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Towards a social typology of language contact and genesis in the (post-) colonial context using the example of overseas Dutch-based varieties

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Room D.2.01 ('Promotiezaal')

November 23rd – November 24th, 2012

Organizer: Gerald Stell (FWO/VUB/UP), Pieter Muysken (Radboud Universiteit)

Description

It seems that five linguistic scenarios have unfolded in the overseas regions of Dutch influence. As a result of social relations typical of plantation societies, Dutch spread among the slave population in pidginized – and then creolized – forms in the Caribbean. The most notorious outcomes of that process go by the name of Negerhollands, Skepi Dutch and Berbice Dutch. The second scenario, which unfolded in Suriname and to some extent in the Dutch Caribbean, is that Dutch spread slowly, at the expense of strong local contenders (namely Sranan Tongo, Papiamentu and English), with which it is today cohabiting in complex patterns of diglossia and mutual influence. The third scenario is that of Southern Africa, where Dutch was massively adopted by certain non-White populations (namely the Khoi-Sans/Coloureds), and further spread as a second language among more non-White populations (namely Black Bantu-speakers). The fourth scenario, which is in certain respects akin to that of Suriname, is that of Indonesia, where Dutch had become an elite language among the local population by the end of Dutch colonization, and as such became a linguistic model during the standardization of Bahasa Indonesia. The fifth scenario is one that is scarcely documented, but aspects of which can be partly recovered by looking at the case of Afrikaans: That of Dutch spreading as a lingua franca among a European settler population, as happened in the long defunct New Netherlands, undergoing more or less significant changes in the process.

This workshop is bringing together specialists of overseas varieties of Dutch and specialists of Dutch linguistic influence overseas around the general question of social processes surrounding pidginization, creolization and language contact. The guiding questions are the following:

- How can one arrive at a general typology of language contact on the basis of the sociolinguistic settings in which Dutch has found itself in colonial history and its linguistic outcomes?
- How can the history of some well-documented Dutch-based varieties (e.g. Negerhollands, Afrikaans) be referred to in order to account for the histories of less well documented Dutch-based varieties (e.g. Berbice Dutch, Leegduits)?
- To what extent can contact between Dutch(-based varieties) and other languages as currently observable in certain settings (e.g. Suriname, Southern Africa) help to account for the linguistic outcomes of contact between Dutch and other languages in the colonial past?

**Towards a social typology of language contact and genesis in the (post-) colonial context
using the example of overseas Dutch-based varieties**

Vrije Universiteit Brussel
November 23rd – November 24th, 2012

Day 1: November 23rd, 2012

10.00 Registration & welcome coffee

10.30 Gerald Stell (FWO/VUB/UP)

Opening

10.45 Peter Bakker (Aarhus Universitet)

Three Dutch creoles in comparison

11.15 Silvia Kouwenberg (University of the West Indies)

Dutch Guiana: the historical context of creole language emergence in Berbice and Essequibo

11.45 Cefas van Rossem (Radboud Universiteit)

Maternity visit on St. Thomas: the first stage of Negerhollands

12.30 Jan Noordegraaf (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Afrikaans versus American Low Dutch: linguistic divergences in a sociolinguistic context

13.00 Lunch break

14.00 Robbert van Sluijs (Radboud Universiteit)

What's past is past: a quantitative study of the expression of past time references in Negerhollands

14.30 **Bart Jacobs** (Universität Konstanz/Radboud Universiteit)

The Curaçao Paradox, or why a Dutch-based creole never emerged on Curaçao

15.00 **Margot Vandenberg** (Radboud Universiteit)

Bakratongo and Ningretongo varieties of Early Sranan in the Suriname Creole Archive

15.30 *Coffee Break*

16.00 **Frans Hinskens** (Meertens Instituut)

The historical lenition and deletion of intervocalic / intersonorant voiced obstruents in Afrikaans

16.30 **Caroline Morris** (Meertens Instituut)

A database of Cape Dutch Pidgin

17.00 *Closing and Logistics*

20.00 *Dinner*

Day 2: November 24th, 2012

09.30 **Herman Giesbers** (Radboud Universiteit)

Sporen van taalpolitiek in Nederlands-Indië

10.00 **Gerald Stell** (FWO/VUB/UP)

Race, ethnicity and language formation: colour-based divisions as an explanation for the formation of Afrikaans.

10.30 **Robert Borges** (Radboud Universiteit)

The Dutch influence on Suriname's creoles

11.00 *Coffee Break*

11.30 **Leonie Cornips** (Meertens Instituut) & **Vincent De Rooij** (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Youth urban vernaculars: the contact setting between Dutch and Sranan

12.00 **Bettina Migge** (Dublin College)

The role of Dutch on the Dutch-speaking periphery

12.30 *Lunch break*

14.00 **Pieter Muysken** (Radboud Universiteit)

Language change in a multiple contact setting: Suriname

14.30 **Kofi Yakpo** (Radboud Universiteit)

Dutch in Suriname: an agent of language change

15.00 Conclusion and the way forward

Abstracts

Three Dutch creoles in comparison

Peter Bakker (Aarhus Universitet)

In my presentation I will compare three creole languages with a Dutch base: Berbice Dutch, 18th century Negerhollands and 20th century Negerhollands. Despite the considerable grammatical differences between the three varieties, they are clearly creoles. I will link the structural properties of the languages with socio-historical events. I will put the three creoles in a broader perspective from a structural point of view: how much creole-like are they compared to the creoles of the world? Older Negerhollands looks less “creole-like” and more Dutch-like than later Negerhollands: why would that be? Berbice Dutch is characterized by a considerable quantity of non-Dutch elements: why are these present in the language? In addition, we will compare the three creoles from a sociohistorical perspective. Whereas Negerhollands is clearly a plantation creole, Berbice Dutch may have a different history. Adapting a hypothesis originally suggested by Mikael Parkvall, I will weigh the evidence for and against the possibility that Berbice Dutch is a maroon creole rather than a plantation creole, as hitherto assumed, taking structural features of BD into account.

The Dutch influence on Suriname’s creoles

Robert Borges (Radboud Universiteit)

This paper will focus on the the relationship between social circumstances and linguistic outcomes of Dutch linguistic influence on lexicon and grammatical structure of the creole languages of Suriname. Better access to Dutch as well as the language’s increased usage across functional domains over the past century has allowed for the spread of Dutch linguistic material into Sranan which has often, in turn, acted as an intermediary, passing on these Dutchisms to Suriname’s other creole languages. I will present (a) an overview of Dutch lexical and structural influence on Suriname’s creoles and (b) relate the differing outcomes to the contact scenario and socio-cultural factors of the creoles involved.

Youth urban vernaculars: the contact setting between Dutch and Sranan.

Leonie Cornips (Meertens Instituut), Vincent De Rooij (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

While work on processes of identification through language among adolescents has been thriving in the UK as well as in mainland Europe (see e.g. Auer & Dirim 2003, Doran 2004, Hewitt 1986, Jaspers 2005, Rampton 2005[1995]), similar studies on Dutch youths have remained conspicuously absent. This study is a first attempt to amend this state of affairs as it looks at how a group of young men in the Dutch city of Rotterdam identify self and other through language mixing and through defining the meanings of ethno-racial and linguistic categories. The young men in this study self-identify as Surinamese while having only very limited proficiency in what is considered their heritage language, Sranan. The youngsters in this study were followed during their leisure time for six months. They use standard Dutch with insertion of lexical elements from Sranan: predicative adjectives, main verbs (but always combined with Dutch auxiliaries), nouns (without determiners or combined with Dutch determiners), quantifiers and adverbs. However, all functional elements (determiners, attributive adjectives, auxiliaries and inflectional elements) are Dutch (Cornips 2004). According to Muysken (2000:9), this type of code-switching e.g. lexical insertion is a frequent bilingual pattern in colonial settings and recent migrant communities where there is considerable asymmetry in speakers’ proficiencies of the two languages. This bilingual strategy reflects the restricted knowledge of Sranan in contrast to Dutch. When time permits it is shown that the youngsters in this study interweave categories of language, race, and place in assembling constantly changing multi-levelled identities that help to construct self and other (Cornips & De Rooij, to appear).

Sporen van taalpolitiek in Nederlands-Indië

Herman Giesbers (Radboud Universiteit)

'Krassen op een rots', zo wordt in de woorden van Hella Haasse wel de invloed van het Nederlands in het huidige Indonesië getypeerd. Anders dan het Portugees in Brazilië, in Portugals Afrikaanse koloniën én in Oost-Timor, of het Frans in Belgisch Kongo, is het Nederlands er nooit in geslaagd de eenheidstaal in Nederlands grootste kolonie, Nederlands-Indië, te worden, en dit ondanks een aanwezigheid van meer dan 350 jaar. De 'krassen op de rots' zijn de naar schatting ruim 5000 Indonesische woorden van Nederlandse oorsprong in het moderne Indonesisch, veelal stammend uit de periode eerste helft van de 20^{ste} eeuw - Tweede Wereldoorlog, een vergelijkbare invloed op de woordenschat van met name het Javaans, en het ontstaan van mengtalen als het "Petjo" (*Pecoh*) in Batavia-Jakarta of het "Javindo" in Semarang.

In deze paper gaan we na in hoeverre een verklaring voor deze stand van zaken gevonden kan worden in de taalpolitiek in Nederlands-Indië, de taalpolitiek ten aanzien van het Nederlands, het toenmalige Maleis, al eeuwenlang de lingua franca in de Indonesische archipel, en tegenover belangrijke talen als die op Java of het Bataks in Noord-Sumatra.

We zullen deze taalpolitiek beschouwen vanuit een beleidsmatig-ideologisch gezichtspunt alsook vanuit de praktische politiek-culturele omstandigheden waarin deze taalpolitiek moest functioneren: een zeer uitgebreid koloniaal gebied waarin Nederland tot aan einde 19^e eeuw-begin 20^{ste} eeuw de facto weinig echte macht uitoefende, een breed geaccepteerde variant van het Maleis als lingua franca die als zodanig al eeuwen voor de komst van Portugezen en Nederlanders functioneerde, en een zeer diverse bevolking met bovendien Batavia (Jakarta) als een uiterst gemêleerde smeltkroes van culturen, talen en etnische groepen.

The historical lenition and deletion of intervocalic / intersonorant voiced obstruents in Afrikaans

Frans Hinskens (Meertens Instituut)

Afrikaans has evolved out of a group of 17th century dialects of Dutch, under the influence of long-lasting, extensive contact with both endogeneous African languages (such as Khoekhoe), imported languages (such as Malay), Malayo-Portuguese and a Dutch-based pidgin which was spoken in and around the Cape colony.

In the course of its historical development, Afrikaans has diverged from Dutch in many respects. Some of the historical changes have affected the phonological form of considerable parts of the sizeable originally Dutch lexical stock. One of the more salient differences concerns the fact that /ɣ/ in intervocalic position after long vowels has disappeared in items such as *reën*, Dutch 'regen', English 'rain', and *hoër*, D 'hoger', E 'higher'. Similarly /v/ has been weakened to /w/, phonetically [ʋ] (in e.g. *briewe*, D 'brieven', E 'letters'; *sterwe*, D 'sterven', E '(to) die') or entirely disappeared (as in *aand*, D 'avond', E 'evening' and *oor*, D 'over', E 'over'). And similarly /d/ has been weakened to /j/ or /w/ (as in *paaie*, D 'paden', E 'paths' and *goue*, D 'gouden', E 'golden') or even completely disappeared (as in *zaal*, D 'zadel', E 'saddle' and *aar*, D 'ader', E 'vein'). This d-lenition is not entirely 'undutch', but otherwise these processes do not corroborate the superstrate view, according to which Afrikaans continued structural tendencies which were already present in the dialects of the 17th century Dutch colonists and settlers.

This talk will zoom in on the phonology of the lenition and deletion processes, their rule-typological status, the question whether these developments are lexically diffuse and, if so, which factors have conditioned the developments. In the latter connection, the impact of lexical factors such as token frequency were studied and thus claims from Usage Based approaches to phonology. On the contact linguistic side, attention will be paid to the important role that was probably played by Khoekhoe speakers as well as to the distorting effects of early 20th century standard Dutch on the codification of the relevant lexical sets in standard Afrikaans.

The Curaçao Paradox, or why a Dutch-based creole never emerged on Curaçao

Bart Jacobs (Universität Konstanz/Radboud Universiteit)

The issue discussed in this paper is referred to in the literature as the Curaçao Paradox and entails the question of why a Dutch-based creole never emerged on Curaçao, even though the Dutch West India Company was at all times the dominant colonial power on the island. Whilst in other Dutch colonies the Dutch-based creoles Skepi Dutch, Berbice Dutch, and Negerhollands were formed, on Curaçao a creole with an Iberian (mixed Spanish/Portuguese) language, Papiamentu, emerged instead, establishing itself as

the dominant communication vehicle among the slaves and soon also among the majority of the European colonizers. In this paper, we compare the linguistic situation of several (former) Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, the Guyanas and Asia, and discuss what we believe to be the most important linguistic and socio-historical factors that have contributed to the diverging linguistic state of affairs in each of those (former) colonies, in an attempt to answer the question why Dutch creolized in some, and not in other cases. For Curaçao, we take as a starting point the hypothesis that Papiamentu is a descendent of Cape Verdean Creole and explain how this assumption allows us to account for the lack of a Dutch-based creole on Curaçao.

Dutch Guiana: the historical context of creole language emergence in Berbice and Essequibo

Silvia Kouwenberg (University of the West Indies)

This paper considers approximately the first one hundred years of Dutch colonization in Essequibo and Berbice. Ambitious Zealantic merchants financed the establishment of Dutch colonies there. But a range of factors conspired to keep these colonies small: recruitment for the colonies was difficult, especially of families; short-term gain from trade was given priority over the development of a plantation economy; raids and attacks from competing European powers resulted in the destruction of property; neither the WIC nor private ventures succeeded in meeting the demand for slaves.

Their small size is not the only factor distinguishing the two colonies from other plantation societies in which creole languages arose. The initial use of Amerindian slave labour, the presence of Amerindian communities in the vicinity of the Dutch settlements, whether it be trading posts or plantations, and the permanent presence of Amerindians rendering services to the planters, points to extensive contact between Dutch and Amerindians over a long period of time, as well as contact between Africans and Amerindians. In light of the small number of Europeans, African slaves outnumbered whites from the inception of the slave trade to Berbice and Essequibo, despite the low average numbers of slaves supplied to the colonies over the period under consideration. This means that conditions were favourable for creolization. In the case of Berbice Dutch, this resulted in a very large proportion of both content and function morphemes derived from Eastern Ijo, thus supporting Postma's (1990) claim that small colonies like those of the Guyanas had to accept shipments from the Bight of Biafra.

Skepi Dutch is so poorly documented that it is not possible to say whether it includes forms of Arawak and African origin in any great numbers. The little that is known shows that Eastern Ijo-derived forms are not shared between Berbice Dutch and Skepi Dutch, and that a number of Dutch-origin forms developed independently of each other, suggesting that linguistic creolization in Berbice and Essequibo were separate processes. The paper will explore the implications of these observations for our understanding of creolization in these Dutch colonies, and the roles the different population groups may have played in it.

The Role of Dutch on the Dutch-speaking periphery

Bettina Migge (Dublin College)

Research on the Creoles of Suriname has focused on the role of African languages in their genesis (e.g. Huttar 1985; Essegbey 2005; Migge 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011; Smith 2001; Winford & Migge 2007). There has also been some discussion about the English, Portuguese (Arends 1999; Smith 1999) and Dutch input to the formation of these languages (Arends 1989; Smith 1989). The role of Dutch in the contemporary Maroon languages has, by contrast, received relatively little attention because research has to date mostly focused on historical rather than contemporary language use (but see Bruyn 2002) and mostly dealt with linguistic descriptive rather than sociolinguistic issues.

The aim of this presentation is to examine the impact of Dutch on contemporary Ndyuka and Pamaka. The analysis will examine natural recordings of the Maroon Creoles Ndyuka and Pamaka that were obtained in both the village and urban setting since 1994 and recordings from the Maroon radio station Koyeba.

The paper argues that rural adult Maroons traditionally made relatively little use of Dutch restricting their use to individual lexical items. These items were probably also 'appropriated' through Sranantongo rather than via direct contact with Dutch. The items tend to be phonologically adapted and linked to certain semantic domains. By contrast, younger people and especially those that align with urban culture make more frequent and sustained use of Dutch, including code-switching. Their Dutch material is not heavily linguistically integrated, if at all, and belongs to different social domains. Alternation between Eastern Maroon, Sranan Tongo and Dutch forms appears to be part of their regular language use.

Carolyn Morris (Meertens Instituut/Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)

In the early colonial period in the Cape of South Africa a Dutch-based pidgin developed which was used by the local Khoikhoi (Hottentots), some Dutch colonists and later by slaves from other parts of the world. This Cape Dutch Pidgin can be found in the utterances of Khoikhoi and slaves recorded in court proceedings and in the journals and letters of those visiting or living at the Cape: missionaries, traders, naturalists, soldiers and so on. For socio-historic and practical reasons the database will initially focus on the second half of the 17th century and the 18th century. This is the time of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape, stretching from 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck founded a supply station for ships, to the capture of the Cape by the English in 1795. The bulk of the material included so far - around 600 items - stems from this period. Much of the early evidence is lexical information, but the database also contains many phrases and sentences and a number of longer texts from the 18th century. In all, material from over seventy sources has been collected, confirming the necessity of one comprehensive corpus, which prevents each researcher from having to establish their own corpus. Hans den Besten had already progressed a long way in collecting pidgin material from this wide range of sources. The aim of the current project is to organise this material systematically and to add the relevant metadata, creating a useful and useable database for research into the Cape Dutch Pidgin.

Language change in a multiple contact setting: Suriname

Pieter Muysken (Radboud Universiteit)

Suriname is well known among creolists for the three very interesting major Creole languages that have emerged there: the coastal plantation Creole Sranan, and the two maroon languages Ndyuka and Saramaccan. These languages have been the subject of a rich literature, both in a diachronic and synchronic perspective. No matter how interesting these Creoles are and they have been at the centre of discussions about Creole genesis ever since Schuchardt's application of his theory of Sprach-Chemie (language chemistry) in *Die Sprache der Saramakka Neger in Surinam* (1914) there are a number of other very interesting phenomena of language contact. Suriname is indeed a unique laboratory of different language contact outcomes, involving languages with very different typological make-ups and different contact scenarios. In this paper I will sketch a broad overview of language contact in Suriname, starting with a historical perspective, and describing some of the contemporary contact settings.

Afrikaans versus American Low Dutch. Linguistic divergences in a sociolinguistic context

Jan Noordegraaf (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

In 1993, David L. Gold suggested that the traditional comparison of European Dutch with Afrikaans should be supplemented by comparing it with >New Netherland Dutch=, the variety of Dutch which later came to be known as Leeg Duits or Low Dutch, and could still be heard in New Jersey in the 1920s. This variety was definitely not a creole dialect, as some scholars have thought it to be. Such considerations invite comparison with another language descended from a form of colonial Dutch: Cape Dutch or Afrikaans. It is a subject crying out for attention, Gold remarked.

In 1996, Tony Buccini published a paper on 'New Netherland Dutch, Cape Dutch and Afrikaans', in which he argued that 'the divergence of the developments of New Netherland Dutch is crucially linked to the differing social and linguistic relations between Europeans and non-Europeans in the two colonies'. Whereas Cape Dutch found its definitive shape only at the end of the nineteenth century, nineteenth-century Low Dutch changed at a much slower pace, thus showing its remarkable conservatism.

First of all, I would like to discuss in this paper some linguistic features of Low Dutch and compare them with related data in Afrikaans. Subsequently, by way of a historiographical case study, it will be pointed out that as early as 1913 the Dutch linguist D.C. Hesseling had given a sociolinguistic explanation for the divergent developments of these postcolonial forms of Dutch. Hesseling was a versatile scholar, who was engaged in the study of various Dutch postcolonial language varieties such as Afrikaans, Negerhollands, Ceylonese Dutch, Papiamentu and Low Dutch. As is well-known, with regard to the origin of Afrikaans, he developed a contact theory, which he sought to defend on the basis of comparisons with other postcolonial versions of Dutch. It is argued that Hesseling did not succeed in composing a study on 'Afrikaans versus Low Dutch' due to lack of reliable Low Dutch language data.

Maternity visit on St. Thomas: the First stage of Negerhollands

Cefas van Rossem (Radboud Universiteit)

Since the first mentioning of the creole language appeared in 1736, and the first text in Negerhollands was written in 1739, I must go into the role which Dutch played in these first decades of the Danish Colony of St. Thomas.

In my presentation I am going to focus on the first 13 years of the Danish Colony St. Thomas (1678 until 1691). In these years the first Europeans entered the island, founded their plantations, married, gave birth to their children, bought their slaves, travelled between town and plantation etcetera.

I will show that demographic information points to a clear southern Dutch provenance of most of the European colonists, but... with a steady foundation in the Caribbean. Next to that I'll show that Dutch was the most important language in most families and that mothers, children on small plantations with only few slaves must have stimulated Dutch as a colloquial language.

Already from the earliest language descriptions on, a Zealandic root of Negerhollands was mentioned and described. In 2000 I have collected all these linguistic informations and linked those to the oldest dialect sources, which showed that not only Zealandic, but mainly northern West Flemish must have been of importance as a lexifier dialect. Since many Europeans were born in the Caribbean, I have to focus on the crystallization of this variety of Dutch in the Caribbean, which became the contact language of the Danish Antilles until the end of the eighteenth century.

What's past is past: A quantitative study on the expression of past time reference in Negerhollands Robbert van Sluijs (Radboud Universiteit)

Negerhollands is the extinct Dutch-based creole language from the former Danish West Indies, the current US Virgin Islands. A feature that is typical for Caribbean creoles is the occurrence of verbs unmarked for past time reference, which has been attested in Negerhollands as well (Graves 1977, Van Diggelen 1978, Stolz 1986, Sabino 1986, Bruyn & Veenstra 1993). Thus, past time reference can be marked in Negerhollands by the preverbal element *(h)a* or it can be unmarked (\emptyset). Quantitative variationist studies in a number of English-based creoles have shown that this variation is not random, but conditioned by certain factors. In this paper, I investigate the impact of factors such as narrative discourse function, aspect and priming on the expression of past time reference in 20th century Negerhollands on the basis of a quantitative variationist study of De Josselin de Jong's (1926) data collection of Negerhollands. The results show that the factors that condition past time reference marking in Negerhollands resemble those in other creole languages, but with a different outcome: Whereas in other creoles past time reference is typically unmarked, it is typically marked with *(h)a* in Negerhollands. This finding is remarkable: 20th century Negerhollands, a basilectal creole variety, shows higher rates of expressing past time reference than the highest mesolectal variety of other creoles. Besides linguistic factors, we must also look for clues in social settings that may account for this creole typologically exceptional pattern.

Race/ethnicity and language formation: Colour-based divisions as an explanation for the formation of Afrikaans Gerald Stell (FWO/VUB/UP)

It has been long argued whether Afrikaans descends straight from Hollandic dialects or forms a creolized version thereof. Part of the controversy is rooted in ideology: It was in the interest of the Afrikaner intellectual establishment to present their language as 'White'. On the basis of historical records, Hans den Besten has been in a position to highlight the considerable influence, whether direct or indirect, exerted by non-Whites on the formation of Afrikaans. In this talk, I present racial divisions established in the Cape colonial society as the main factor behind the process of transformation undergone by Hollandic dialects at the Cape. I also highlight one aspect of the history of Afrikaans which is usually overlooked, namely that of the process of standardization that took place in the early 20th century and that in my opinion should be considered as the single most important factor that confirmed the establishment of Afrikaans as a language truly separate from Dutch, while it previously was best described as a fluid stage along a continuum ranging from basilectal non-White varieties up to Dutch-like varieties spoken by White upper classes.

This talk is organized in three main parts. First, I summarize a few of the key findings on the racial factor in the formation of Afrikaans made by Den Besten, strengthening his views with the help of historical records that he himself didn't have the opportunity to comment upon. Second, I place the history of Afrikaans in a comparative perspective that involves typologically distinct cases of Dutch in contact at Dutch colonial outposts, as in particular in New Amsterdam, the Caribbean and Asia, while also using the case of Southern English varieties as a point of comparison located outside of the Dutch sphere of colonial expansion. South. Finally, I show on the basis of current data the extent to which the history of Afrikaans

as the outcome of interracial contact can be reconstructed on the basis of currently observable patterns of language variation within the Afrikaans speech community.

Bakratongo and Ningretongo varieties of Early Sranan in the Suriname Creole Archive

Margot Vandenberg (Radboud Universiteit)

Sranan Tongo emerged as a means of interethnic communication among (the descendants of) Africans and Europeans on Suriname plantations from the late 17th century onwards. The language is relatively well documented. The Suriname Creole Archive includes at least ten 18th century sources in and on Sranan Tongo that provide a window on its early stages of development, ranging from dictionaries, word lists, dialogues and plays to transcripts of interrogations (Court Records) and the Sranan Tongo version of the Saramaka Peace Treaty of 1762. The sources display linguistic variation along multiple dimensions; examples of different regional varieties, social registers and styles are encountered in addition to examples of diachronic language change. This paper focuses on linguistic variation as social practice. I will present some thirty linguistic variables (forms and constructions) at the morpho-lexical, morpho-syntactic and syntactic level that have a *Ningretongo* and/or a *Bakratongo* and/or neutral variant in the sources. The terms *Ningretongo* and *Bakratongo* are used to identify the extreme poles of a continuum of varieties of Sranan Tongo that became more and more complex in the course of the 18th century. In short, *Ningretongo* is a cover term for those linguistic features that can be associated with the vernacular of the Surinamese population of African descent, in particular the enslaved people on the plantations. *Bakratongo* is used to denote the linguistic features that associated with the European population and, to some extent, with free people of mixed racial background. In some cases *Ningretongo* and *Bakratongo* features are identified by the authors of the texts, in other cases they are reconstructed. I assume that *Ningretongo* bore a close resemblance to Eastern Maroon Creole as opposed to *Bakratongo*, that differed from Eastern Maroon Creole in that it had more Dutch-derived features than Eastern Maroon Creole. Furthermore, *Ningretongo* is assumed to exhibit crosslinguistic effects that can be explained in terms of language contact with the Kikongo, Akan and Gbe languages, whereas *Bakratongo* is assumed to have exhibited more crosslinguistic effects that result from contact with Dutch as Dutch was the official language of Suriname at that time. In sum, I will present linguistic, sociolinguistic and demographic data on Suriname in the 18th century that will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of creole formation in Suriname in particular, and of the impact of social setting on linguistic restructuring in general.

Dutch in Suriname: an agent of language change

Kofi Yakpo (Radboud Universiteit)

Dutch has been present in Suriname since the mid-17th century. Historical records show that the language was not only used by Dutch colonists and free Africans but also by enslaved Africans from the very beginning of its implantation in Suriname. In the course of its history in the country, Dutch has been an agent of change for the languages of Suriname. At the same time, it has itself been transformed. In my talk, I focus on the former role of Dutch. The most striking consequence of contact between Dutch and the creole language Sranan Tongo is the temporal layering of contact outcomes: Historically early adstratal transfers of Dutch linguistic material into Sranan Tongo are chiefly lexical in nature and are phonologically adapted (e.g. *skrif* < 'schrijven'). With the functional expansion of Dutch in Suriname in the 20th and 21st century came its transformation from an elitist medium of communication with roots in the colonial past to its large-scale appropriation as an autochthonous language by the Surinamese population. This is reflected in the increasing lexical and structural influence of Dutch on the languages of Suriname. Presently it appears that Dutch influence on the languages of Suriname is at least as important in dimension as that of Sranan Tongo.

A number of socio-political and economic factors have accelerated the influence of Dutch since the independence of Suriname in 1975. The most important factor is increased mobility, both in people, and in cultural and economic goods: Circular migration between Suriname and the Netherlands and between the interior of Suriname and the coast has dramatically increased exposure to Dutch, so has exposure to popular media via internet, TV and music. Conversational interactions in Suriname are characterized by intensive code-mixing involving Dutch and Sranan Tongo, and often a third language, with constant shifts in the base language, back-and-forth calquing, extensive lexical and structural borrowing, and creative adaptations.