

# LANGUAGE & CULTURE RESEARCH CENTRE

## Special Workshop of the Language & Culture Research Centre (Cairns) and the University of Augsburg (Augsburg) Language contact and the emergence of hybrid grammars

**Coordinators: Alexandra Aikhenvald, Péter Maitz**  
**Special Workshop in D3-063**  
**Wednesday 11 July 2018**

13.45	Official Opening	
14.00	Péter Maitz	Boarding school creoles and the mixed language debate
14.45	Lena Schmidtkunz	The effects of language contact on the aspect system of Unserdeutsch: a contrastive analysis
15.30	Afternoon tea	
16.00	Alexandra Aikhenvald	Blended grammars: Kumandene Tariana of northwest Amazonia
16.45	Luca Ciucci	Chamacoco: the hispanization of a Zamucoan language
17.30	Finish	

### Thursday 12 July 2018

9.30	Péter Maitz and Siegwalt Lindenfelser	Simplification in language contact: evidence from Unserdeutsch
10.15	Salome Lipfert	The prepositional system of Unserdeutsch in typological perspective
11.00	Morning tea	
11.30	Katharina Neumeier	The emergence of creole syntax: Evidence from Unserdeutsch
12.15	Firew Girma Worku	Lexical borrowing strategies in Mursi
12.45	Lunch	
14.00	Katarzyna Wojtylak	Language contact and change: the case of Murui from Northwest Amazonia
14.45	Nathan White	Language and variety mixing in diasporic Hmong
15.30	Afternoon tea	
16.00	Alex Walker	The effects of language contact on Northeastern Pomo phonology
16.45	Péter Maitz, Alexandra Aikhenvald (moderators)	Discussion

Everyone is welcome to attend

## Abstracts

### a) Australian participants:

#### 1. Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald



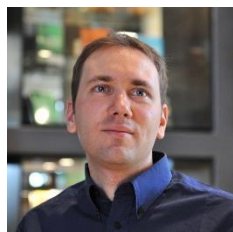
*Title:* Blended grammar: Kumandene Tariana of northwest Amazonia

*Abstract:* Kumandene Tariana, a North Arawak language, spoken by about 40 people in the community of Santa Terezinha on the Iauari river (tributary of the Vaupés River, not far from the Upper Rio Negro, a major tributary of the Amazon), can be considered a new blended language. The Kumandene Tariana moved to their present location from the middle Vaupés about two generations ago, escaping pressure from the Catholic missionaries. The Kumandene

Tariana intermarry with the Baniwa Hohôdene, speakers of a closely related language. This agrees with the principle of 'linguistic exogamy' common to most indigenous people within the Vaupés River Basin linguistic area. Baniwa is the majority language in the community, and Kumandene Tariana is endangered. The only other extant variety of Tariana is the Wamiarikune Tariana dialect (for which there is a grammar and a dictionary, by the present author) which has undergone strong influence from Tucano, the major language of the region. As a result of their divergent development and different substrata, Kumandene Tariana and Wamiarikune Tariana are not mutually intelligible.

Over the past fifty years, speakers of Kumandene Tariana have acquired numerous Baniwa-like features in the grammar and lexicon. The extent of Baniwa impact on Kumandene Tariana varies depending on the speaker, and on the audience. Kumandene Tariana shares some similarities with other 'blended', or 'merged' languages — including Surzhyk (a combination of Russian and Ukrainian), Trasjanka (a mixture of Russian and Belorussian), and Portunhol (a merger of Spanish and Portuguese). The influence of Baniwa is particularly instructive in the domain of verbal categories — negation, tense, aspect, and evidentiality on which we concentrate in this presentation.

#### 2. Luca Ciucci



*Title:* Chamacoco: the hispanization of a Zamucoan language

*Abstract:* The Chamacoco language is spoken by about 2000 people in the department of Alto Paraguay in Paraguay. It belongs to the Zamucoan family, along with Old Zamuco and Ayoreo. The Chamacoco began to have stable contacts with Western people in the last decades of the 19th century, and most Chamacoco looked for integration in the Paraguayan society, gradually abandoning many aspects of their culture. For this reason, in Chamacoco one can observe many

Spanish borrowings in grammar and lexicon, to the point that some of the original Zamucoan elements and structures have been replaced, and some grammatical systems are weakening. Despite the fact that the language is now the main cultural element characterizing the Chamacoco identity, the influence of Spanish is growing in the younger generations of speakers, so that the language will continue to change, losing even more Zamucoan elements. Chamacoco is already much more innovative than the other Zamucoan languages, and this also has to do with the different stage of contact with Western society during which the language has been documented. Indeed, excluding an analysis of Chamacoco phonology, done in 1989, the first scientific study on Chamacoco was published in 2009. By contrast, Old Zamuco, now extinct, was spoken in the 18th century and documented immediately after the contact. The situation of the Ayoreo people is similar, because they lived isolated in the woods until the second half of the 20th century, so that at present this language still shows little influence by Spanish.

### 3. Neil Alexander Walker



*Title:* The effects of language contact on Northeastern Pomo phonology

*Abstract:* Northeastern Pomo (pef) is an extinct Pomoan language of Northern California. It was surrounded by speakers of three unrelated languages: Yuki (Yukian), Nomlaki (Wintun, and Patwin (Wintun). Its homeland had the smallest area of any Pomoan language, but it contained an important salt deposit. Speakers of different languages regularly sought the salt through trade or war. Under Mexican and American rule, its speakers were killed, enslaved, or displaced.

The survivors merged with neighboring Indigenous people or, rarely, into American families. The effects of language contact on the phonology of Northeastern Pomo can be divided into three time periods: (1) contact with Indigenous languages, (2) contact with Spanish, (3) contact with English. This study examines the evidence for phonological change from each period and introduces a hitherto unknown autochthonously created wordlist that displays the phonological system of Northeastern Pomo as it existed among the last partial speakers of the twentieth century.

### 4. Katarzyna Wojtylak



*Title:* Language contact and change: the case of Murui from Northwest Amazonia

*Abstract:* Murui (Bue) is a Witotoan language spoken by about 1,000 people in the Colombian and Peruvian regions of Northwest Amazonia. The current sociolinguistic situation of the Murui is characterized by a rapidly progressing language shift towards Spanish. The language shift is an obvious consequence of the process of cultural interaction with the dominant cultures of Colombia and Peru over the course of the last centuries. The resettlement of the majority of the

Murui throughout the years of the Amazonian Rubber Boom (1879-1913), the brutality of forceful 'acculturation' of the people, and the introduction of education and instruction in the Catholic faith have resulted in people's prejudice against speaking their native language and a gradual loss of their ethnic identity. Consequently, with many traditional norms and values being lost, today, children are brought up solely in Spanish and have little knowledge of the language of their parents and grandparents. Murui elders frequently complain that the speech of younger generations is 'impoverished' and 'incorrect'. This paper is a first attempt at a comparison between the features of 'traditional' Murui language (as spoken by the elders) and the 'innovative' Murui (as spoken by the younger generations). It identifies contact-induced change on phonological, morphological, and lexical levels under the impact of Spanish. Special attention is given to structural changes in the 'innovative' Murui, including negation, number marking on verbs, nouns, and pronouns, markers of comparative constructions and tag questions, as well as the use of differential object marking suffixes and evidentials.

## 5. Nathan White



*Title:* Language and variety mixing in diasporic Hmong

*Abstract:* In its diaspora context in Australia and the United States, Laotian Hmong (Hmong-Mien) is experiencing elements of mixing not only between its two varieties, White Hmong and Blue(/Green) Mong, but also with English. Mixing between White and Blue varieties involves usage of morphemes from the other variety of both open and closed classes—even when the equivalent exists in the other variety—including the complete adoption of closed class and grammatical morphemes from one variety to the other. Moreover, phonological calquing based on typical sound correspondences is exhibited, as well as the unexpected choice of variety even within intra-family contexts, e.g., a Blue Mong father speaking to his son (also Blue Mong) in White Hmong.

Interaction with English involves a degree of (re-)lexification with varying degrees of phonological assimilation—the result of a highland village-based agricultural community of Southeast Asia resettling in the developed world, complete with the drastic concomitant differences in terms of material, political, and social culture. This process includes the adoption of several English nouns as classifiers, as well as the replacement of lexemes originally borrowed from Lao with their English equivalents and favoring of English terms even when native Hmong words are available.

## 6. Firew Girma Worku



*Title:* Lexical borrowing strategies in Mursi

*Abstract:*

- i. Changing –ATR vowels into +ATR vowels
- ii. Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) – is a phonological feature among vowels. In Mursi [-ATR] vowels in many borrowed words are made assimilate to [+ATR] vowels –which seems a deliberate strategy to make sure that borrowed words are in accordance with the existing sound system of the language.
- iii. Vowel insertion in borrowed words – (often +ART vowels)
- iv. Consonant suffixing at the end borrowed words – (often the palatal approximant /j/)
- v. Number marking on borrowed nouns: plural suffixes -na, ča and so on.
- vi. Tone assignment on borrowed nouns – borrowed nouns from a non-tonal language(s) are assigned a tone when they are adopted as new lexical entries.

## b) German participants:

### 1. Péter Maitz

*Title:* Boarding school creoles and the mixed language debate



*Abstract:* There is a small group of contact languages including, for instance, Tayo (Ehrhart 1993), Bilingual Navajo (Schaengold 2003), Roper River Kriol (Harris 1986) or Unserdeutsch (Maitz & Volker 2017) that share the rather unusual property of having emerged in a boarding school environment. Even though these languages have very similar histories, some of them are classified as mixed languages while others are listed among creoles. Apart from the atypical circumstances of language genesis that make these languages borderline cases among contact languages, the main reason for this inconsistent classification might be the lack of clear definitions and typologies for both creole and mixed languages. In my paper, I will take a critical look at both the affected languages and the criteria behind their classification in the relevant literature. By doing so, I will try to make a small contribution to the consistent classification of these boarding school languages and at the same time, to the identification of the necessary and sufficient criteria for the distinctive definition of different types of contact languages.

### 2. Péter Maitz / Siegwalt Lindenfelser



*Title:* Simplification in language contact: Evidence from Unserdeutsch

*Abstract:* Simplification processes resulting from second language acquisition in language contact scenarios seem to affect grammatical categories to a different extent: While some categories tend to be reduced or even omitted as a whole easily, other categories are much more persistent and almost never get lost. This observation caused researchers to differentiate between “weak vs. strong inflection” (Kiparsky 1982) or “contextual vs. inherent inflection” (Booij 1993; 1995), depending on whether a category expresses an aspect of extralinguistic reality, or solely serves grammatical purposes (e.g. agreement). Lately, the distinction has been taken up again by research about language complexity, especially in the debate concerning so-called redundancy-induced complexity. Are there categories that are merely “historical baggage” (Trudgill 1999), some kind of “ornamental elaboration” (McWhorter 2001), which do not really contribute to communication and are thus easily degradable? In our paper, we will examine to what extent the loss and retention of categories in Unserdeutsch does fit this hypothesis. Furthermore, we will include insights from other pidgin and creole languages around the world with highly inflected strata languages involved in their emergence. An additional comparison to general results from language acquisition studies may then shed further light on the question, how much of a “conventionalized interlanguage of an early stage” (the creole definition of Plag 2008) Unserdeutsch actually is.



### 3. Lena Schmidtkunz



*Title:* The effects of language contact on the aspect system of Unserdeutsch: a contrastive analysis

*Abstract:* Given the common ancestry of Unserdeutsch (Rabaul Creole German) and German, it is not surprising that they use similar periphrastic constructions to express progressive meaning: [copula + am + v<sub>inf</sub>] in German and [copula + am + verb] in Unserdeutsch. However, these cognate constructions have grammaticalized to different extents. To assess the nature of these differences I will examine (1) the influence of the high-contact situation on the genesis and development of the language’s aspect system and which characteristics can be traced back to the structural and functional transfer from the main substratum (Tok Pisin), the superstratum (German), and the adstratum (English) respectively, and (2) to what extent the aspect system can be located in creole language mainstream (using data from APiCS and other

sources). The derived data will be contrasted with other contact varieties of German (Namibian Black German, Pennsylvania German and Texas German). I will argue that (a) the use of periphrastic progressives is generally more widespread in those varieties that have undergone strong influence from English over an extended period of time, and (b) that the aspect system of Unserdeutsch nevertheless is 'creole typical'.

#### 4. Salome Lipfert



*Title:* The prepositional system of Unserdeutsch in typological perspective

*Abstract:* This paper analyses the prepositional system of Unserdeutsch (Rabaul Creole German) and puts it into a typological perspective. For this purpose, firstly, a prepositional system will be derived from corpus data. Particular attention is paid to influences from the superstrate language Standard German, the substrate Tok Pisin and the adstrate English. The study intends to shed light on the origins of the occurring prepositions, thereby focusing on their formal and semantic characteristics. The results can serve as a basis for the analysis of typological aspects, such as changes in general semantic scope or (non-)realisation of prepositions in certain contexts when compared to the languages mentioned above. Finally, the patterns found during the analysis shall be contrasted with general tendencies in other creole languages, looking for relevant similarities and divergences. The results may then allow to draw conclusions on the genesis of Unserdeutsch.

#### 5. Katharina Neumeier



*Title:* The emergence of creole syntax: Evidence from Unserdeutsch

*Abstract:* The study examines the sentence structure of Unserdeutsch. Previous analyses have determined a fixed SV(O) word order in basilectal Unserdeutsch which seems to be generally maintained across all sentence types (cf. Maitz & Lindenfelser 2017; Volker 1982). These first observations coincide with the widespread description of creoles as being mainly SVO (cf. Velupillai 2015; Bartens 2013; Huber 2013).

In case the intended studies suggest that Unserdeutsch does indeed display a fixed SV(O) word order, the creole would be proven to differ drastically from its lexifier language Standard German. At the same time, Unserdeutsch would then show obvious syntactic similarities to its substrate language Tok Pisin as well as to the adstrate language English.

Based on the previous findings on Unserdeutsch, the study aims to provide further insight into the sentence structure of Unserdeutsch. Therefore, a more detailed analysis of several interviews with basilectal Unserdeutsch speakers will be conducted. Certain language domains have been proven to be more vulnerable to language transfer, for example the discourse-syntax interface in general or the complementizer system with regard to word order (cf. Aboh 2015). Based on these assumptions, the study will try to investigate which aspects of the sentence structure of Unserdeutsch can be attributed to superstrate, substrate or adstrate (i.e. English) influence and why. Consequently, general tendencies in the emergence of creole syntax in multilingual contexts should be established.