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LIGN177 MULTILINGUALISM

**Midterm exam
October 29, 2009**

Choose the best answer in the following multiple choice questions:

1. The language range from *basilect* to *acrolect* is known as
 - a. the creole continuum
 - b. pidgin expansion
 - c. diglossia
 - d. decreolization
 - e. none of the above

2. Which of these countries has a monolingual population?
 - a. Japan
 - b. Korea
 - c. Iceland
 - d. None of the above due to deaf populations who use sign language

3. A language is selected for official status in a country if it is
 - a. the most widely spoken native language
 - b. the language of an important minority population
 - c. the language of the former colonial power
 - d. all of the above

4. A person's dominant language is his or her
 - a. first language (L1)
 - b. second language (L2)
 - c. language of greatest proficiency
 - d. parents' native language

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5. Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés' research on bilingual Catalan-Spanish infants showed that the vowel perceptual discrimination ability of bilingual infants
 - a. is like that of monolingual Catalan infants throughout the first year of life
 - b. is different from monolinguals around 8 months
 - c. is like that of monolingual Spanish babies at 12 months
 - d. none of the above

6. Studies of L3 acquisition have shown that
 - a. typological similarity between L2 and L3 assists acquisition of L3
 - b. low proficiency in L1 does not impact acquisition of L3
 - c. knowledge of an L2 inhibits acquisition of an L3 due to cognitive demands on memory
 - d. proficiency in L2 does not affect influence of L1 on L3 because of the 'last language learned principle'

7. If a person switches between two dialects of the same language within a single conversation, this is analyzed as:
 - a. register bumping
 - b. phatic function
 - c. a transfer effect
 - d. code-switching

8. A creole language is standardly assumed
 - a. to be formed from one dominant language and two or more subordinate languages
 - b. not to fit into standard language family trees
 - c. to grow from a pidgin language through a process of nativization and expansion
 - d. all of the above
 - e. only a and c

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9. Which of these is not an assumption about the superstratist view of creoles:
- a language cannot be more or less creole than another
 - creoles are not distinguished from other languages that have undergone heavy language contact
 - creoles are varieties of their lexifier language
 - early plantation slaves spoke a pidgin which developed into a creole
10. If both Pacific and Atlantic creoles have a similar tense, mood, aspect marking system, which theory of creole genesis does this best support:
- bioprogram hypothesis
 - superstratist hypothesis
 - substratist or creole hypothesis
 - universalist hypothesis
12. What type of linguistic explanation has been proposed for how mixed languages like Michif and Ma'a arose?
- children did not want to be bilingual, so combined the two languages spoken by their parents to create a single language
 - unsuccessful suppression of L2 influence on L1
 - code-switching in which one language served as the matrix
 - none of the above
13. Divergence in accommodation theory refers to
- a speaker excluding an interlocutor to create social distance
 - a speaker selecting a language to meet social approval of an interlocutor
 - a language exhibiting interference from a second language
 - multilinguals downplaying their ethno-linguistic identity through language choice
14. Michif, a mixture of Cree and French, is considered an unusual language because
- its inflectional morphology is Cree and its derivational morphology is French
 - its verbs have complex morphology but its nouns don't
 - its speakers are not bilingual in either Cree or French
 - the verbs are Cree and the noun phrases are French

Short answers – one or two sentences

1. Does a multilingual represent the knowledge and competence of two or more monolinguals? Why or why not?

(2) No. Multilingualism is not measured by competence, and few are perfectly balanced bi/multilinguals, usually being dominant in one language. In addition, multilinguals have different rates and time of exposure to each of the languages.

2. How are pidgin languages different from mixed languages such as Michif?

(1) Either answer ok –

1. Pidgins do not have native speakers, mixed languages do
2. Pidgins are simplified languages, whereas mixed languages are structurally complex

3. What does McWhorter(1998) claim to be the three properties of creoles that, when taken together, set them apart from other languages?

(3) Little or no inflectional affixation.
Little or no use of tone to lexically contrast monosyllables or encode syntax.
Semantically regular derivational affixation.

4. Explain the term “diglossia”, and provide an example of a diglossic situation.

(2) Two languages or dialects used by a community *in different domains*. Examples could be Classical Arabic vs. dialectal Arabic or English vs. immigrant language in U.S. or Paraguay Guarani vs. Spanish

5. Give two factors that might affect how a multilingual makes a decision about which language he/she uses:

(2) Choose among:
Topic
Location or Domain
Function
Interlocutors

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6. What do the studies by Janet Werker and her colleagues tell us about the speech perception abilities of infants less than eight months old?
- (2) Infants are able to discriminate between sounds of the world's languages, even if the sounds are not found in the infants' environment language: they are universal listeners
7. Give one example of a cognitive advantage that bi/multilingual children have over monolingual children
- (1) One of these:
Use more adaptive problem-solving strategies
Separate word from referent earlier
Flexibility in matching strategies to task
Implicit learning strategies
8. What conclusion do Johnson and Newport (1988) draw from their language acquisition study, which examined the English proficiency of Korean and Chinese immigrants to the U.S who arrived at different ages?
- (2) There is a critical period effect (around puberty)
Arrival before puberty correlated with higher performance on English structure tests, and was linearly related to age
Arrival after puberty showed low and highly variable performance, not related to age
9. Explain what is meant by 'additive multilingualism' and 'subtractive multilingualism' with respect to language learning
- (2) Additive: L1 still used and valued when L2 or L3 is added.
Subtractive: L1 (or L2) is replaced when L2 or L3 is added.

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10. What is the difference between a borrowing and a word switch/transfer?
- (2) A borrowing is permanent and used by many speakers of a language
A word switch is temporary and used by an individual speaker
11. How do the superstratist and substratist views of creole genesis differ in assessing the 'genetic' status or affiliation of creoles?
- (2) Superstratist would view creoles as descendent or genetically related to superstrate language, since they are versions of the superstrate or lexifier
Substratist would view creoles as independent languages that do not fit into genetic family trees, because they are combinations of languages from different family trees
12. In immigrant communities using language pairs such as German/Italian, Turkish/Dutch or Spanish/English, language competency is observed to affect code-switching patterns in similar ways. What patterns do these communities exhibit with respect to *transfers*, *intrasentential switching* and *intersentential switching* and how they connect to language competency?
- (3) Transfers occur when one language dominates (usually new arrivals)
Intrasentential switching when fully competent in both (usually 2nd gen)
Intersentential switching when they have good competency but one language favored (usually 3rd gen)
13. African-American Vernacular English is thought by some researchers to be a creole that has undergone decreolization, but by others to be a dialect of English. Provide an argument for each point of view.
- (2) Decreolization – AAVE shares features with other creole languages. It has features like stressed BIN and lack of verb to be that do not appear in other dialects of English, but which do appear in creoles. This suggests that AAVE was a creole which has gradually decreolized

Dialect – 1. AAVE shares features with regional English dialects, such as Irish.
2. Diaspora communities of slave descendants (such as Samana in Dominican Republic) speak like AAVE, not like a creole. Unless they underwent a separate process of decreolization without exposure to standard English, suggests AAVE was not historically a creole, but a dialect of English.

14. In Nahuatl, a language of central Mexico, the order of adjective and noun is the same as Spanish: noun-adjective. In Nahuatl-Spanish code-switching, the order is also noun-adjective as in (b). Spanish *blanco* 'white' is in italics.

(a) ye kipia se kalli iztak
 she has a house white
 'she has a white house'

(b) ye kipia se kalli *blanco*
 she has a house *white*
 'she has a white house'

(Nahuatl is like English in that it does not make gender distinctions in nouns, so *kalli* 'house' is not feminine in Nahuatl, and the Spanish adjective form chosen is the masculine *blanco*. We will ignore this for our purposes)

Does the code-switching example in (b) violate Poplack's 'equivalence constraint'? Why or why not?

(2) It does not violate it, as the equivalence constraint allows switching when the grammars of the languages match. Here they are both N-A, so switching is allowed between them.

Nahuatl also allows the other order of adjective and noun, with the adjective preceding the noun as in (c). In other words, Nahuatl adjective noun order is actually 'free'.

(c) ye kipia se iztak kalli
 she has a white house
 'she has a white house'

Yet, in code-switching, the sentence in (d) is ungrammatical.

(d) *ye kipia se *blanco* kalli

Compare Poplack's equivalence constraint to Myers-Scotton's matrix language frame model of code-switching. Assume that Nahuatl is the matrix language. Which of these models best explains the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (d)? Explain your answer.

(2) Equivalence constraint is better. If the two languages differ in terms of their grammar (word order), switching is not allowed. In (d) there is a N-A (Spanish) vs. A-N (Nahuatl) conflict, so switching is banned. The EC predicts ungrammaticality. The matrix language model would falsely predict a switch would be possible in (d) as Nahuatl is the matrix language, and its order should be respected.