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Speech and Beyond
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NORMS, GRAMMAR, OR A BIT OF STYLE: LINGUA FRANCA AND THE ISSUE OF LANGUAGENESS

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“Variationist” studies... have started from the supposition that there are languages in the use of which members of a community vary. The languages themselves have been objects of theoretical and descriptive study, as has variation in their use. But “languages” and “groups” have been taken as given, the starting points.” (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985:1)

Language is our Rubicon, and no brute will dare to cross it. (Müller 1862: 354, cited in Sutcliffe 2008)

This paper addresses last year’s LACUS conference theme on variation, but strongly resonates with the 2007 theme of “Speech and Beyond,” and the here-recurrent question of what it means to be a language. The starting point of my exploration into both themes is a presumed negative correlation between variation and what will here be termed languageness. I sketch a gradient of languageness that pertains to various types of contact languages. The question is when such a contact language should count as a language, rather than as interlanguage, broken code, or some other form of sub-language collection of individual attempts at communication that are too varied to be assigned to a system. It is, indeed, the search for the Rubicon, this time within the realm of human communication.1 The background to this line of questioning is ongoing investigation of the Lingua Franca of the Mediterranean: the Lingua Franca is situated at that peculiar point on the scale—that of pidgins—where it becomes difficult to draw a clear line between language and pre-language. From the contact language literature, I isolate some factors that are frequently assumed to accompany various types of contact languages, and discuss how variation on the one hand, and concepts such as norms, grammar and style contribute to our definition of languageness. I conclude that languageness, even in the restricted context of contact language creation, remains difficult to ascertain (with structural or functional measures) independently of social measures.

1. Language contact as language creation. Where people speaking different languages come into contact with each other; where their native, bona fide full-fledged

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1 I owe Müller’s citation and framing of this paper with the Rubicon metaphor to Patricia Sutcliffe’s excellent LACUS presentation, published in this volume. I here transpose the distinction between human and non-human production to the boundaries existing within human speech production. Bickerton (2000:24, cited in Sutcliffe 2008) has already applied this citation to the human realm: “Syntax thus becomes, in words reminiscent of Müller’s, ‘the real rubicon ....’"
languages will not adequately serve them anymore for an extended period of time; in a context where language is there, but multiply so, and people create a new code for communicating: starting at what point can we refer to this code as a language? What requirements must such communication fulfill to be considered a language? We do not have a good definition of what a language is, nor when utterances of a makeshift jargon become (perceived as part of) one. We also understand very little of what it is that holds these younger languages together, and have not reached a clear view of what specific characteristics are prerequisites for languageness.

We do, however, generally assume a ‘developmental hierarchy’ for young contact languages. This field-wide consensus is most clearly spelt out by Mühlhäusler (1997:6): Jargon > incipient pidgin > expanded pidgin > creole. Here, I do not focus on the justification of the idealized categories, nor on the evolutionary bias itself. The problem of terminology is well known to creolists. I will accept these idealizations for a moment as a given, and just slightly adapt the hierarchy above by merging the pidgin class into a single one, and adding a final stage, that of ‘normal language’. Other than the notion of decreased variation, an obviously insufficient and also problematic assumption, how can we operationalize or motivate our already highly simplified labels? In absence of evidence for a sudden creation of a grammar, and therefore assuming gradual development, the incremental rise of languageness is considered. By inserting possible heuristic measures that would characterize each new level reached—i.e., each discretely labeled stage of languageness—I hope to generate at least a very simple and rudimentary implicational scale of languageness. My aim is therefore neither to show the trajectory of one specific language, nor to do justice to all the different cultural shapes a language can have. Rather, I wish to briefly inspect what motivates our use and understanding of these specific labels that apply to formations of contact languages.

1.1. Variation. Variation, though present in any language, is often relegated to the margins of language, which is seen as a basically stable, even pristine entity when at its best. Pidgins

2 Mufwene has criticized the very idea of a creole because the concept is solely sociohistorically defined (Mufwene 1986). The fundamental problem of P/C terminology and the no less fundamental issues surrounding it are thoroughly scrutinized by Jourdan 1991, who shows the categories to be blurred from the start. She asks, “[I]s not language a social phenomenon prior to being a linguistic one?” (Jourdan 1991:189) The present survey has but little to add to her brilliant paper, nor to other more recent publications broaching the topic (cf. Ansaldo, Matthews and Lim 2007).

3 I purposely employ this term in order to allude critically to continued preconceptions of a type of language that is quite automatically allotted legitimacy and prestige: one with a long, written history and literature, standardized in grammar and spelling, according to rules imposed oftentimes by national institutions (see section 3); and one in stark contrast to contact varieties.

4 The existent ‘Language Bioprogram Hypothesis’ (Bickerton 1984) to this effect (LBH), where children put to use their inborn Language Bioprogram and therewith create creole output from pidgin input, has failed to stand up to the test of evidence. The LBH has been generally rejected by the field of pidgin and creole studies (see Siegel 2007 for a summary).
and creoles (P/C), however, constantly challenge the otherwise more convenient myth of language as a monolithic entity. Variation in pidgins and creoles is pervasive, often unpredictable, and cannot be easily done away with by sociolinguistic distributions into gender, age, class or region—precisely because these societies are often characterized by flux. While creoles, despite these difficulties and despite their frequent lack of standardization, are fortunately no longer denied language status at least by the profession, the matter of language-ness is much more open in the case of pidgins, and their jargon predecessors. Often, they appear as a collection of speech acts so varied and so loosely held together that they entirely eschew description. This problem of dealing with variation in a young contact language certainly applies to the Lingua Franca of the Mediterranean (LF), with which I deal below.

1.2. Lingua Franca of the Mediterranean. LF is the famous, near-mythical, oral code reported to have been spoken across the Mediterranean, from at least the late Middle Ages up until early nineteenth century. Trade between Arabs, Christians, Jews, all meeting in this arena, was purportedly typically carried out in this simplified code. Its vocabulary is largely Romance derived.

This code was so highly variable in nature that it calls into question the unity of the LF language system, although the LF as an instance of lingua franca communication in the wider Mediterranean area (see Kahane & Kahane 1976 for an overview of the story of the term) is clearly documented. LF enjoyed a successful reputation of serving the communicative needs of Mediterranean people for over half a millennium. This contrasts with the lack of evidence for a stable grammar, indeed, with indications that speakers did not rely on stability in their code.

Despite the fact that LF is well-known as the earliest European pidgin, the available linguistic evidence has been under analyzed. A corpus composed of songs, theatre pieces, and reports, often novel-like, of travel and captivity, as well as more academically oriented general descriptions of the Barbary Coast (a main locus of Christian slavery, where LF was employed), has been developed since Schuchardt 1909. The sources have been published near comprehensively by do Couto 2002 and by Cifoletti 2004; the reader is referred to these collections for reference to that data.

The best LF source is also the last one, and comes as a dictionary set up in a “Teach yourself LF” format, designed to ease French invasion and conquest of Algiers. To let the Preface of the Dictionnaire de la langue franque ou petit mauresque suivi de quelques dialogues familiers et d’un vocabulaire des mots arabes les plus usuels a l’usage des Français en Afrique (published anonymously in Marseille 1830) sum up:

La langue franque ou petit mauresque, très-répandue dans les états Barbaresques, lorsque les corsaires de Tunis et d’Alger rapportaient de leurs courses un grand nombre d’esclaves Chrétiens, est encore employée par les habitans des villes maritimes, dans leurs rapports avec les Européens. Cet idiome, qui ne sert guère qu’aux usages familiers de la vie, et aux rapports commerciaux les moins compliqués, n’a ni orthographe, ni règles grammaticales bien établies; il diffère même sur plusieurs points, suivant les villes où il est parlé, et le petit mauresque en
usage à Tunis, n’est pas tout-à-fait le même que celui qu’on emploie à Alger; tirant
beaucoup de l’italien dans la première de ces régences, il se rapproche au contraire
de l’espagnol dans celle d’Alger. (6)

Several pages later, the introduction continues: “Pour familiariser le lecteur avec cet idiome,
que l’on n’ose appeler une langue ...” (Dictionnaire 1830:9). If even the authors of the sole
dictionary and explicit description of the language had to muster up courage to refer to
LF as a language, how then are we to establish, on the basis of these few and variable data,
whether LF really was a language deserving of the name? I return to the problem after
examining some of the data on LF.

2. VARIATIONS OF LINGUA FRANCA. The nature of the linguistic data available for LF
seriously limits the extent of any rigorous analysis.5 Despite the limits of the available LF
corpus, given the legendary status of the language, it is no longer viable to ignore this data
completely. I shall examine key aspects of the available data below. After all, historical lin-
guistics is (as dubbed by Labov, pe) ‘the art of making good use of bad data’.

2.1. THE GRAMMAR. Different sources of LF mark grammatical relations in different ways.
Often, a periphrastic strategy is found in one source (often the Dictionnaire), but a mor-
phologically bound strategy in another. This is true of possessive marking, expressed peri-
phrastically with di, or with a pronominal clitic as in the anonymously authored Contrasto
della Zerbitana of 1300 (do Couto 2002).6

   b. Commé star il fratello di ti? – ‘How is your brother?’ (Dictionnaire 1830:94)

Similarly, object marking can be expressed with a multifunctional preposition per, pho-
nologically adjusted to bel in the speech of Giancarli’s Zingana. However, it can also be
expressed with a pronominal clitic, again observed in the Zerbitana.

(2) a. Si per li capelli prendoto...
   ‘If I took you by the hair...’ (Zerbitana 1300, cf. do Couto 2002:42)
(2) b. Enti domanda bel mi gran cosa.
   ‘You ask a great deal of me.’ (Giancarli 1545: Zingana, act II, scene 12)

5 While the linguistic data available for LF is scant and scattered, and does not lend itself to the
quantificational methods of sociolinguistics, strong sociolinguistic evidence is available for LF as
it was spoken by the Christian hostages in the slave colonies of North Africa. For discussion on
how basic social and historical facts may have influenced speakers’ linguistic behaviour, see Sel-
bach (2008). On the willingness to let intriguing myths carry on through time regardless of data,
see Selbach (2007).

6 Doubts about the Zerbitana being a good LF source are expressed in Operstein (1998). Haedo on
the other hand is generally considered a very reliable and valuable LF source. I shall not take into
consideration here the question of what is a good vs. a bad LF source.

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c. Mi star contento mirar per ti
   ‘I am glad to see you.’ (Dictionnaire 1830:93)

True to its periphrastic preference, the Dictionnaire states that there is no plural marking; this is exemplified as indicated in (3)b. Thus, while the default plural is described as being unmarked, some sources add -s for plural number (e.g., Encina in (3)a). Noun-adjective and adverb-adjective agreement is also marked occasionally ((4)a and b).  5

(3) a. dar ovo ‘give eggs’ (Encina 1520, cf. do Couto 2002:48)
   b. l’amigo ‘friends’ (transl. Dictionnaire 1830:7 as ‘les amis’)

(4) a. bona bastonada ‘a good beating’ (Haedo 1612, cf. do Couto 2002:60)
   b. Star mouchou bonou. ‘That is very good.’ (Dictionnaire 1830:94)

One of the most salient features of LF is the infinitival-derived verb (cf. Schuchardt 1909:445), which ends in Vowel+r, and remains uninflected for person. Irrealis is marked periphrastically with preposed bisogno (Dictionnaire 1830:8). Past tense may be marked by a participle-derived form ending in -ato, without the need for auxiliaries (Schuchardt:445).

Yet, variation exists within Haedo 1612. The past tense in Haedo is formed both with, and without the auxiliary ha (5)a. Imperatives also are not as uniform as expected, ending, again within the same source, either in -a or in the expected -ar ((5)b) (examples taken from do Couto 2002:60).

The question remains open whether this type of variation within close proximity in the same author should not be interpreted as a stylistic tool. It is difficult to judge whether we have free variation or style here. The alternation of different forms within one source indicates at least that variability in LF is more than the mixing of L1 influenced idiolects. However, we do not have sufficiently lengthy LF texts to reach a final verdict on the status of these variables.

(5) a. Qui portato de campaña? Gran vellaco estar, qui ha portato.
   ‘Who brought it from the country? The great beast is (the one) who brought it.’
   b. Anda presto piglia, portà fora guarda diablo, portar a la campana.
   ‘Go quickly, take and carry it away from the watch of the devil, take it to the country.’

A final component mentioned here is the paradigm of personal pronouns. The Dictionnaire (8) shows forms resembling Italian pronouns; the entire system can be quite neatly derived from (identical subject and object) forms of the Genoan Ligurian dialect (van Rijssing 2004:71). However, in other sources (Rehbinder 1798 in Cifoletti 2004:225, 226; Giancarli 1545; Thierry-Mieg 1861:105, 109), variant forms intervene in the system: Iberically guided 1st and 2nd plurals nous autros, vos autros, and also Arabic derived enti, enta for 2nd person singular (see Figure 1). I discuss other doublets—the lexical options of LF—in section 2.2.  35

7 See Arends and Muusse (2002) for a detailed analysis of LF as a pidgin with a wealth of inflectional morphology. In contrast, I would argue that the occasional lack of the documented inflectional marking renders it optional, and therefore not part of a stable grammar of LF’s own.  40
The lexicon of LF is extremely variable; more than one lexeme corresponds to one concept within and across sources. Apart from some key emblematic terms, the lexicon appears to have remained quite open throughout the several centuries of its existence. Lexical variation is attested within a fixed idiomatic shell in (6), illustrating the room there was for lexical maneuvering within given structural limits. Gandouf and buba are interchangeable terms—lexical doublets for LF, synonyms if they were part of the same tight-knit system—denoting ‘plague’.

Other doublets include:

- ‘to speak’: parlar - hablar - ablár
- ‘to have’: tenir - tener - avir - aver
- ‘to give’: dar - donar
- ‘to do’: counchar - counchiar - contechar - fasir - fazer - fazir
- ‘head’: testa - cabeza - cabessa
- ‘dog’: cane - perro
- ‘god’: dio - dios
- ‘good’: bon - bonou - bono - bona - bounou - bueno - buón - taybo
- ‘prison’: bagnos - bagnes - baños
- ‘house’: cazeria - casseries - cachareas

Some of these alternations could be explained as purely phonological, as different pronunciations all in circulation in the city of Algiers. Others clearly show derivations from different source languages were permitted to enter into the language concept of LF.

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8 Schuchardt (1909:445), for instance, refers to the omnipresent “Hauptlieblingswort” bono (‘good’). Also recurrent and unchanging are several idiomatic expressions.

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We cannot assume LF had a core system upon which variations played; it was variable at heart. Nevertheless, LF served as a useful and long-lived strategy for communication. Effective communication with a variable code contrasts with usual conceptualizations of languageness. This juxtaposition illustrates the fact that the idea of language is still quite ill-defined, even in one relatively delimited set of contexts, spoken language contact. Yet, so much appears to hinge on our idea of a language. Where is our Contact Language Rubicon?

3. A SCALE OF LANGUAGENESS. I now examine the Languageness Scale. On the bottom of this scale are placed the least, lowest forms of verbal communication and expression: the jargons. The middle ground is taken up by what is often termed P/C, that is both pidgins and creoles, which are notoriously difficult to keep apart (cf. Jourdan 1991). On top sit the fully fledged, normal languages. These are always comparatively old, and typically, when talking about this type of hierarchy, equated with national languages. This also means they satisfy the oft-quoted definition of language, attributed to Weinreich in our days: “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy,” and correspond to the view expressed by Nebrija 1992 [1492] in the first written grammar of Spanish: “Language is the companion of Empire.”

What exactly holds the younger languages together is less clear. However, from the P/C literature there emerge some broad assumptions about their evolution into full-fledged languages. In this process, there are, on the one hand, expectations of decreasing variability along the languageness scale, presumably as languages tend, or are tended by their governments and institutions, towards standardization. On the other hand, these codes on their way to increased languageness are assumed to concomitantly develop other qualities, among them one best summed up as a quasi-poetic capacity. Fully fledged languages finally reach a maximum of expressiveness, uniformity and prestige. Several developments are non-controversial parts of the definitions: it will be taken for granted that jargons do indeed have the weakest norms, and that full-fledged languages have the most historical depth or cultural enshrining. These will be inserted into the scale at either end: new norms as the first hurdle towards the attainment of greater languageness, and historical depth as the final element for undisputed languageness.9

More difficult is discerning what happens in the mid-range of the scale, that is, in drawing a line between pidgins and creoles (Jourdan 1991). Differentiating the two has become especially difficult since Bickerton’s Language Bioprogram Hypothesis, which offered (the spontaneous creation of) grammar as a heuristic, has become defunct (as noted above, for a state-of-the-art summary on arguments against the bioprogram see Siegel 2007). However, there exists one precise claim that I would like to pursue further here: it has been suggested that pidgins differ from creoles (and full-fledged languages) in that they lack the possibility of stylistic refinement (Labov 1990 [1971]) or expressive force (Bakker 2003).10 In exploring

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9 For enlightening discussions of the topic see Jourdan 2008 and Enfield 2005.
10 Labov (1990[1971]:45) states: “It would be more accurate to say that grammar is style.” This suggests to me the following extension: As grammar is replaced by style (Labov 1990), nativization is replaced with community (Jourdan 1985).
the notion of style I thus examine specifically the Pidgin > Creole nexus: the stage where something is most expected to happen, and where we most expect to find a Rubicon.

The insights alluded to or explicitly addressed in the literature (norms, style, historical depth) yield a hypothetical scale of languageness as shown below.

\[ \text{jargon} > (+ \text{norms}) > \text{pidgin} > (+ \text{style}) > \text{creole} > (+ \text{historical depth}) > \text{normal language} \]

### 3.1 defining pidgins

Bakker (2003:4-5) provides the most recent and thorough definition of pidgins. They are described as (not) being five things: (1) not mother tongues; (2) always second languages; (3) endowed with norms; (4) not general languages of a speech community. The fifth is relevant here, and I cite it in full:

> Pidgins rarely if ever fulfill an *expressive function*, for example in verbal art or oral or written creative expression. An exception here would be Chinook Jargon, which was used for songs. The communicative function is the only important function of pidgins. Pidgins are used to get a message across and not for purely esthetical reasons. (Bakker 2003:4-5).

In a similar though much earlier vein, Labov, in a 1990 article (from a 1971 manuscript), “On the adequacy of natural languages,” postulates that “pidgins are deficient in most of the basic grammatical categories and syntactic operations typical of more developed languages” (Labov 1990(1971):16). He hence concludes that pidgins are logically, but not stylistically, adequate.

These two stipulations about pidgins have in common the underlying assumption that at the basis of communication is a logical message, and that expressiveness (as esthetics or style) is a decorative measure that sets in at a later developmental stage. It is only at this later esthetic apotheosis that languages produce Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe—and also James Joyce. Literature flourishes, as if in celebration of the cultural achievements of standardization. The taming of the beast of variation, which is henceforth indexable (i.e., as style), appears to have reached successful conclusion in the normal language.\(^\text{11}\)

Concomitant with an increase in style, expression, and prestige, a decrease in variability is expected. Yet how do we distinguish variability such as is presumably found in Haedo (examples (5)a and b), from style? It cannot be done on purely linguistic terms. I suggest that the difference between style and variability has a lot to do with the social frame into which the language is embedded (3.2.); and that this social embedding is also the main defining factor of languageness (3.3., 4.).

### 3.2 defining style

Style studies are an expanding and exciting field of research in linguistics (see Eckert & Rickford 2001). In passing, I touch on two examples of definitions here, one oriented more on language and one more on the speaker.

While Labov (1990[1971]) focuses on the possibilities of style-shifting within a language system, where the chosen style mirrors the social context of the speech, Eckert (2001:123)

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\(^{11}\) Despite the present display of sarcasm, I acknowledge that the necessity of tensions between rules and their breaking is a topic for consideration, elsewhere.

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is more speaker focused in her definition of style. She defines style as “a clustering of linguistic resources, and an association of that clustering with social meaning,” and discusses “the stylistic construction of a self” in terms that reach beyond language systems. Rickford and Eckert (2001:1) combine a language- and a speaker-oriented approach in their definition: “Style is the locus of the individual’s internalization of broader social distributions of variation.”

Using this latter definition, we can say LF had no style, as it could not index social distributions where no rigid social system for LF speakers existed—and L2 speakers are not expected to form a rigid sociolinguistic system together. Can style be construed as the turning point, the stage where grammatical obligations begin to exist (Labov 1990[1971])? It is a possibility worth pursuing as long as certain assumptions—namely those of language and group which LePage and Tabouret-Keller allude to in their opening quote—are adhered to. A turning point in the language system could accordingly only be found once the speaker community becomes delineated, and language and group become meaningful, overlapping terms.

Before this time of community identification, LF is at most a means of style within the multilingual context, as variations of LF may only carry indexes to outside of that looser community. This means that style (under Labov’s stricter definition) can only arise when the community of speakers has gelled; i.e., when the language has become the main language of the community. The style measure then is also to some extent circular, as its definition depends on the social matrix that is indexed and indexable, rather than upon the linguistic variables themselves.

3.3 FROM PIDGIN VARIABILITY TO CREOLE STYLE? Below once again is the implicational scale of languageness. Underneath it, I have indicated another set of measures, growing from the individual to the culturally organized implementation of the speech act. These social context measures correlate well with the different stages of languageness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jargon</th>
<th>(+ norms)</th>
<th>pidgin</th>
<th>(+ style)</th>
<th>creole</th>
<th>(+ historical depth)</th>
<th>normal language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community (psychosocial) requirement</td>
<td>Perpetual (often economic) requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional (literary) requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social requirements are always invoked in defining a language. At the jargon stage, we have idiolects; produced by otherwise well-endowed speakers of languages. What is lacking is the community grammar. Along the scale, speakers progressively enter a shared social system together. The degree to which the observer can reach an abstract representation of a whole system increases accordingly. At the end point of the scale, the language has a history of Literature and Tradition, so no one can call into question its status as both fully

However, if the system of multilingualism is recognized as potentially replacing the social system usually reserved for speakers of the same language (as in Labov’s model), thereby expanding the set of permissible elements at the disposal of speakers, then the definition of style can change: LF can then be seen as one of the (stylistic) registers available in Algiers.
fledged and normal language. Purely linguistic measures are harder to use as heuristics along this scale. Style, as a measure that combines social and linguistic factors, continues to be a potentially useful heuristic that certainly merits being pursued further than it so far has been in the language contact literature.

4. CONCLUSIONS. Returning to the European speakers of LF, we have seen that whatever tools were available to them, they employed: (1) simplificational strategies, either as L2 speakers, or for the benefit of L2 speakers (foreigner talk); (2) phonological streamlining; (3) direct use of their knowledge of Italian, Spanish, French, and other Romance dialects; (4) free borrowing of other terms also from non-Romance languages, especially from Turkish (e.g., yoldaş) and Arabic (ṭayb, marjuz). That is, variation went hand in hand with the available means of expression. LF provided a liberal platform for the negotiation of meaning in absence of rigid sets or rules.

A question that arises is, can there really be any utterance that is purely communicative, or a way of speaking, even in a second language, that carries no affect, intention, persuasive element, goal, or motivation? It is hard to imagine normal human beings resorting to an exchange of nothing but logical code, of ‘naked propositions’. LF was also used, or at least portrayed, in songs, theatre pieces and poetry, where rhyme and word play are heavily involved. Contentwise, LF as documented in Haedo’s Dialogues of Captivity borders on the philosophical (see excellent discussion in Lang 1992). The pidgin LF was clearly used for expressive purposes. Is this not another counterexample besides Chinook Jargon to Bakker 2003?

Expressivity and style should be distinguished. This distinction is social. While expressivity would seem inalienable from language (contra the use by Bakker), style may still provide a heuristic for languageness, as suggested by Labov 1990. In other words, while poetry resides in the individual (authors in fact produce language, not vice versa), style is a socially indexed poetic expression. Absence of style, then, is not an individual but a social lack. Only after the gelling of a social system can variables possibly index what they are expected to: social factors, within that system. Along our scale of languageness, it is the unpredictability of variation that decreases, rather than variation itself. Concomitantly expanded is the capacity for stylistic expression: socially regulated means of expression increase.

Can LF qualify as a language, despite the variation displayed in the sources? First, no language is monolithic. Further, it is not trivial to stress that the people involved in such instances of language creation and development already speak a language (Jourdan 1985). From the speaker’s point of view, LF may then be seen as part of an extended language repertoire (cf. Enfield 2005): a subcomponent of the complete repertoire which includes variation, style, and norms. LF did not have a grammar outside of the multilingual context it

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13 These may eventually have lead to periphrastic constructions, more frequently attested in later sources.
14 A term introduced to me by Ingrid van Alphen, pc, with my thanks for discussion.
15 See Mühlhäusler (1997) for discussion of the sharp distinction between P/C expression and parody. It is difficult to tease these apart for the historically distant LF sources.
was embedded in. The question unfortunately, but tellingly, cannot, as I see it, be answered more rigorously.

Variation is inherent in humans and their languages, just as expression is. It remains an interesting challenge to show what quantitative and qualitative changes occur in either domain as languages mature along with their society. As languageness pertaining to a specific language is defined first by its socialness, not by purely linguistic factors, we have to be able to define our group before we can define our language.

In that sense, the Rubicon has eluded us again.

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