

Typological features of mixed languages: A case study of Hokaglish

Wilkinson Daniel Wong Gonzales

National University of Singapore

Hokaglish or *Salamstam-oe* is a contact variety mainly involving Hokkien, Tagalog, and English and is spoken by Filipino-Chinese in Manila. This presentation discusses the use of its affixes and intensifiers. Together, these linguistic features suggest that Hokaglish is not a codeswitching phenomenon, but a mixed language.

Example (1) shows the Tagalog *nag-* prefix attaching to a Hokkien word *kongoe* ‘speak’:

- (1) *Nung nag-¹ kongoe tayo ti hia la*
When PERF speak 2PL PREP DEM PRT
‘When we spoke there...’

Examples (2) and (3) exhibit intensifiers in Hokaglish – reduplication and intensity markers, respectively.

- (2) *Basta kung ano na-approve, na-approve? Labo~labo lo.*
Just COND what PERF-approve, PERF-approve? unclear~unclear PRT.
‘Everything gets approved. It’s really chaotic.’

- (3) *Sabi ni mama talaga ia powerful la i.*
say of Mom INT INT powerful PRT 3SG
‘Mom says he is (really very) powerful.’

Reduplication is typically used in Hokkien and Tagalog for intensification, just as intensity markers (e.g., Tagalog *talaga*, Hokkien *ia*) are used to intensify adjectives, verbs, and nouns. In (3), both markers are used simultaneously to achieve a higher degree of intensity for the adjective *powerful*.

From the data, I conclude that Hokaglish fits the profile of a mixed language based on Thomason’s (2003) classification since it results from minimally simplified mixtures that are easily separated according to the language of origin. Moreover, unlike codeswitching where the constituents can all be identified as sourcing from a particular language, Hokaglish involves grammatical and lexical subsystems that cannot all be traced back to a single source. Neither is it a creole since the source subsystems, which are not drastically simplified, can still be identified. Overall, based on the data, I propose that Hokaglish is a mixed language similar to Light Warlpiri spoken in the Lajamanu community in Australia (O’Shannessy, 2016). (294 words)

Notes

¹ Words that are underlined are clearly Tagalog in origin.