

**Difference and repetition in language shift to a creole:
The expression of emotions in Kriol (Australia)**

Although much has been written about the social and political underpinnings of language shift (Kulick 1992; Prochazka & Vogl 2017), we actually know far less about its ‘linguistic’ consequences: what difference does using a new lexico-grammatical code make to what speakers can express and how they describe the world (Mithun 1998; Woodbury 1998)? This question is in a sense an avatar of the linguistic relativity – aka the Sapir-Whorf – hypothesis, upon which language shift offers a novel angle (Whorf 1956; Levinson & Gumperz 1996; Enfield 2015),

I have tackled this question through an empirical comparison of Kriol (Ponsonnet 2019), the English-based creole spoken in the north of Australia, with Dalabon (Gunwinyguan, non-Pama-nyungan), one of the Australian Aboriginal languages that is being replaced by Kriol. Focusing on the semantic domain of emotions (Ponsonnet 2014), I show which linguistic resources remain, which do not; which meanings and functions get replaced, and which are missing. I also question the degree to which linguistic restructuring impacts shared conceptual representations (Dickson 2015).

This presentation will focus on two potential mismatches between Kriol and Dalabon. Firstly, I will examine what happens when Kriol ‘lacks’ a linguistic resource that is pervasive in Dalabon, e.g. morphological diminutives. Here we find that Kriol recruits linguistic tools from miscellaneous sources to cover ‘missing’ diminutive functions. Secondly, I will discuss the figurative representations of emotions, where we find significant differences between Kriol and Dalabon. However, there is also some evidence that this shift in *linguistic* metaphors for emotions does not necessarily correspond to a shift in speakers’ *conceptual* representation of emotions.

These analyses highlight the tensions between the purely linguistic pressures exerted upon the communicative tools available to speakers on the one hand; and on the other hand, the remarkable plasticity by which languages allow their speakers to say whatever they want to say. Apart from shedding an interesting light upon linguistic relativity, this case study also suggests some practical options that may appeal to post-shift linguistic communities.

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