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Getting personal: life-history variables & variation in Mǎhŋki

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Overview

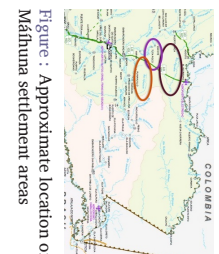
- ▶ Current theories of dialect contact (e.g. Kerswill & Trudgill 2005) claim that dialect mixing deterministically produces koines
- ▶ We show that in Mǎhŋki (Tukanoan, Peru), over ~100 years in 2 communities, **intensive dialect contact has not produced a koine**
- ▶ Most speakers instead show mixing of heterogeneous dialect features
- ▶ Outcomes of mixing reflect membership in **particular communities of practice** (Lave & Wenger 1990): suggests greater effect of individual relationships on variation in **very-small-scale societies**

Background: dialect mixing & koineization

- ▶ Received theory: intensive contact between mutually intelligible varieties **produces leveling/koiné in 1-2 generations**
- ▶ Studies of dialect contact in USA (Labov 1981), UK (Kerswill & Williams 2000), UK colonies (Trudgill et al. 2000, 2004)
- ▶ Likewise for **North American indigenous languages** (Clarke 2009, Spence 2013)
- ▶ Dialect maintenance & divergence under contact involve explicit ideology where dialect is identity marker (e.g. Gomez-Imbert 1999, Stanford 2008)

Background: language & people

- ▶ Mǎhŋki: Tukanoan language of Mǎhŋuna ethnic group, extreme NE Peruvian Amazonia
- ▶ Speaker pop. ~75, most over 50
- ▶ Ethnic pop. ~500
- ▶ 3 settlement regions: **Eastern (red)**, **Western (purple)**, **Northern (black)**
- ▶ Data from authors' fieldwork 2010-2015, primarily spontaneous texts



- ▶ Mǎhŋuna people traditionally:
 - ▶ Practice clan exogamy & language group endogamy
 - ▶ Do not stigmatize language/dialect mixing (cf. Eastern Tukanoan societies; Sorenson 1967, Jackson 1983, Epps & Stenzel 2013)

The Western dialect region

- Sources of variation:
- ▶ **In-migration from Eastern dialect region** 1940s-1970s: spouse import
 - ▶ Influence from **prominent Eastern-speaking schoolteacher** c.1965-1980
 - ▶ Most conservative form of Western dialect:
 - ▶ Preserves Pre-Mǎhŋki morpheme-initial *g- vs. *g deleted in Eastern dialect
 - ▶ Innovative -dʒi for PL-/ISG-PRSs interrogative inflection -- vs. some Eastern variants preserve Pre-Mǎhŋki *-dʒe
- Mixing yields intra-, inter-speaker variation in (g), only inter-speaker in (dʒe)

Western dialect region: Morphosyntactic variation

Table : Variation in PL-/ISG-PRS inflection

Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms	Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms
		<i>dʒe</i> clan			<i>dʒe</i> clan
AMM	M, 1953	-h̄	NMP	F, 1938	-h̄
LMM	M, 1955	-h̄, -ḡu	EMR	F, 1969	-h̄
JMM	F, 1961	-h̄, -ḡu	MTT	F, 1967	-h̄
NMM	F, 1969	-ḡu	MTT	M, 1944	-h̄
HMR	F, 1973	-ḡu	RIT	F, 1976	-h̄

AMM, LMM, JMM, and NMM are children of mother NMP and father FMP. HMR is child of FMP's brother JMP. (No data for FMP and JMP.)

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Western dialect: distribution of variants

- ▶ *gu* variant is **Western innovation**: not present in other regions
 - ▶ Corporate groups (age, sex, clan) and kin relations alone **fail to explain** distribution of *gu* vs. *hi*. Instead, need intersection of kinship and age
 - ▶ Speakers with *gu* are **younger children of two brothers, JMP and FMP**
 - ▶ Variable is **minimally affected by accommodation**:
 - ▶ In video-recorded interactions between NMM and NMP, NMM continues to use only *gu*, NMP only *hi*
 - ▶ LMM's use of both variants may reflect accommodation to *gu*-using spouse
- Speakers have **little awareness** of variable: no spontaneous metalinguistic talk

The Northern dialect region

- ▶ Sources of variation in this region (Oral histories in Skilton 2014):
 - ▶ **Population collapse** & contraction of geographic territory c.1900-1920
 - ▶ **In-migration from Western & Eastern regions** c.1920-present: spouse import (not traditional), economic motivation
 - ▶ **Consolidation & sedimentation** of bands by missionaries in 1950s
- ▶ Most conservative form of Northern dialect:
 - ▶ Exceptionless sound changes of Pre-Mǎhŋki: *k' > k & *h > Ø / [V_V] MORPH
 - ▶ 3SG agreement-past tense affixes: Pre-Mǎhŋki *-dʒi 3SG.M.PST, *-dʒo 3SG.F.PST > Northern -di, -do (other dialects -gi, -go)

Northern dialect region: Morphosyntactic variation I

Table : Variation in 3SG.PST inflection

Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms	Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms
		<i>dʒo</i> clan			<i>dʒe</i> clan
SLA	F, 1945	-di, -do	TRD	M, 1935	-ḡi, -ḡo
PLA	M, 1950	-di, -do	ERD	M, 1940	-ḡi, -ḡo
FLA	M, 1955	-di, -do	ARS	M, 1945	-ḡi, -ḡo
OLG	F, 1963	-di, -do			

- Why this distribution of variants?
- ▶ TRD, ERD, ARS are brothers, children of Northern mother & Eastern father. Raised in settlement dominated by Eastern speakers (father, older siblings)
 - ▶ *-ḡi, -ḡo* is **Eastern dialect feature inherited by TRD & brothers from father**, not primarily a clan level feature -- all clans have it in other regions

Northern dialect region: Morphosyntactic variation II

Table : Variation in PL-/ISG.PST inflection for root-allomorphy class verb *sáŋ* 'go'

Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms	Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Forms
		<i>dʒo</i> clan			<i>dʒe</i> clan
SLA	F, 1945	sá-h̄	TRD	M, 1935	sá-h̄
PLA	M, 1950	sáŋ-h̄	ERD	M, 1940	sáŋ-h̄
FLA	M, 1955	sáŋ-h̄	ARS	M, 1945	sáŋ-h̄
OLG	F, 1963	sáá-h̄			
JGS	M, 1938?	sáŋ-h̄			

Expected factors fail to explain variation above:

- ▶ Local corporate groups like clan, gender, age not relevant
 - ▶ Nor family (cf. SLA & her brothers PLA, FLA), co-residence (cf. SLA & OLG)
- Variation instead reflects **kin relations overlaid on gender**:
- ▶ OLG's mother from Apayacu R. basin -- her form likely Apayacu: TRD, ERD, ARS form found in Western & Eastern meets -- again acquired from father
 - ▶ Why difference between SLA and *dʒo* clan? **Men and women form separate communities of practice** in Mǎhŋuna society: homosociality, strict division of labor in subsistence & extractive activities
 - ▶ **Men lead change** here: *sáŋ* form innovative relative to Pre-M (cf. Labov 2001)

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Northern dialect region: Phonological variation

Table : Variation in *h & *k' reflexes

Spkr	Gender/BirthYr	Descend	"cook.VI"
TRD	M, 1935	<i>gáŋe, gáŋe</i>	<i>kʷáko, káko</i>
ARS	M, 1945	<i>gáŋe</i>	<i>káko</i>
SLA	F, 1945	<i>gáŋe</i>	<i>káko</i>
PLA	M, 1950	<i>gáŋe, gáŋe</i>	<i>kʷáko, káko</i>
FLA	M, 1955	<i>gáŋe, gáŋe</i>	<i>kʷáko, káko</i>
OLG	F, 1963	<i>gáŋe</i>	<i>káko</i>

- ▶ (h) & (k') variation is **highly salient** to speakers:
 - ▶ In migrant Western speakers have explicit prescriptive ideology favoring /h/-ful & /k'/-ful variants and their ideology **drives change over lifespan**
 - ▶ PLA, FLA, TRD have long history with Western-/Eastern intimates: They give /h/, /k'/-ful variants in wordlist elicitation but /h/, /k'/-less variants in connected speech: **Labovian style-shifting**
 - ▶ OLG, SLA have only Northern-speaking intimates: zero /h/, /k' /
 - ▶ ARS has Northern intimates and only 2-5 years of Eastern exposure: /h/ and /k' / in scattered lexical items
- ▶ What are the **indexical properties** of (h) & (k')?
 - ▶ **No consensus**: PLA, FLA evaluate /h- & /k' / less forms as incorrect, their sister SLA, as "authentic" Northern variants
 - ▶ Yet (h) & (k') are **salient while morphological variables are not** -- no style-shifting, very little metalinguistic talk on morphosyntactic variation

Conclusions & contributions

- ▶ The Mǎhŋki dialect mixing outcomes **do not support** the claims about koineization made by Kerswill & Trudgill (2005) a.o.:
 - ▶ Over multiple generations of dialect contact in two distinct speech communities, **speakers did not converge on a koine**
 - ▶ Likely reflects differential importance of individual idiolects in input in **large-scale/industrial vs. small-scale/non-industrial societies**
- ▶ Understanding variation requires reference to speakers' life history:
 - ▶ Most speakers display mixing of features attributable to **parents' dialects**, early-life membership in homosocial **communities of practice**, & accommodation to **spouse's dialect**
 - ▶ Network attributes and memberships in local corporate groups (gender, clan) are **minimally relevant** (cf. Lipipi-Green 1989, Bownen 2005, Romero 2009)
 - ▶ Recalls covert but crucial role of life history in certain variationist studies, e.g. Labov 2001 (385ff.), Wolfram and Becker (2000)

Importance for endangered language research

- ▶ Groups which experience major losses of population or territory often undergo **simultaneous language endangerment and dialect mixing**
- ▶ Many similar cases in Australia (Dixon 1972: 34ff., Harris 1993, Evans 2003, Bownen 2012: 4ff. a.o.) and North America (Clarke 2009, Spence 2013)
- ▶ Crucial to know **whose variants are preserved** in documentation, and **whose variants are standardized out** in orthographies and teaching materials

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