**What children do and don't do in contact-induced language change**

Major questions in contact-induced language change are whether adults or children lead change, and what cognitive mechanisms are involved. Bickerton's (1981, 1984) view that children create a creole language from impoverished input continues to be debated. Often the sociolinguistic situation at the time of the change cannot be pieced together adequately, as the change took place long ago, and there is little documentation. Where we do have a reasonable amount of background data, we have seen that different age groups have each been agentive in promulgating change, in different contexts. Adults are believed to be responsible for the development of pidgins and creoles (Plag, 2008, 2009; Siegel, 2008), mixed languages (Thomason, 2003), and frequently the transfer of lexicon and structure from one language to another; adolescents have led development in koines (Amery, 1993; Kerswill & Williams, 2000); elementary school-aged children have created at least a creole (Kegl, Senghas, & Coppola, 1999) and multiethnolects (Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox, & Torgersen, 2011); and children have created a mixed language (O'Shannessy, 2012).

I present new data on the emergence of Light Warlpiri, a mixed language spoken in northern Australia, to illustrate that when children lead contact-induced change, they re-analyse and regularise patterns in the input provided to them, as child learners do in every context. It may be that often the input from adults (and maybe other younger speakers) was not known to the researchers, but provided the motivation for the re-analysis. A re-analysis and regularisation of a pattern from the point of view of the child learner can then result in a dramatic change in terms of language structure.

Specifically, in Light Warlpiri, a pronoun form in the input, *im* '3sg', was reanalysed as *i-m* '3sg-nonfuture', and regularised across other pronouns, creating a structure that was not in the input languages, in which past and present tense contrast structurally with future tense (or a realis –irrealis modal contrast). A past tense marker in the input *bin* 'past' was largely replaced by the new structure. In this paper I show that constructions such as *im faind-im* '3sg find-trans' (or, pronoun + perfective) were already in the input the children received. The children re-analysed patterns they heard, in which perfective and past contexts could be realised without an overt past element, *bin* 'past'. The result is a radically different verbal structure in the new system, but the step of re-analysis is easily motivated by the input patterns.

The data show that children can lead language change, and when they do, their re-analyses can be motivated by the patterns in the input they hear. Researchers do not usually have access to adult-child interactions during the time of change, and tend to posit a greater change than may have in fact taken place. Adult patterns might already have differed from the documented language, e.g. through systematic code-switching. There is no need to posit mechanisms that involve children creating structure from lack of input. A better understanding of the input the children received may show that the children acted as child learners always do, but the result was more dramatic than in some other contexts.

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