The Effects of Frequency in Surinamese Multilingual Speech

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Suriname is a small country in South America, inhabited by 500,000 people. It comes as a surprise that this country is home to more than 15 languages, including 6 creoles. Two of the major languages are Dutch, the sole official language, and Sranan Tongo, the most widely spoken creole of the country. The latter serves as a lingua franca among most Surinamese groups and is said to be the ‘language of the street’ whereas Dutch holds more prestige and is rather used in a formal context. Both languages are in close contact with each other.

The proposed talk presents research on how the Surinamese languages chance due to their mutual contact. It focusses on the effects caused by the frequency of trigger words and language content in multilingual speech. What are the most significant trigger words for both languages and how do they relate to trigger words between other language pairs? Another important issue is the growing common lexicon between the Surinamese variety of Dutch and Sranan Tongo. How can we determine whether a word should still be categorized as trigger word or whether it has already become an integral part of the lexicon of both languages? Frequency is one important answer to this question. Furthermore, the role of (spontaneous) borrowing plays an important role in this process: how does it contribute to the development of both languages?

These questions will be addressed by a corpus-based, bottom-up approach. The corpus was collected during a research stay in Suriname and consists of original data based on computer-mediated communication (CMC). Since CMC includes both features of written and oral communication, it is a profound source of ‘new’ language data. The aim of this presentation is to identify significant trigger words and discuss the ‘boundary’ between Dutch, Surinamese Dutch and Sranan Tongo.
1. Overview of the Common Lexicon Between Sranantongo and Surinamese Dutch (Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexeme</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winti (religion)</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi gado My god</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mang Interjection</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owru Yari New Year’s Eve in Suriname</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srananman Surinamese</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No span no stress</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baya Interjection</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poku Song</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td></td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Multilingual speech - examples

Dutch: dat [...] je niet je soortgenoten vangt.
Sranan Tongo: taki [...] yu no vanga yu speri.
Original phrase: dat [...] joe no vanga je soortgenoten
English that [...] you do not catch your congener

Original phrase: No mek yu - druk
Dutch: - maak je niet druk
neg make you neg stress