Carol Wakama and the late Kay Williamson (Peter Bakker, personal communication).

- **19. Verbs, nouns and noun morphology from A, verb morphology (and most free grammatical morphs) from B:**
  -Mednyj Aleut. (A is Attuan or Western Aleut, B is Siberian Russian; BM, T97.)

- **20. Lexical and morphological forms from A, typology largely from B:**
  -Takia (A is the Bel group of Oceanic languages, of which Takia is a member, and B is the Papuan language Waskia), Dami (also a Bel language with similar components but showing greater influence from Papuan languages than Takia does; Ross 1996),
  -Maisin of Oro Province, Papua New Guinea (though in this case with some additional lexical influence from the typology-providing language: A is the Papua Tip group of Oceanic languages and B is Korafe or another Binanderean language: Ross 1996),
  -modern Sri Lanka Creole Portuguese (with minor degrees of borrowing from Sri Lanka Tamil, the B language where A is Portuguese; Smith 1979),
  -to some extent Mindanao Chabacano (here A is Mexican Spanish and B is Hiligaynon, though here also lexicon is 'stripped' according to source; Grant 2002).

- **21. High-frequency lexicon and morphology from A, less-used (but still core) structures and lexical items from B:**
  -Tsat (A is Chamic, including the layers of borrowings from Bahnaric and the tranche of independently-innovated lexicon, and B is several forms of Chinese, firstly Hainanese Minnan and nowadays Putonghua; Thurgood and Li 2003; there are also some Hlat [Kra-Dai] elements in Tsat),
  -probably Brahui (A is Northern Dravidian and B is Baluchi; Elfenbein 1998),
  -and to a lesser extent many more languages, such as Ilwana (A is a sister-language to Swahili and B is Orma Cushitic, which is a form of Oromo; BM).

- **22. 'Stripping' languages (in which there are two major elements, one of which is intrusive and non-genealogical, and which in terms of the number of forms is less copious but still basic within the language in question; this stratum is not especially more frequently represented in non-basic levels of lexicon than the major lexifier language, but is stripped at equal proportions throughout the language's lexicon of):**

-Mindanao Chabacano (see above for details of its components).

- **23. A variation of the above in which there are three or more important participatory languages:**
  -Yapese (where A would be the Oceanic language which provided the genetic core of Yapese, while B would be Palauan or a sister-language of Palauan and C would be a Western Chuukic stratum, hailing from Ulithian or Woleaian or from a language ancestral to these; Ross 1996a).

- **24. Most lexicon and morphosyntax from A, much basic lexicon and some less basic lexicon from B, additional syntactic structures and much cultural lexicon from C:**
  -modern Garifuna (A is an Arawakan language which is related to but not identical with Arawak proper and Taino and whose 17th century version was Dominican Island Carib, B is Kalinha and C s Dominican Creole French; there is also important lexical material from Creole English and Caribbean or Central American Spanish; Escure 2004.)

- **25. Most lexicon and most bound or free grammatical morphs mostly from A, a tranche of basic and some non-basic lexicon from B, with additional and mostly non-basic lexicon from C and D:**
  -Angolar (A is an early form of Saotomense Creole Portuguese, including loans from Kikongo and Edo/Bini, and B is Kimbundu, while C is Kikongo and D is the large tranche of forms of unknown but potentially African origin; Saotomense itself contains Kikongo and Edo forms, a subset of which comprise the relevant forms of those origins which are found in Angolar; Maurer 1995).

- **26. Most lexicon and most bound or free grammatical morphs derive from A, a tranche of basic and some non-basic lexicon from B, many typological features at all levels and much cultural lexicon from C, further typological features have developed internally and are not attributable to any source language:**
  -Saramaccan (A is an early form of Sranan Creole English, B is pidgin Portuguese, C is an agglomeration of forms from Gbe languages; potential D and E would be Kikongo and Dutch; Holm 1989).

- **27. Lexicon from A, typology from B, bound morphology is either dispensed with or else is built up out of lexical elements from A but using patterns that are native to B: several creole languages (at least those in cases where A is a European lexifier and B is one or more Niger-Congo languages:**
  -this profile fits many Caribbean creole languages of various lexical backgrounds (Haitian Creole French and Jamaican Creole English, for example; Holm 1989).

- **28. Lexicon and morphosyntax from A, segmental phonology from B:**
  -Orokolo (an Eleman language of Papua New Guinea, related to Toaripi, but which has been phonologically influenced by the segmental inventory of the Korikian language Namau, which is the B-language; Smith 1986).

- **29. Lexicon and morphology from language A, typology (thus including syntax, certain suprasegmental and canonical features of phonology, structure of certain semantic subsets, etc.) from language B.:**
  -Wutun (A is Mandarin Chinese and B is a variety of Amdo Tibetan which has been strongly modified by the Mongolic language Bao(n)an, which was itself strongly modified by Tibetan and Chinese, and also by Salar Turkic; Lee-Smith and Wurm 1996).

- **30. Lexicon, syntax and morphology from A, suprasegmental phonology from B:**
  -Rama Cay Creole English (where A is a form of Western Caribbean Creole English and B is missionary German-accented English; Holm 1989).

- **31. Languages, indicated by A, with two or more addressee-defined registers, at least one elevated member of which requites the use of many elements from Language B.**
  -Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese, Madurese and maybe some other languages of Indonesia, each of which contain both elevated and colloquial registers (in each case the elevated register B contains many elements of Sanskrit origin which are not found in the more colloquial registers; Clynes 1993).

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Appendix 1. A classification of morphological items which tend to be generally reconstituted (or rebuilt), non-reconstituted and retained from the lexifier language in European-lexifier creoles.

(This table is adapted and expanded from Bickerton 1981 and Romaine 1994: 590, with additional inspiration from Muysken 2003).

Morphemes which are not reconstituted or retained are lost in the creole in question, as are the grammatical categories which they encode.

Morphemes not reconstituted	Reconstituted morphemes	Retained morphs
Gender agreement	tense, aspect, modality forms	(often) articles
Number agreement	question words	some adpositions
Bound verbal morphology	pluraliser	cardinal numerals
Derivational morphology*	personal pronoun systems	some copular forms
Pronoun case and gender forms (usually)	oblique case-markers (sometimes)	some conjunctions
some adpositions	general locative prepositions	time adverbs
	Irrealis complementiser	place adverbs
	Relativising particle	discourse particles
	Reflexives and reciprocals	many quantifiers
	Many comparative markers	most auxiliaries
	(Often) possessive marking	Major negators
	Purposive markers 'in order to'	'to have'
	Some conjunctions (both subordinating and coordinating)	Some adpositions

* Actually, despite what Romaine suggests, the idea that derivational morphology from the chief lexifier language is not perpetuated in creoles is at best a matter for debate and at worst is simply an incorrect statement. Certain affixes in a number of creoles, which are transmitted as part of lexemes which are retained in the creole lexicon, remain as affixes in the creole and may become increasingly productive there. Many other affixes cease to be productive and remain attached to just a few stems, and are synchronically unanalysable, having entered the lexicon of the creole as part of a word which is regarded within the creole lexicon and morphological system as being monomorphemic. Yet again, some original non-affixes which entered the creole's lexicon as full contentive stems are reconstrued and regrammaticalised as affixes, and then become productive within the lexicon of a creole (Saramaccan -ma 'agentive' from English 'man', also used as an independent contentive, is an example of this). Berbice Dutch has no morphemes which can be counted solely as constituting items of derivational morphology, although it does have a morpheme –jɛ, from Eastern Ịjọ, which serves to turn adjectives into nominalised forms (kali 'small', kalijɛ 'a small one').