Title: Non-Dravidian elements and (non)diasystematic change in Malayalam

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Abstract:

This chapter applies a Diasystematic Construction Grammar (DCxG) approach to account for non-Dravidian vocabulary and phonology in Malayalam, a high-contact Dravidian language. The distinction made in DCxG between *diaconstructions*, which are language non-specific, and *idioconstructions*, which are language-specific, proves useful in accounting for semantic specialization and phonological heterogeneity due to language contact. Notably, increased contact with English has led in some cases to decreased phonological adaptation, as some constructions change from *diaconstructions* to *idioconstructions*: Non-diasystematic change. Taken together, this chapter argues that any analysis of Malayalam must account for non-Dravidian subpatterns, and including language labels as part of speakers' linguistic knowledge enhances our understanding of the dynamics of language contact.

Keywords: Malayalam, English, language contact, language change, semantic specialization, loanword adaptation, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics

1 High-contact languages are not categorically different

By introducing a distinction between *diaconstructions*, which are language non-specific, and *idioconstructions*, which are language-specific, Diasystematic Construction Grammar (DCxG) captures the fact that borders between languages, while often blurred, also shape language use (Höder 2012). Building on other construction-theoretic approaches, DCxG characterizes all languages as consisting of emergent subpatterns of constructions. This includes hybrid or high-contact languages, which differ only in that those subpatterns can be attributed (by analysts, not necessarily speakers) as belonging to a particular language. As such, DCxG provides an ideal framework for analyzing high-contact languages while also capturing smaller-scale contact effects. Crucially for those studying language contact, this obviates the need for a fundamental distinction between high- and low-contact languages (e.g., Faraclas & Klein 2009, Mufwene 2000).

In this chapter, I apply a DCxG approach to account for non-Dravidian vocabulary and phonology in Malayalam, a Dravidian language with considerable influence from Sanskrit and English, as spoken in Kerala, India.¹

The outline of the chapter is as follows: The remainder of Section 1 discusses the data and goals for the chapter. Section 2 covers the sociohistorical contexts of the language contact which led to the non-Dravidian elements in Malayalam, culminating in contemporary attitudes towards English as documented in sociolinguistic interviews. Sections 3 and 4 discuss how accounting for word origin contributes to our understanding of semantic change and phonological heterogeneity respectively in Malayalam. In Section 5, I show how increased language contact can lead to non-diasystematic change via loanword de-adaptation. Section 6 focuses on word-final schwa as a signifier of “Malayalam” idioconstructions. Finally, Section 7 advocates for Malayalam as a hybrid language.

1.1 “Stratified lexicon” without a lexicon

As demonstrated in Section 3, Sanskrit- and English-origin words in Malayalam are highly frequent and appear across a variety of semantic domains. Analogous to Latinate and Germanic morphophonological subpatterns in English, Sanskrit and English words in Malayalam have phonological patterns which are not found in Dravidian-origin words, such as heteroorganic clusters, certain codas, and voiced aspirated stops.

Non-constructional approaches have dealt with this heterogeneity due to language contact in Malayalam in a variety of ways. Previous analyses of Malayalam phonology and morphology (Mohan, T., 1989; Mohan & Mohan 1986) have posited distinct derivational processes for Dravidian-associated and Sanskrit-associated words, dependent on whether the words have a [+DRAVIDIAN] or [+SANSKRIT] feature. This approach anticipates a main insight of DCxG, in that a speaker’s analysis of a word being of Sanskrit or Dravidian origin has an effect on the constructions it is connected to (or, in the derivational approach, in the rules and rule orderings which apply). Crucially, speakers’ analyses may or may not align with a word’s etymological origin as determined by linguists; speakers pay attention to a variety of phonological, meaning-based, and social cues in their assessment of a word.

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¹ Malayalam (Glottocode: mala1464) is a South Dravidian language spoken by about 35 million speakers in India (where it has official designation, and the status of a Classical Language), Lakshadweep, Puducherry, and by a considerable diasporic population all over the world.

In constraint-based approaches, language-specific patterns are abandoned in favor of a *core-periphery* distinction, in which indexed constraints are differentially violated in distinct strata of the lexicon (Itô & Mester 1993). From this perspective, the perceived etymology of words is not part of speakers' representations, rather, the strata are emergent from the constraints which are differentially violated. *Nativization* is defined as the violation of fewer constraints, as words move from the periphery -- in which more constraints are violated -- to the core, where fewer constraints are violated. Itô & Mester specifically refer to the Sanskrit words in Malayalam as being an instantiation of core-periphery stratification in the lexicon. In such approaches, constraints are theoretical primitives; therefore, patterns in the lexicon emerge from the interaction between constraints.

In constructional approaches, patterns emerge from inferences across learned form-meaning mappings, *constructions*, which are richly specified with information that speakers use to make comparisons and connections. The crucial analytic contribution of DCxG is that speakers' analyses of what language a particular construction belongs to can be part of the construction itself. This approach assumes rich lexical knowledge, and, following Elman's model of lexical knowledge without a lexicon, the enterprise becomes psychologically tractable (Elman 2009). Social information such as language origin can be part of a speaker's lexical knowledge (e.g., Kristiansen 2008), even without a stored lexical entry.

When describing the selective violation of "native" phonological patterns, as found in Malayalam, a DCxG approach allows for an analytic move from the idea of a stratified lexicon toward a model which contains networks of connected constructions which can or cannot be associated with a particular language. Diasystematic change, in which language-specific constructions, idioconstructions, become language-non-specific diaconstructions is one possible outcome of language contact. Elements which were previously marked in some way (whether in their form or function) as being associated with a particular language adapt to the larger constructional networks in the language. This is one way of describing what happens during loanword adaptation, for example. While we will see such examples in this chapter, we will also see cases of language contact resulting in non-diasystematic change (Section 5), that is, previously language-non-specific constructions becoming language-specific. Taken together, this chapter argues not only that any analysis of Malayalam must account for non-Dravidian subpatterns, but that accounting for perceived etymology and/or word origin using a DCxG approach enhances our understanding of the dynamics of language contact.

1.2 Note on the data

There is not yet a tagged corpus of spoken Malayalam; written standard Malayalam differs considerably from spoken Malayalam, and, as described in the following section, affinity towards and use of written Malayalam is in flux. Online (on WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media platforms), written standard Malayalam is used in addition to transliteration of Malayalam in English script, and transliteration of English and spoken Malayalam in Malayalam script. Unless cited otherwise, the data in this chapter comes from observations of Malayalam usage online, via WhatsApp, in popular culture, and from field work conducted in 2014 and 2016 in central Kerala – mostly in areas surrounding Thrissur (Trichur)² and Kochi (Cochin). Malayalam words are represented using conventional transliterations, or, to avoid confusion due to variance in transliteration conventions, using the International Phonetic Alphabet. All transcriptions are broad and my own.

Because valid measures of frequency are not available for spoken varieties of Malayalam, no strong claims about relative frequency or the effect thereof are made here. However, care was taken to include words which are in common use. A word was determined to be ‘no longer in common use’ if it was not found in internet searches of magazines, newspapers, blogs and other Malayalam media online, dictionaries,³ and if, in consultation with other Malayalam speakers, the word was categorized as archaic or unknown.

2 Language contact in Malayalam

This section contains a brief description of the conditions under which non-Dravidian elements have entered Malayalam, focusing on the non-Dravidian languages which have had the most influence on Malayalam, Sanskrit and English, in addition to Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Dutch, and Portuguese, for comparison.⁴

2.1 Sanskrit

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² Here and elsewhere, colonial toponyms are in parentheses, and the conventional English transliteration of toponyms as used currently in Kerala are in the main text.

³ olam.in in particular, and a print dictionary published in 1997: *Sabdathaaraavali*

⁴ See Kurien (1994), Pilla (1962), and George (1972) for more detailed discussion of the history of Malayalam and Malayalam-speakers

Influences from Sanskrit can be found throughout Malayalam. In the tradition of South Asian linguistics, elements which are inherited from Sanskrit are called *tadbhava* words, and elements which are borrowed from Sanskrit are called *tatsama* words. For those familiar with Latin influences in European languages, this is akin to loan doublets, such as *shirt* and *skirt* in English. Of course, Malayalam being a Dravidian language, none of the Sanskrit-origin words are inherited, or *tadbhava*, but the prevalence and integration of Sanskrit-origin words in Malayalam is considerable, and comparisons can be made to Sanskrit influences on Indic languages such as Hindi-Urdu. In fact, there are loan doublets in Malayalam as well:

- (1) a. $kṛʃṇan$
‘Krishnan (a personal name, a Hindu deity)’
b. $kaṇːan$
‘alternate name for Krishnan, cherished son’ (from Sanskrit *kṛʃṇa* ‘Krishna (a Hindu deity)’)
- (2) a. $aṭʃːˈhan$ (alt. $aṭʃːan$)
‘father’
b. $aːtʃaːrja$
‘respected one’ (from Sanskrit *aːrja* ‘respected one’)

Both of these words participated in unique sound changes and semantic shifts, and neither form was inherited, though $aṭʃːˈhan$ seems to have been borrowed from Prakrit *aḍʒːa* ‘respected one.’⁵

Staal (1963) describes Malayalam as a *semi-tatsama* language in terms of its vocabulary, which he says (overstating somewhat) is “predominantly Sanskrit” (Staal 1963:275). Malayalee linguist and literary scholar K.M. George (1972:9) states “Perhaps it can be asserted that no other Dravidian language has been so deeply influenced by Sanskrit as Malayalam;” indeed, the idea Malayalam arose as a language separate from Old Tamil due to influence from Sanskrit is pervasive, in academic and non-academic discourses (Pillai 1962, Sridhar 1981). Crucial for the present discussion, the influence from Sanskrit is highly salient to speakers, and the difference between Malayalam and nearby Tamil is commonly ascribed to Sanskrit influence, whether or not that is supported by research in historical linguistics (see Govindakutty 1972).

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⁵ There is an additional interesting case of *paḷa* ‘ripe fruit’, which was borrowed from Dravidian into Sanskrit as *phala* ‘fruit, result’, and then back again into Malayalam as *phalam* ‘positive result, product’; *paḷam* means ‘ripe fruit’ in Malayalam.

Sanskrit influences in Malayalam are generally thought to have entered through a gradual and multi-faceted process called *Sanskritization*⁶ (Srinivas 1989, Sridhar 1981). Sanskritization is not just about the use of Sanskrit words, it is also a – sometimes performative – increase in a constellation of behaviors, including vegetarianism, abstention from alcohol, strictness of caste hierarchy, and general social conservatism. Srinivas (1989) emphasizes that, while Sanskritization is associated with Hinduism and priestly classes in particular, it is a hyperlocal process. As such, the degree to which linguistic material from Sanskrit is associated with (high-caste, Northern-influenced) Hinduism is highly variable across Malayalam-speaking parts of India.

However, the exact mechanism of how Sanskrit influence permeated the language is unknown, and the role of Sanskritization might be overstated. While some high-caste Hindus came into contact with Sanskrit via formal religious education, this was not the primary way that Sanskrit influenced Malayalam, as the use of Sanskrit-origin words was (and is) decidedly not limited to Hindus or to those with formal schooling. In fact, Malayalee Muslims use the Sanskrit-origin word *ṇiska:ram* for the daily prayers to Mecca (from *ṇamaska:ram*, a Sanskrit-origin word used as a greeting but also to describe prostration), and there are Sanskrit influences in religion-related words in Judeo-Malayalam as well: Gamliel (2013) discusses male- and female-specific strategies for translating sacred texts, the former of which are called *tamsi:r* (which she says is likely from Arabic), and the latter of which is called *arttham*, a Sanskrit-origin word for ‘meaning.’

Sanskrit influences are likely due to generations of contact between more- and less-Sanskritized socio-ethnic groups via the spoken language. The role of strict caste boundaries in either facilitating or hampering this influence is unclear: Srinivas (1989) describes a trickle-down effect of Sanskritization, stating that more Sanskritized upper-castes led to more Sanskritization throughout socio-ethnic strata, while Kala (1977) discusses how areas of Kerala with more conservative upper-caste Brahmins (Walluvanaad, in particular) corresponded to reduced influence from Sanskrit in the language of the enslaved people and lower castes. Either way, it is clear that more historical sociolinguistic work on this topic is necessary.

Because of the associations between Sanskrit and caste-based oppression, eschewing Sanskrit(-seeming) words has been a way to reject Sanskritization and resist the associated social oppression; this was part of the platform of groups fighting for social and political justice for Dalits in Tamil Nadu post-Independence (Srinivas 1989). Though there was a left-

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⁶ This is distinct from the ‘Aryan invasion theory’; see Bryant & Patton (2005) for nuanced discussion.

wing movement in Kerala which led to a democratically elected communist government in the 1950s and brought about many social changes and considerable de-Sanskritization in the broader sense, there was no comparable move to remove Sanskrit influences from the Malayalam language.

2.2 Arabic

Trade and contact between the people on the coast of Kerala, East Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula, has been active for centuries, predating Mughal dynasties in North India, the founding of Islam, and the differentiation of Malayalam from proto-Dravidian (Bahuddin 2012). Arab traders had small permanent settlements on the Kerala coast since before 100 C.E. (Common Era), and Muslim communities in Kerala have been around since the late 600s to early 700s C.E., that is, since the very early days of Islam (Ricci 2011, Randathani 2010).

Arabic influenced not only the language of the Arab, and then Muslim, communities in Kerala,⁷ it also influenced the language of trade and commerce in the society at large. Until the arrival of the Europeans, who found an alternate route to India specifically to establish hegemony over sea trade, this community was “politically stable and had a crucial role” not only in trade, but also in political and diplomatic capacities (Cheerangote 2018). These communities were multilingual, speaking Arabic for religious and commercial purposes, Malayalam with the surrounding community (and potentially at home), and Farsi, Urdu, etc., for trade and diplomacy (Ilias 2007). The sustained presence of the Malayalee Muslim community has had a large impact on the language and culture of Kerala, and there are many common words in Malayalam which are of Arabic origin (see Section 3.2), likely entering through Arabic both directly, via schooling and trade, and indirectly, via Mapilla Malayalam.

2.3 Portuguese and Dutch

While Malayalam speakers have been in contact with Europe – mostly indirectly – through trade since the first attestations of the language, European colonialism brought words from Portuguese, Dutch, and, notably, English. Vasco de Gama landed in Kozhikode (Calicut) in 1498; for

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⁷ Muslim communities in Kerala speak Mapilla Malayalam (Glottocode: mopl1237), which is unique among Indian Muslim languages as being not derived from Farsi/Urdu, but, rather, the result of contact between Malayalam, Arabic, Persian, and other languages (Cheerangote 2018, Ilias 2007).

centuries after, a consistent trading relationship was established between the local kingdoms and the Portuguese, who intermarried with Malayalees, performed (sometimes forcible) conversions to Catholicism, and established permanent colonies on the coast. George (1972) states that at least one king of Kochi (Cochin) learned Portuguese, but there were not widespread efforts to establish Portuguese schools for locals, and many colonizers learned Malayalam for the purpose of conversion and commerce.

In 1663, the Dutch East India company usurped port cities, and caused official Portuguese settlements to move northward up the coast, to Goa. Small Malayalee-Portuguese communities remained for generations after. The Dutch established factories and plantations, but did not intrude upon the local society to the extent that the Portuguese did. As stated in Koshy (1989:222), “they made little influence on the language and literature of the land,” and they were in general not interested in conversion or establishing permanent settlements. Malayalees who did not interact directly with these colonizers via trade, marriage, or religion generally did not learn Dutch or Portuguese.⁸

2.4 English

Contact with English has been sustained since the colonial period. However, the intensity of English influence in Malayalam has increased and become ubiquitous relatively recently. As such, I divide my discussion of English influence into two sections: a historical discussion in Section 2.4.1, and a discussion of contemporary attitudes towards and contact with English in Section 2.4.2, which also includes data from sociolinguistic interviews conducted in 2016 (Namboodiripad 2017).

2.4.1 English pre-1950s

During the British colonial period, exposure to English was limited to certain social and economic classes for the vast majority of Malayalam speakers. Of the three Malayalam-speaking realms which became the state of Kerala, only the northernmost, Malabar, was under direct British rule (from 1793 until 1947). The other two kingdoms, Kochi and Thiruvithamkoor (Travancore), were relatively independent. Colonial governors would interact with the local ruling classes, but interaction with everyday Malayalees was limited.

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⁸ One such transactional interaction between the Dutch and Malayalees led to the first appearance of Malayalam writing in ‘print’, the *Hortus Malabaricus*, a guide to various medicinal in Malabar, authored by Henrik van Rheede and Itty Achuden, among other contributors (Manilal 2003)

In 1833, with the Government of India Act, English medium schools were made available from 6th grade onward, as opposed to Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic, which has been the traditional languages of (higher) education. The intent of this policy was to further the goals of British colonialism. As stated by Thomas Macaulay, who advocated for English as the official language of the British Empire in India, the goal of this policy was not to educate all of the colonized people, but rather to “form a class (of persons) who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (quoted in Dobbin 1970:18).

The Malayalam-speaking kingdoms outside of direct British rule established some English-medium schools in the early 1830s as well, though most of the educational infrastructure, in English or otherwise, was organized and funded by Catholic and Protestant organizations (Mathew 1999). For most Malayalam-speakers, intense contact with English began after independence from Britain. English was (and is) considered preferable to Hindi as a lingua franca by many South Indians (Srinivas 1989, Cody 2013, Gargesh 2006); English is associated with modernity, and as a foil to Sanskrit and Hindi.

2.4.2 English post-1950s and today

Moving to more contemporary times, contact between English and Malayalam is mostly mediated by education and media. In Kerala, education became free and compulsory in 1955, and a wider range of Malayalam-speakers were exposed to English via schools, where it was taught as an additional language (usually by 5th Standard, ~age 9). By 1970, schooling until 10th grade was free, and literacy (which entails exposure to English) in Kerala had doubled as compared to 1961 (Lieten 2002). However, the use of English words in spoken Malayalam had become much more widespread well before these educational reforms; Kala (1977) describes the use of many English words by a variety of Malayalam-speakers, including illiterate villagers. These words were not limited to novel words for novel items, but she also describes the use of English words to replace words which already existed in Malayalam, as shown in (3) and (4):

- (3) a. $\widehat{t\acute{e}e:n}$
‘(necklace) chain’ (English-origin: *chain*)
b. $\widehat{t\acute{e}a\eta:ala}$
‘chain’ (Sanskrit-origin: *ṣṛiṇṇ^hala*)
- (4) a. $\widehat{ja:p\acute{o}}$

‘shop’ (English-origin: *shop*)

b. *kaḍa*

‘shop’ (Dravidian-origin; cf. Tamil *kaḍai*)

Kala lists the English-origin words in (3) and (4) as being used by people under 55, and the other words as being used by or directed to people over 55. Carrying this over to today, it is not the case that the (a) examples have replaced the (b) examples. For (3), the forms have undergone further semantic specialization: Kala lists the English-origin example as meaning the chain of a necklace; this connotation persists today, and the (b) word is not as likely to be used as a general term for a chain, but it is more associated with thick chains or shackles. The examples in (4) are relatively interchangeable in current-day speech, though there are some conventions for which word is used in compounds:

(5) a. ? *kaḷ:ə kaḍa*

‘liquor shop’

b. *kaḷ:ə ʃa:pə*

‘liquor shop’

(6) a. *ṭea:ja kaḍa*

‘tea shop’

b. ? *ṭea:ja ʃa:pə*

‘tea shop’

Both *kaḷ:ə* and *ṭea:ja* are associated with Malayalees; both types of establishments are central to Malayalee culture, and yet the conventionalization of these two forms has taken different routes. The fact that *ʃa:pə* participates in this conventionalization path indicates that it is seen as part of Malayalam.

From her fieldwork in 1972-1975, in what she stated were relatively rural⁹ areas, Kala describes the language used as “Hybrid Conversational Malayalam,” in which the languages which make up the “hybrid” are English and Malayalam:

The picture of an ideal conversationalist in the area where I worked is as follows: (i) he should employ English words befitting (a) the educational standard of the listener, (b) the age group to which he (the speaker) belongs, (c) the general sophistication attained by the listener, (d) the listener’s rather natural inclination to use English words; (ii) he should bear in mind that the locally recognised popularity of English or Malayalam words maximizes the effect of the

⁹ The larger towns included were Ottapalam and Shoranur, and the smaller villages were Munnurkode, Karattukurssi, Thikkadeeri, Panamanna and Kulappully. These towns are located in Walluvanaad, which had (and still has) a reputation for being where the “purest” or “best” Malayalam is spoken.

speech. He should not therefore make a laborious attempt to bring in a Malayalam word which is normally confined to the press and the radio. (Kala 1977: 271)

Crucially, this means that an ideal conversationalist should at times avoid certain words which are Dravidian or Indic (i.e., Sanskrit) in origin in favor of English, in order not to appear stilted or overly formal.

This describes very well the conversational norms of contemporary Malayalam-speakers as documented by sociolinguistic interviews I conducted in 2016. I interviewed 112 Malayalam-speakers who grew up in Kerala and considered Malayalam to be their mother tongue. The participants ranged in age from 16 to 86, all had a 10th grade education or greater, and represented a variety of castes and socio-economic statuses. They all lived in villages or towns around Thrissur (Trichur), in central Kerala; as such, the discussion in this chapter about speaker attitudes should be taken to apply to this geographic context. 90% of participants (101/112) stated that they do not avoid using English words when speaking Malayalam, with many of them stating that English is a part of Malayalam; some representative quotes are below, in addition to the participant ID and age.¹⁰

- (7) “[using English] is necessary” P60; age 41
- (8) “[I] try to avoid using English sometimes, but it is not practical. English is part of Malayalam” P46; age 51
- (9) “[I] don’t worry about using English because everyone will understand both languages” P35; age 46
- (10) “The standard way to speak Malayalam is to use English with Malayalam” P78; age 38
- (11) “[I] only try to avoid using English when teaching Malayalam specifically; Malayalam words don’t come naturally in many cases” P74; age 41
- (12) “[I] often don’t know the word in Malayalam, so [I] use English” P82; age 42

Participants in general see English as part of Malayalam; some participants said that they use English words intentionally, when there is not an “apt” (P96, age 71) word in Malayalam, but many describe it as a more natural and subconscious process. This aligns with my more informal observations, and is further supported in the literature by Nayar (2008): “For the educated middle-class Malayalee, a mixture of English and Malayalam is the unmarked code of informal interaction.”

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¹⁰ Malayalam is an argument-dropping language; the pronouns in the translations are in brackets because they were inferred and not spoken.

Use of English has only increased since Kala's study, and this can be attributed to changes in educational attainment (corresponding to point (a) in Kala's quote above) and the naturalness of using English words (corresponding to point (d) above), each of which plays a causal role with regard to the relative popularity of English-origin words (corresponding to (ii)), in addition to shifting ideologies around what counts as "Malayalam".

With regards to educational attainment in particular, there have been significant changes since the 1970s. In the 1990s, the literacy rate in Kerala exceeded 90%, and considerable pushes were made toward increasing English education in Kerala. By 2010, about one-third of all students were in English-medium schools (Kerala Educational Census 2011), though the degree and contexts of exposure to English in these schools varies widely (Nayar 2008). The Standard which is taught is Received Pronunciation, though there is little to no direct exposure to Received Pronunciation, and Abraham (2019) notes considerable "mother tongue influence" in the English spoken by Malayalees.¹¹ Much of the education literature focuses on monolingual standards of English (non)attainment;¹² this is orthogonal to the present discussion, but it is relevant to state that concerns about the quality of English education in Kerala coexist with concerns about the encroachment of English upon Malayalam.

In my sociolinguistic interviews, speakers shared their anxieties about Malayalam and English. In responses to the question "What do you think about the future of Malayalam?" 29 participants (about 26%) made a comment about English taking over or replacing Malayalam, and many discussed the hybrid nature of Malayalam and English, in both positive and negative ways:

(13) "People are not speaking either English or Malayalam" P112; age 54

(14) "People aren't speaking English nor are they speaking Malayalam. They don't know either; they are speaking a mix of the two which is neither" P52; age 17

(15) "Malayalam is going away...people on TV don't know how to speak Malayalam" P017; age 77

(16) "Malayalam is regressing; people are speaking Manglish [mix of Malayalam and English]" P98; age 21

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¹¹ There is some work on Malayalee English, which Mohanan & Mohanan (2003) describe as a "transplanted L2 variety."

¹² See Vaish (2005) for an alternative view, focusing on English education in Delhi.

- (17) “Young people are speaking Manglish; adding new English words to Malayalam” P59; age 24
- (18) “In Thrissur [a large city nearby], English is preferred among the young; there is shame associated with speaking and knowing Malayalam. People are using half and half Malayalam and English” P95; age 33I
- (19) “[There is] No issue with the future of the language. Codeswitching and accepting words from other languages is good for the health of the language. It is inevitable. It will have an effect on Malayalam, just like internet speak has had an effect on English. English is changing, and the new generation is adapting Malayalam for the computer age. It is something like Malayalam, but it is not quite Malayalam” P90; age 81

Along with more positive feelings about the influence of English on Malayalam, we see the idea of *languagelessness* (Rosa 2016) being ascribed by Malayalees to themselves or ‘the young people’ due to their use of a hybrid variety. Education is seen as a conduit of English hegemony, in addition to a force that reduced the status of Malayalam and young people’s Malayalam “ability.” In fact, in 2017, a bill was passed which made Malayalam a compulsory subject until 10th grade for the first time (Fourteenth Kerala Legislative Assembly, Bill 55); this was being discussed at the time of these interviews, and participants expressed support for the measure while also stating the economic need for English:

- (20) “Malayalam is going away, so people are trying to make Malayalam a required subject, even in English medium. [...] our language is Malayalam, so everything should be in Malayalam. We can’t throw Malayalam away. [...] We want our kids to be better than us, and have a good understanding of English because we need it outside of Kerala.” P111; age 40

Indeed, while I did not meet or hear of any monolingual English-speakers of Malayalee ancestry living in Kerala, many of the participants were more comfortable writing in English than in Malayalam; 48% (54/112) said they preferred to write a note to themselves or a grocery list in Malayalam, while the rest said either English or English and Malayalam equally. There are generational differences as well; Table 1 shows participants’ preferences broken down by age (via a median split).

Table 1: Participants’ preferred language to write in (casual).

	41 AND UNDER	OVER 41
MALAYALAM	36% (N=20)	60% (N=34)
MALAYALAM AND ENGLISH	20% (N=11)	10.5% (N=6)
ENGLISH	44% (N=26)	26% (N=15)
MALAYALAM AND HINDI OR TAMIL	0	3.5% (N=2)

Just 36% of participants under 41 stated that they prefer to write in just Malayalam, as opposed 60% of those over 41, and a plurality of participants under 41 preferred to write in just English. Again, these are all participants who grew up in Kerala, in non-urban areas. About 1/3 of those under 41 were educated in English immersion schools (which aligns with the data for Kerala in general), but all of them state that Malayalam is the language they feel most comfortable using. Taken together, this shows not only the intensity of contact between English and Malayalam, but, beyond that, the ways in which English is inextricable from the language practices of Malayalees.

2.5 Interim summary: History and hybrid Malayalam

Malayalam has considerable non-Dravidian influences from English and Sanskrit. At the respective times of contact, both languages were hegemonic and associated with formal education. The words from these languages spread and became popular not just through education, but through spoken multilingual language practices. That Sanskrit-origin words must be part of any description of Malayalam is a given, and it is accounted for in previous linguistic analyses. Based on the preceding historical and contemporary descriptions of English use in Malayalam, I argue that English-origin words should receive a similar status. Analyses of Malayalam must account for the full linguistic repertoires of the speakers; in this context, that includes words and sounds which can be traced to English. In the following section, I expand on this further by showing how English- and Sanskrit-origin words are integrated into Malayalam.

3 The role of non-Dravidian words across social and semantic domains

This section discusses the social associations and semantic domains particular to non-Dravidian words in Malayalam. After providing illustrative examples from Sanskrit, Arabic, Dutch, and Portuguese, I focus on motivations for using English-origin words in Malayalam, describing how a word's association with a particular language or not (i.e., whether or not it is an idioconstruction) corresponds to its meaning and use.

3.1 Sanskrit

Nayar (1991) discusses three groups of Sanskrit-origin words in Malayalam, those which supplement the vocabulary (Group 1), those which supplanted Dravidian-origin words (Group 2), and those which coexist and

“compete” with Dravidian-origin words (Group 3). The discussion in this section builds upon that categorization.

In Group 1 are words which deal with philosophy, religion, literature, the names of stars, and scientific/technical vocabulary, among others:¹³

(21) pu:ḍz ^h jam ‘zero’ [†]	(28) kap ^h am ‘phlegm’
(22) vja:karaṇam ‘grammar’	(29) ak ^h faram ‘letter’
(23) ḍi:rg ^h am ‘long, length marker (in Malayalam orthography)’	(30) ḡa:mam ‘noun’
(24) saṅk ^h ja ‘number, digit’	(31) art ^h am ‘meaning, significance’
(25) eṭama:nam ‘percentage’	(32) eare:a ‘discussion, debate’
(26) harik:jal ‘division (mathematics)’ [†] (noun: haraṇam)	(33) kaviṭa ‘poem’
(27) a:ea:ri ‘carpenter’ [†]	(34) ka ^h fa:jam ‘brewed medicine’
	(35) ḍz ^h o:ṭi ^h jam ‘astrology’

Though many of these words are culturally specific, they also are the only or by far most commonly used (non-English) words for these concepts.

In Group 2 are words which completely or almost completely replaced existing Dravidian words as the Standard or citation form for this concept. In cases where the Dravidian-origin words are also in use, I have included those words in parentheses.¹⁴ In many cases, the Dravidian-origin word has additional meanings (denotational and connotational), indicating that semantic specialization has likely occurred.

(36) a. ḍe:ham b. ʃari:ram ‘body’ (Dr. me:lə)	(37) muk ^h am ‘face’ (Dr. mo:r)
	(38) me:k ^h am

¹³ Daggered[†] examples are from Nayar (1991). Though I have included palatalized consonants (indicated by super- script /j/), palatalization is regional, and is not representative of pronunciation in North Malabar, for example.

¹⁴ As above, the daggered words are from Nayar (1991), who makes stronger claims that I do here about replacement: He does not include these Dravidian-origin alternates.

(39)	p:atram 'pot, vessel'† (Dr. tēat:i)	(45)	b ^h a:fa 'language'†
(40)	divasam 'day' (Dr. ṇa: ə)	(46)	a. de:ḷam b. fuṇṭ ^h i 'anger' (Dr. ve:rp:ə)
(41)	pakṣi 'bird (category label)'†	(47)	b ^h a:rja 'wife' (Dr. keṭ:ijol)
(42)	kaṭha 'story'	(48)	ma:tram 'only' (Dr.: expressed periphrastically)
(43)	ra:tri 'night' (Dr. ra:və, poetic)		'agreement, concord, consent'
(44)	eraḍ: ^h a		
(49)	saṭjam 'truth'		
(50)	sam:atam		

Unless indicated otherwise, the corresponding Dravidian-origin words to the ones listed above are not citation forms, or they have an additional meaning. For example, *ve:rp:ə* is the Dravidian counterpart to *de:ḷam* 'anger', which is of Sanskrit origin, and *ve:rp:ə* also means 'sweat, shudder.'

The Sanskrit-origin words in Group 3 have Dravidian counterparts in active use. Below are some examples, with the Sanskrit-origin word in (a) and the Dravidian-origin word in (b). In some cases, there are slightly different nuances in usage across the words, as shown below, but there is considerable variation across varieties.

(51)	a. ma:msam 'flesh' (Sansk.) b. iratē:i 'meat, beef' (Dravid.)†		'time (duration only)' (Dravid.)
(52)	a. hrḍejam 'heart' (Sansk.) b. ṇentēə 'heart, chest' (Dravid.)	(55)	a. ro:mam 'hair, fur' (Sansk.) b. muṭi 'hair on head' (Dravid.) c. majir 'pubic hair (profanity)' (Dravid.)†
(53)	a. vastram 'cloth, clothing' (Sansk.) b. ṭuṇi 'cloth (Dravid.)†	(56)	a. aṇṭarite:u 'died (respectful, human)' (Sansk.) b. marite:u 'died (respectful)' (Sansk.) c. tēat: ^h u
(54)	a. samajam 'time' (Sansk.) b. ṇe:ram		

‘died (disrespectful,
nonhuman)’ (Dravid.)
(57) a. ɳa:lɪke:ram

‘coconut’ (Sansk.)
b. t̪e:ŋ:a
‘coconut’ (Dravid.)

As seen above, when there are meaning differences, social connotations associated with the particular languages – as relevant for those who were constructing the Standard variety -- guide semantic specialization. For example, as use of Sanskrit is associated with the general process of Sanskritization, it follows that the Dravidian word for ‘meat, flesh’ would be more likely to be associated with meat that one eats than the Sanskrit-origin word. Similarly, the respectful word to refer to a death is Sanskrit-origin; using this word to describe what happened to a mosquito one swatted would be infelicitous, while the Dravidian-origin word would be perfectly fine in that context (note that *marit̪e:u* is also taboo for some speakers, and euphemisms like *po:ji* ‘went’ are often used). In other cases, like that of ‘coconut’, the difference in connotation, if any, is not noticeable. Further systematic research of some of these words might reveal robust patterns along etymological lines.

Sanskrit-origin words are commonly used across semantic domains in Malayalam. In some cases (i.e., Group 2) the Sanskrit-origin forms are less marked than Dravidian-origin words, and in other cases (i.e., Group 3), there is variation as to how interchangeable the words are, with the hegemonic status of Sanskrit guiding many of the semantic specializations. Especially for the culturally specific words in Group 1 and the words which have undergone semantic shift in Group 3, the social and semantic meanings are connected to their Sanskrit origin. However, all of the Sanskrit-origin words in this section are highly frequent (subjectively), and their use in everyday spoken Malayalam is unmarked.

3.2 Arabic

While some words with Arabic origins are related to trade, local governance, and legal matters, others (which likely started out in these domains) are used widely in general contexts. The examples below clearly relate to local governance:

(58) d̪zil:a
‘district’

(59) t̪a:lak
‘subsection of a district’

Besides using an English-origin word, these are the only words which are used to refer to the major regional districts of Kerala and their subdistricts respectively.

A second set of words started out as being related to the courts, and these words are still used in the context of legal proceedings (the only alternates are English-origin).

(60)	vak:i:l 'lawyer'	(61)	kara:r 'complaint'	(62)	ha:ḍẓr 'be present'

Both *kara:r* and *ha:ḍẓr* are used in non-legal contexts, though they are both somewhat marked as formal: *kara:r* more likely to be used to describe a serious complaint, as opposed to a child's complaint that they want more dessert, for example, and *ha:ḍẓr* is often used to indicate that a student is "present" at school.

The final set of words discussed here also can be traced back to the diplomatic and legal roles that Arabic played in Malayalam, but these words have lost all formal or legal connotation, and are perfectly unremarkable. In fact, it would not be surprising if these words, unlike *ṭa:lak*, whose word-final obstruent and government-specific meaning mark it as "Arabic," would go unnoticed by many Malayalees as being of Arabic origin:

(63)	kaṭ:ə 'letter'
(64)	ṭardẓama 'translation' (alt. ṭardẓima)
(65)	ma:pə 'apology'
(66)	ṭaj:a:r 'ready'

While there is a Dravidian-origin word for 'letter', *e.ɲuṭ:ə*, using *kaṭ:ə* does not seem to have a particular specialized meaning, social or otherwise, associated with it. As for the other words in this last group, *ṭardẓama* has a less-common Sanskrit-origin alternate *vivartṭanam*. While there is no exact alternate word for apology, one can communicate a similar meaning via asking for patience, *kṣama*, a Sanskrit-origin word. There does not seem to be an alternate to (66); *purapeḍuka* means 'to prepare' or 'leave for', but it is not really the same as *ṭaj:a:r* 'ready'. Whatever alternates there may be for this last set of words, they are either just as marked or less marked than their Arabic-origin counterparts. It could be that *ḍẓil:a*, for example, is associated with Arabic for speakers and is thus an idioconstruction, but the examples from (63) – (66) are certainly "well-behaved" cases of loanwords having undergone diaconstructional change over generations.

3.3 Portuguese and Dutch

Drawing from the heuristic from Nayar (1991) about words which supplement (Group 1), supplant (Group 2), or coexist with (Group 3) Dravidian words, Portuguese and Dutch words in Malayalam are mainly restricted to words for European items, and belong to Group 1. I include only one Dutch-origin word here because I was unable to trace the actual source of the other purported words of Dutch origin, or they are no longer in common use:

- (67) kak:u:sə
 ‘toilet’ (Dutch: kak *hœys* *kakhuis* (lit. ‘shit house’))

This word has gained semantic senses as it became entrenched in Malayalam; not only does it mean ‘toilet’, it is also a relatively unstigmatized term for bodily functions associated with a toilet (thus also being a Group 3 word, as it coexists and competes with Sanskrit- and Dravidian-origin words).

Portuguese words in Malayalam are much more widespread, as expected given the history of more sustained contact with and intrusion of the Portuguese in the region. Regardless, these words are mostly limited to particular items introduced by the Portuguese (Nayar’s Group 1). Below are some common Malayalam words of Portuguese origin, with the Malayalam pronunciation and gloss followed by a current-day Portuguese pronunciation¹⁵ and the word in Portuguese orthography.

- (68) kase:ra
 ‘chair’ (Portuguese: kədərə *cadeira*)
 (69) me:əa
 ‘table’ (Portuguese: mɛzɐ *mesa*)
 (70) a. alama:ri
 b. alama:ra
 ‘cabinet’ (Portuguese: ɐrməriu *armário*)
 (71) a. d̥zenalə
 b. d̥zena:la
 ‘window’ (Portuguese: ʒinɐlɐ *janela*)

As seen in (70) and (71), there have been some changes to the form of these words. The second form in each case – *alama:ra* and *d̥zena:la* -- are older

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¹⁵ Of course, the pronunciation of these words by those who came into contact with Malayalam-speakers could have been different; I make no claims about the sound correspondences into Malayalam; the current-day Portuguese pronunciations are listed as a reference for the reader.

forms, though they are still in use today, and, to my knowledge, have not undergone semantic change.

3.4 English

Similar to Sanskrit in Malayalam, English-origin words in Malayalam occur across semantic categories; they have supplemented the vocabulary, coexist with existing words, and, may potentially supplant words in some cases.

Below are words which refer to novel or culturally-specific objects and/or concepts, thus supplementing existing words in Malayalam:

- (72) bas:to:p:ə
‘bus stop’
- (73) kampjuṭar
‘computer’
- (74) d̥iḍzital
‘digital’
- (75) miksi
‘blender’
- (76) mobajl
‘mobile [phone]’
- (77) mo:ṭar
‘motor’
- (78) reḍi majiḍs
‘ready-mades’
- (79) ṭi:vi
‘TV, television’
- (80) ṭrawsar
‘trousers’

These words are somewhat analogous to the Portuguese loans, though the items to which they refer were not necessarily introduced by the British, or even from predominantly English-speaking countries. For some, such as *mobajl* or *reḍi majiḍs*, the item has a Western, foreign, or “new” association. For each word above, there is no clear non-English option without resorting to neologism (likely a Sanskritized compound) or perhaps a loan from another language (e.g., *ḍu:rəḍarfan*, a Hindi word for ‘television’ which is used to describe the so-named TV channels, not TVs themselves); using a non-English-origin option would be highly marked.

The fact that these words originate from English is not really part of their meaning, social or otherwise. When Malayalam-speakers discuss English words which they use in Malayalam, they often refer to words like the ones

in this section as examples of words which they consider to be part of Malayalam, even though they are identifiably of English origin.

3.4.1 Semantic specialization

Some English-origin words which have existing semantic “competitors” in Malayalam have undergone (sometimes partial) semantic specialization. For the following section’s examples, the divergent meanings associated with an English-origin word and its alternate do not have to do with Westernness, nor does use of the English-origin word mark the speaker as someone who “doesn’t know Malayalam.” These words are therefore analogous to the “Group 1” words, with the crucial difference that they do not refer to novel items or concepts.

One example came from my 2016 fieldwork in central Kerala: In (81), the English-origin word (a) refers to smaller plates which are used for snacks or add-ons, while its alternate (b) is used for large plates which would have a main meal on them.¹⁶

- (81) a.   *plɛ:tə*
               ‘(small, side) plate’ (Eng. plate)
        b.   *kiŋ:am*
               ‘(large, often metal) plate’

The association between the side-plate and the form *plɛ:tə* is not conventionalized for all speakers, but it was widespread among those I spoke to in the Thrissur area; this could be a regional variant or a change in progress.

Another set of examples comes from Kala (1977), who listed the English-origin word in (82a) as being associated with the speech of younger people, and (82b) as being associated with the speech of older people (or speech directed to older people).

- (82) a. *stad:ə*
               ‘stud/post of earring’ (Eng. stud)
        b. *kam:alə*
               ‘earring’

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¹⁶ Some older speakers use a Portuguese-origin word for plate: *piɲa:lɐm*. This seems to be relatively limited, and to refer to a particular type of plate with porcelain or enamel coating; the other two forms in (81) are used by these speakers as well.

If we take a traditional apparent-time approach, we might expect from Kala's description of the state of affairs in the 1970s that the English-origin forms would supplant the Malayalam-origin form (see also the discussion of *ʃa:pə* in Section 2.4.2). However, both forms persist today, with *stad:ə* being used more specifically to refer to the post of an earring.

For (82) and (81), the slightly different meaning of the English-origin word is not connected with these words being identified or otherwise labeled as “English.” Even (and especially) for speakers who use *ple:tə* and *kiŋ:am* interchangeably, there is nothing about the items which would go on a *ple:tə* which are particularly associated with the British or Westernness/foreignness. For *stad:ə*, it is clear that the word has taken on a meaning in Malayalam that it may not have in many Englishes, which is to refer to the post of an earring; it is a hypernym of *kam:alə* in addition to being a name for a part of a *kam:alə*. From a DCxG perspective, these English-origin words can be thought of as diaconstructions, not having a language-specific association.

3.4.2 Semantic specialization with Western connotation

Below are English-origin words which do have non-English-origin counterparts, but a fairly conventionalized semantic specialization has taken place; the meanings associated with the English-origin words have a Western connotation:

- (83) a. *vaiɖjan*
       ‘doctor’ (traditional, often Ayurvedic)
- b. *ɖo:kʈar* (alt. *ɖo:kʈar*)
       ‘doctor’ (practicing ‘English’ or Western medicine)
- 84. a. *tʃerup:ə*
       ‘sandal’
- b. *ʃu:sə*
       ‘shoes’ (covered, Western-style footwear, often formal)
- (85) a. *viʌk:ə*
       ‘lamp’ (oil, maybe kerosene)
- b. *lait:ə*
       ‘light’ (electric light)

As with the Sanskrit-origin words, there is (likely patterned, likely social) variation in the degree to which the English-origin word really refers to a different object as compared to the alternative. While the examples above are relatively stable, a potential case of semantic specialization in progress is in (86):

- (86) a. *viɾi* or *viɾip:ə*

‘bedsheet’ (lit. ‘spread’ as a noun)

b. *bedci:tə*

‘bedsheet’ (more likely Western-style fabric)

bedci:tə is limited in its use (especially compared to the other examples), though it is commonly seen on signs in stores, particularly in reference to Western-style bedding sets (fitted sheet, top sheet, pillowcases). *viri* can refer to a tablecloth, for example, or a cloth put on a sofa, so this is a likely pair to undergo semantic specialization, if it has not already in some contexts.

(87) is an example of an English-origin word supplanting its semantically specific alternate; for example, it is common to hear someone say (87a), when they could have said (87b):

- (87) a.   *a:jurve:da*   *do:ktare*   *kaŋdo*
                  Ayurveda   doctor.ACC   saw.Q
                  ‘Did you see an Ayurveda doctor?’
       b.   *vaidjane*   *kaŋdo*
                  Ayurveda.doctor.ACC   saw.Q
                  ‘Did you see an Ayurveda doctor?’

In this case, *do:ktar* is modified with *a:jurve:da*, as opposed to using the term *vaidjan*. This also patterns with other types of doctors, such as *ho:mijo do:ktar* ‘homeopathy doctor,’ though the very culturally specific term for a doctor who cures poisonous bites (like snakebites), is called a *vefavaidjan* ‘poison-doctor’; to my knowledge, there is not yet a term *vefado:ktar*.

Again, more systematic investigation into these words is necessary to make claims about the extent and trajectory of these ongoing semantic changes. However, the perceived Englishness of the words has differing effects. In the case of *bedci:tə*, foreignness is part of the meaning, while in the case of *do:ktar*, the foreign association is being lost, and *do:ktar* is available to be modified to specify the type of doctor. Put in DCxG terms, *do:ktar* has undergone diasystematic change, that is, its language origin is not being used by speakers to guide its semantic shift. However, *bedci:tə* retains its English association; its origin contributes to how it is used, making it an idioconstruction. Semantic change is occurring in each case, but taking a DCxG approach can capture the role of the language-specificity of the construction, as well as providing a post-hoc explanation for the direction of semantic change.

3.4.3 Motivations for using English-origin words

Another way to categorize English-origin words in Malayalam is to examine the motivations for their use; for the words in this section, there are clear social motivations for use of an English-origin word. In most cases, this has to do with relative neutrality of the English-origin word. For example, Kala (1977) cites the avoidance of taboo language as a motivation for using English words; some examples from her paper are below:

- (88) pi:rijaḍṣ
‘menstruation’ (Eng. ‘periods’)
(89) brestə
‘breast’

Kala reports that non-English terms are still used, but the English-origin terms are deemed more appropriate for public conversation.¹⁷

A more recent case in which the English term is more neutral than an alternate is shown in (90); the (b) example, which is a Sanskrit-origin word, means ‘corpse’ as well, but it has taken on a pejorative valence is now considered profane.

- (90) a. dedbo:ḍi
‘corpse’ (lit. ‘dead-body’)
b. eavam
‘corpse (profanity)’

The English-origin term, *dead-body*, which does not have the profane connotation, is used to avoid the now-taboo Sanskrit-origin word.

Another motivation for borrowing which is underpinned by the relative social neutrality of English is when English-origin words are used for kinship terms or as a replacement for other socially-indexing words. As in many languages, kinship terms in Malayalam vary widely depending upon region and socio-ethnic group. In addition, some kinship terms have very different meaning across communities. As such, using English terms allows for mutual-intelligibility, avoidance of social indexing, as well as a performance of a more modern and egalitarian alignment. Kala (1977) and Srinivas (1989) discuss examples of this in detail, and it is also described in Mesthrie (1990) for South African Indian English.

As much has been written about kinship terms and their complexities in Malayalam, I give three quick sets of examples here. The words for ‘uncle’ and ‘aunt’ vary considerably across communities, with patrilineal and matrilineal communities having very different systems. In conversation

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¹⁷ A reviewer reports that *menses* is also commonly used.

across communities, therefore, speakers will often say (91) and (92), which does not index their identity or potentially confuse their interlocutors.

- (91) am:e:de sistar
‘mother’s sister’¹⁸
- (92) am:e:de braṭar
‘mother’s brother’

The words for older and younger sibling are also socially indexing: Terms just for ‘older sister’ include *tēe:tei*, *e:ṭaṭ:i*, *ak:a*, and *o:po:l*, among others. Using ‘sister’ avoids this; when the relative age of the aunt becomes relevant, speakers will often say *am:e:de mu:ṭ:ə sistar* ‘mother’s oldest sister,’ even though they may have an alternate way within their community or family to specify this.

Another instance in which using English aids mutual-intelligibility is when there are kinship terms which have different meanings across communities. Kala mentions the example of *marumakan*, which is used in many communities to describe one’s daughter’s son; this term also can mean ‘nephew,’ ‘son of one’s sister,’ or ‘male relative one generation or more below oneself who is related via his mother’s side.’ Having a word which refers to both ‘nephew’ and ‘son-in-law’ can lead to miscommunication, and using nephew or son-in-law can be preferable to a Malayalam circumlocution explaining the exact relationship.

Finally, English words also supplement existing kinship terms. The English-origin word ‘cousin’ is used to describe the child of one’s parent’s sibling without indicating gender or relative age; in addition, I have not found a variety of Malayalam which differentiates between the terms used to describe siblings and to describe parent’s sibling’s children, which ‘cousin’ does. Indeed, the terms ‘cousin-brother’ and ‘cousin-sister,’ innovations particular to Indian English, are in wide use among Malayalam-speakers who would like to indicate the gender but not the relative age of their cousins.

A general motivation for borrowing which is related to many of the examples in this subsection is avoidance of Sanskrit – one could use an age-neutral Sanskrit-origin term *saho:ḍari* for ‘sister’, for example, but sister is preferred. This was discussed in Section 2.4 as it relates to (de)Sanskritization in South India (Srinivas 1989). While there were no organized efforts to rid Malayalam of Sanskrit-origin words as there was for Tamil, the labeling of some words (and, crucially, not others) as being

¹⁸ Note that not all speakers use *am:a* for ‘mother’; many use English-origin *mam:i* (Eng. *Mummy*).

socially marked is a motivator for the use of English words. In this case, it is the non-English-origin words which are marked, not the English-origin words, and in many cases the origin of these marked words is Sanskrit. As such, the effect is that English-origin words are replacing Sanskrit-origin words. Though these replacements are not overtly stated as ‘replacing a Sanskrit word with an English one,’ this is nonetheless language change which is being shaped by etymology. Having language labels as part of constructions, therefore, is a crucial part of explaining this phenomenon.

3.4.4 English-origin words requiring further explanation

English-origin words are rampant in Malayalam; for the examples above, we can cite semantic specialization or social motivations for the use of these words. In this section, I list some words for which I do not have any such explanation or analysis. This is not to say that no explanation exists; more systematic work on English-origin words in Malayalam will have to address these types of examples.

Below, the English-origin word (in the (a) examples) is paired with its counterpart(s). These words all have very high subjective frequency, though the English-origin words seem to be more common in spoken varieties than in written sources.

- (93) a. vət:tə
‘weight’
b. k^hanam
‘weight’
c. b^ha:ram
‘weight, burden’
d. t̪u:k:am
‘weight, (scale)’
- (94) a. ka|arə
‘color’
b. ɳiram
‘color’
- (95) a. ru:mə
‘room’
b. muri
‘room’
- (96) a. beɖ:ə
‘bed’
b. kiɖak:a
‘bed’

- (97) a. ki:
       ‘key’
       b. ʈa:ko:lə
       ‘key’
       tea:vi
       ‘key’
- (98) a. leftə
       ‘left’
       b. eʈa:ə
       ‘left’
- (99) a. saidə
       ‘side’
       b. vacam
       ‘side’

For present purposes, the apparent interchangeability of these words with their (very common, also unmarked) non-English-origin counterparts is illustrative of the hybrid nature of Malayalam, as well as potential evidence that their English origin is not very salient or relevant to speakers.

3.5 Interim summary: Word origins and meaning

So far, we have seen how the history of language contact in Malayalam has led to differences in the extent of word transfer, and we see differences in the effect of these words on the vocabulary in Malayalam which can be attributed to history of language contact as well.

Non-Dravidian words in Malayalam can be analyzed as being more or less associated with their particular language of origin. In some cases, the use of non-Dravidian words is context specific (such as with kinship terms, where the English-origin words are often used outside of one’s socio-ethnic group); this can be seen as a type of *koineization* or dialect-leveling. In other cases, when the non-Dravidian word exists along with an alternate, semantic specialization occurs, which may or may not be related to the “Englishiness” or “Sanskritness” of the word.

Unlike English- and Sanskrit-origin words, Arabic-, Portuguese-, and Dutch-origin words do not actively participate in the dynamics of semantic change. The Arabic, Portuguese, and Dutch words in Malayalam may be identifiable by some as being non-Dravidian in nature, but these words mostly are integrated into the language and their origins have been bleached. Because this is true of some Sanskrit- and English-origin words as well, it is not sufficient to say that Arabic, Portuguese, and Dutch words are fully nativized while English and Sanskrit words are not; this demonstrates the benefit of constructs such as idioconstructions and

diaconstructions in analyses of lexical semantics in the non-Dravidian parts of Malayalam.

4 Heterogeneity in Malayalam phonology

The previous section laid out some examples which showed that thinking about words as being idioconstructions or diaconstructions helps to categorize and account for semantic (non)shifts in loanword pairs. Thusfar, we have focused more on the social and semantic meanings associated with words with different etymologies. However, constructions are tightly mapped form-meaning pairs, and speakers use not only meaning to associate words with particular languages or varieties, but also form. In this section, I discuss some contact-based heterogeneity in Malayalam sounds and syllable structure, which is noticed and exploited by Malayalam speakers as they use the emergent subpatterns in their language.

4.1 Heterogeneity in Sounds

I focus in this section on aspirated stops, /f/, and /æ/, which are non-Dravidian elements in Malayalam. Aspirated stops are quite marginal and not consistently produced in most contemporary varieties (Namboodiripad & Garellek 2017; Namboodiripad, U. 1989). However, they remain in the orthography, and are a signifier of a formal variety; speakers who do not usually use aspirated stops will pronounce them when reading a passage aloud, or shifting into a more formal register. The (b) examples below show how words with orthographic aspiration (shown in the (a) examples) are more typically pronounced:

(100) a. muk^ham
b. mugam
'face'

(101) a. me:k^ham
b. me:gam
'cloud'

(102) a. juḍ:^ham
b. juḍ:am
'war'

(103) a. ɕraḍ:^ha
b. ɕraḍ:a
'attention'

(104) a. fuṇṭ^hi
b. fuṇḍi

- ‘anger’
 (105) a. la:b^ham
       b. la:bam
       ‘gain, profit’

In a DCxG framework, we can say that aspiration is a Phonological Language Marker (Höder 2012) of Sanskrit, more formal or superstandard¹⁹ Malayalam, and Sanskritized ethnolects: Aspiration is available both implicitly and explicitly as a socially meaningful cue which marks aspirated words as idioconstructions, that is, as being language-/variety-specific.

/f/ interacts in an interesting way with the aspirated stop series; /f/ is found in English- and Arabic-origin words; English-origin examples can be found in (106):

- (106) a. fo:ŋə
       ‘phone’
       b. gaɭfə
       ‘gulf’
       c. frentə
       ‘friend’

However, it has also spread to replace /b^h/ in some cases:

- (107) a. b^ha:rja
       ‘wife’ (formal, Standard)
       b. ba:rja
       ‘wife’ (unmarked)
       c. fa:rja
       ‘wife’ (novel variant)
 (108) a. b^ha:ʃa
       ‘language’ (formal, Standard)
       b. ba:ʃa
       ‘language’ (unmarked)
       c. fa:ʃa
       ‘language’ (novel variant)

In the words above, /b^h/ is the formal variant and the pronunciation reflected in the orthography. The unaspirated variant is the most common and

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¹⁹ I use this term to draw a comparison between production of released /t/ by speakers of American English as described in Bucholtz (2001) with the present discussion of aspiration, though the social contexts are not analogous.

socially unmarked pronunciation, and /f/ is the novel variant, in which a non-Dravidian and non-Sanskrit sound is found on a Sanskrit-origin word.

While determining the motivation for this variant is beyond the scope of this paper,²⁰ we can rule out influence from orthography; the Malayalam letter for /ph/ is used to represent words with /f/ in the orthography; the written form of the words above would have the letter representing /b^h/. It could be that speakers have a notion of the formal variant with aspiration, and the /f/ pronunciation could be a hypercorrection. The fact that the /f/ variant is highly limited, and in some cases stigmatized, provides some support for this explanation. Regardless, this is evidence that the non-Dravidian sound /f/ is integrated enough into Malayalam that it is available for speakers to incorporate into highly frequent words.

In some contexts, nativization results in diasystematic change, that is, loanwords becoming less distinguishable from non-loanwords in terms of perception and phonological form. An example of this is the crosslinguistically commonplace strategy of adapting /f/ using /p/, /p^h/, /v/, or /h/.²¹ As shown here, the situation in Malayalam is different, with the novel sound spreading to established words.

Moving to vowels, /æ/ is categorized as non-native (Asher & Kumari 1997:421), and it seems to be limited to English-origin words in most varieties of Malayalam. Below are examples of English-origin words with the vowel /æ/.

- (109) bæŋgə
      ‘bank’
- (110) bægə
      ‘bag’
- (111) tomæto
      ‘tomato’
- (112) skwæʃə
      ‘squash’ (the drink)
- (113) fæʃən
      ‘fashion’

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²⁰ Cheerangote (2012) discusses some historical adaptation of aspiration to /f/ in Mappila Malayalam, the variety spoken by Malayalee Muslims. This is likely one source of this variant, though this particular change seems to be more widespread, so it may not be the whole story.

²¹ Examples include Korean (Park & de Jong 2008), Japanese (Kay 1995), Hawaiian (Adler 2004), Vietnamese (Alves 2009), and Gurindji (McConvell 2009).

In Malayalam orthography, the vowel for each of these words corresponds to /a:/, as there is no way to represent /æ/. These words could have been incorporated into Malayalam via /a:/, and some people do use the /a:/ vowel for *bag* and *bank*. This alternation is discussed in Asher & Kumari (1997:421), though the sources of this variation remain unexplored. However, *tomato*, which has not been mentioned elsewhere in the literature, is consistently pronounced with /æ/, as are *squash* and *fashion*.

To my knowledge, /æ/ is not present in UK or US English variants of *tomato* and *squash*; this seems to be an innovation whereby /æ/ is labeled a Phonological Language Marker of English, and used in these English-origin words.

4.2 Heterogeneity in syllable structure

‘The Dravidian syllable,’ as discussed in Mohanan (1989), prohibits syllabic consonants, and consonant sequences are allowed only if they are geminates or homorganic clusters, the latter of which means that the two consonants have the same manner of articulation, though not the same place of articulation. Mohanan (1989) also states that Dravidian-origin syllables are CV in Malayalam, and that codas are prohibited. Later work (Asher & Kumari 1997, Cyran 2001, Namboodiripad, Garellek, & Baković 2015, in prep.) has stated that obstruent codas are not found; liquids and nasals are available to be codas. ‘The Sanskrit syllable’ (Mohanan 1989), on the other hand, allows complex onsets and codas, and syllabic consonants as well.

While some adaptation has taken place of Sanskrit words into Malayalam, the syllable structure nonetheless remains different across Dravidian- and Sanskrit-origin words, to the extent that speakers can often identify which words are Sanskrit-origin. For example, the word for ‘sound’ in (114) below, has a coda /b/ and adjacent /bq/, marking it to speakers as being a Sanskrit word:

(114) cabḍam
‘sound’

Obstruent codas and aspiration are both associated with Sanskrit. However, a hypothetical process analogous to (de)aspiration – in which speakers might not produce coda consonants or may assimilate them into the adjacent consonant – based on register, or performance of a variety associated with a particular identity, has not been described. More systematic investigations could reveal such patterns, and frequency likely plays a role, but it could also be that this is a language-associated sub-pattern which does not have metapragmatic salience for speakers.

Perhaps aided by existing heterogeneity from Sanskrit-origin words, English-origin words also can have complex clusters:

- (115) ga|fə
‘Gulf’ (referring to the Gulf countries)

ga|fə is of particular note because it contains a heterorganic cluster with the non-Dravidian sound /f/.

The English-origin examples below, from Namboodiripad, Garellek, & Baković (2015, in prep), contain geminates which are not found in Dravidian:

- (116) fɪ:fə
‘fish’
(117) k|ab:ə
‘club’

While both consonants appear as singletons, neither /f:/ nor /b:/ is found in Dravidian; apart from English-origin words, /b:/ is found in the Hindi-Urdu-origin word *qab:a* ‘container’. /f:/ is not found at all (Asher & Kumari 1997), though the acoustically similar /ɛ:/ is; speakers could have adapted *fɪ:fə* as *fɪɛ:ə*, and, indeed, some pronunciations of the /f:/ are a little palatalized.

However, the crucial observation here is that /f:/ and /b:/ are innovative in Malayalam and not found elsewhere in English; the novel geminate forms preserve minimal word requirements²² in Malayalam (Namboodiripad, Garellek, & Baković 2015, in prep). As such, these words are Dravidian-like in their overall structure, but innovative in their phonotactics.

5 Socio-cognitively motivated non-diasystematic change

The hegemonic status of English over the past 30 years, reinforced by socio-historical factors, has led to phonological patterns in English-origin words which are increasingly distinct from Dravidian, even as English-origin words are increasingly used by Malayalam-speakers. Increased contact, in this context, does not uniformly lead to increased nativization (moving from periphery into core, or from diaconstructions to idioconstructions), but

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²² Malayalam words have been described as minimally bimoraic (Mohan 1989); for discussion of minimal word requirements, see Downing (2006)

rather, it leads to increased heterogeneity in wordforms, as speakers use forms which sound more like English: Non-diasystematic change.

I use the term ‘socio-cognitive’ here to highlight the tight relationship between what are typically considered ‘social factors’, such as language ideologies and attitudes, and ‘cognitive factors’ such as language use, processing, and perception over the lifespan. Language ideology and language policy (as discussed in Section 2.4) affect the amount and extent of English use, and previous research has shown that top-down categorization affects bottom-up perception (Niedzielski 1999; Hay, Nolan, & Drager 2006; et alia). As these factors feed into each other and are indeed inextricable, they must be considered together.

Kala (1977) gives two forms for the word ‘glass’ in Malayalam: she notes that older speakers say *kalaas* /ka|a:sə/, while younger speakers say *klaas* /k|a:sə/.²³ I have added from my data two additional forms of ‘glass’, and the four variants are listed below, ordered from older forms to more recent forms:

- (118) a. ka|a:sə
b. k|a:sə
c. g|a:sə
d. g|a:s
‘glass’

Currently, instances of *kalaas* are rare, and, though Dravidian does not have initial voiced stops (as reflected in the first two forms), /g|a:sə/ is used widely.²⁴

Another documented (via dictionaries) example of non-diasystematic change is listed in (119).

- (119) a. a:pi:sə
‘office’ (older variant)
b. o:fi:sə
‘office’ (newer variant)

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²³ The italicized portion is her transliteration; the transcription is mine.

²⁴ Initial clusters are allowed in Dravidian, though these are thought to have come from historical variants with vowels in between the clusters, as seen in (i):

- (i) a. pi|a:və
‘jackfruit tree’ (older variant)
b. p|a:və
‘jackfruit tree’ (newer variant)

The newer form, *o:fi:sə*, is more similar to English ‘office,’ and it has the non-Dravidian /f/. Within a DCxG framework, *o:fi:sə* and *glɑ:s* are both examples of non-diasystematic change. The newer variants are more similar to English and more different from Dravidian than the older variants. Comparing these examples to the Portuguese loanwords discussed earlier and reproduced in (120) and (121) is illustrative; while the exact forms which were used by the Portuguese are unknown, the older variants in Malayalam are more similar to the current Portuguese pronunciations.

(120) Portuguese: /*ərməriu*/ *armário*

a. *alama:ra*

‘cabinet’ (older variant)

b. *alama:ri*

‘cabinet’ (newer variant)

(121) Portuguese: /*ʒineɾə*/ *janela*

a. *ḍzena:la*

‘window’ (older variant)

b. *ḍzenalə*

‘window’ (newer variant)

In the usual case, as seen in examples from Sanskrit aspiration and Portuguese/Dutch, increased entrenchment (e.g., Backus 2013) leads to diasystematic change. In the case of English and Malayalam, increased exposure to English in combination with positive attitudes towards the language interact, resulting in a general pattern towards more English-like wordforms in some cases.

6 Word-final schwa as a Phonological Language Marker of Malayalam

The examples in this chapter so far have shown how non-Dravidian sounds and syllable structures have been preserved or incorporated into non-Dravidian words in Malayalam. Here, I show how a particular type of variation in the degree of phonological adaptation has led to word-final schwa as a Phonological Language Marker of Malayalam.

Non-nasal and non-liquid codas are not found in word-final position in Malayalam (Cyran 2001). As may have been evident from the English-origin examples elsewhere in this chapter, word-final schwa is used to ‘repair’ illicit word-final obstruents. This word-final schwa is also called an ‘enunciative vowel’ (Namboodiripad & Garellek 2016, Wittmer 2019); it appears after word-final geminates and homorganic clusters elsewhere in

Malayalam, and these enunciative vowels are found throughout Dravidian (Valentine 1976).

There is a strong association between word-final schwa and Malayalam; adding a schwa to the end of a word is a common way to perform ‘Mock’ Malayalam, and, especially, ‘Mock’ Malayalee English.

In this section, I discuss two examples of word pairs in which the form with a schwa was labeled by speakers as being “Malayalam” while the word without a schwa was labeled as being “English”.

In the first example, either form would be licit in Malayalam, as the word-final consonant is a liquid:

- (122) a. sku:lə
          ‘school’ (labeled by speakers as “Malayalam”)
       b. sku:l
          ‘school’ (labeled by speakers as “English”)

Crucially, both variants are used widely (and seemingly interchangeably) in written and spoken contexts of varying formality. For example, both variants appeared (in Malayalam orthography) on a single sign for a school in a medium-sized town in central Kerala, which is presumably a formal context. In addition, any prosodic factors which might influence the pronunciation of this schwa are not relevant here, while prosodic factors would also be relevant in spoken contexts (Wittmer 2019).

The second example is similar, except the form that was labeled “English” does not meet the minimal length requirement for Malayalam words, and it contains a word-final consonant which is not found in Dravidian:

- (123) a. bra:fə
          ‘[tooth]brush’ (labeled by speakers as “Malayalam”)
       b. bra:f
          ‘[tooth]brush’ (labeled by speakers as “English”)

The “Malayalam” form has a higher subjective frequency relative to its alternate; this form also contains the innovative geminate /ʃ:/ discussed in the previous section. However, it meets the minimal length requirement, and it has the characteristic word-final schwa. Though the “English” form is more divergent, as described earlier, it is used in spoken Malayalam. I also encountered this form at a market in the village of Cherpu, in central Kerala; it was written in Malayalam orthography, as a printed label on a display of toothbrushes. While there may be some residents of the area who

are not fluent in Malayalam (recent migrants from other parts of India), writing ‘brush’ in Malayalam orthography cannot have been for the benefit of these individuals. It is highly unlikely, if not impossible, that anyone would be able to read Malayalam script (which is not used by any other language) but not know that *braf:ə* refer to a brush. Most likely, this was produced by a Malayalam-dominant speaker who has a variant *braf* in their linguistic repertoire.

In order to unpack this a bit, here are some examples of English-origin words which have the enunciative word-final schwa (reproduced from previous examples):

- (124) p|e:tə
‘(small, side) plate’
- (125) stad:ə
‘stud/post of earring’
- (126) bedəi:tə
‘bedsheet’
- (127) brestə
‘breast’
- (128) ve:tə
‘weight’
- (129) leftə
‘left’

Malayalam speakers know that /-ə/ is not present in the “English” versions of these words, through familiarity with different varieties of English, written and spoken. Due to exposure to other Indian languages, the association between /-ə/ and Dravidian languages is also salient. As such, a sort of informal comparative method leads speakers to label English-origin words ending in schwa as being “Malayalam” (or adapted), while English-origin words not ending in schwa are “English” (or non-adapted). We can think of this “informal comparative method” as a process by which Phonological Language Markers emerge.

This could also be nascent non-diasystematic change; in these cases, there is an association between a more Malayalam-like wordform and a word belonging to Malayalam. Because the forms with schwa and the forms without co-exist, it could be that they undergo semantic specialization, as with English-Dravidian and Sanskrit-Dravidian pairs elsewhere in the language. Or, the non-schwa pronunciations could be associated with a particular social meaning, perhaps representing a younger, more urban, and more modern speaker who is oriented towards English and away from Malayalam – there is some anecdotal evidence this is already happening. In both of these cases, I would consider the forms to be idioconstructions,

associated with a particular language or variety. A final possibility is diasystematic change: the forms could be truly interchangeable and not associated with a particular language or language-specific social or semantic meaning, or the forms without schwa could disappear, making the coexistence of schwa and non-schwa forms simply a temporary blip in the history of the language.

7 Malayalam as a hybrid language

This chapter showed how implicit and explicit notions of language-specificity in constructions are relevant to understanding some contact phenomena in Malayalam. Social and semantic meanings are systematically mapped on to Sanskrit- and English-origin words. Despite non-Dravidian words having a high subjective frequency and being used over generations, some behave as idioconstructions, as they are associated with the source language in their form and/or meaning, while others behave like diaconstructions, and their word origin is not relevant for their use.

There is also evidence for some non-diasystematic change in Malayalam phonology; constructions gain features associated with their word origin, and move from being language-non-specific diaconstructions to language-specific idioconstructions. Increased use does not necessarily lead to diasystematic change; here, we saw how increased use combined with increased awareness of and education in English can lead to preservation or reintroduction of non-Dravidian patterns. Future work should examine the factors which lead to (non)diasystematic change.

In addition to considerable additions to the vocabulary, across Malayalam, language contact has led to innovative phonological subpatterns. This observation is somewhat analogous to investigations of the conditions under which language contact leads to morphosyntactic simplification and the circumstances leading to morphosyntactic complexification (Wray & Grace 2007; Meakins et al. 2019; Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2017). Approaches which conflate heterogeneous subpatterns with language boundaries might consider much of the linguistic behavior of Malayalam speakers to be code-switching, as opposed to a holistic multilingual language practice – in these approaches, the fact that speakers are “violating” the rules of their language is seen as evidence that a switch is being made (e.g., Myers-Scotton 1997). In DCxG, distinguishing between code-switching and borrowing is not a barrier to linguistic analysis; community-level conventions guide which idioconstructions are inappropriate in a particular context. This more accurately captures how Malayalam-speakers see their language: English words are a part of Malayalam.

As shown here and elsewhere in this volume, assumptions about word origin do play a role in the inferences speakers make about how a word is pronounced, what it means, and the social meaning associated with its use. DCxG provides a viable way of analyzing subpatterns, motivating changes in how words are analyzed, accounting for metalinguistic awareness of language boundaries, which is part of the lexical knowledge speakers have. This approach allows for a unified analysis of high- contact and low-contact languages, and, as such, this framework is a natural analytic companion to the view that high contact languages are not fundamentally different from other languages (Mufwene 2000, Thomason 2001).

As demonstrated in the sociolinguistic interviews in Section 1.2, speakers are aware of contact-based heterogeneity in Malayalam. With the considerable contact-induced changes in the language from English, some of which have been described in this chapter, there is renewed focus and concern about “Pure” Malayalam. This is also a deeply problematic and common comment I receive from linguist colleagues when presenting about language contact in Malayalam: “What is “Pure” Malayalam though? Can’t we just find speakers somewhere who know “only” Malayalam?”

From a DCxG approach, “Pure” Malayalam would only exist if speakers suddenly had no conception of where subpatterns and words come from in their language. This is not the case for Malayalam-speakers, and it is not likely to be the case for future generations of Malayalees. “Pure” Malayalam is non-existent from the perspective of linguistic analysis, and, as of now, it seems to be non-existent or in the process of extreme change from the perspective of many speakers.

As I was reminded by an anonymous reviewer, there is a notion among Malayalees of *pacca* /pat̪eːa/ Malayalam (lit. ‘green, fresh, unripe, uncooked’ Malayalam). This term does have a “pure” connotation, though, crucially, that “pureness” is not associated with using only Dravidian forms. Analogous to the discussion of “Hybrid Conversational Malayalam” in Kala (1977), it seems to be associated with using an appropriately balanced register, not relying too much on infrequent words, where infrequent is context-dependent.²⁵ Sanskrit-influenced Malayalam is in some contexts seen as “good” Malayalam, as it is closer to the written standard;²⁶ this is observed in Kala (1977), and the association persists somewhat today.

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²⁵ The dynamic ideologies surrounding who gets categorized as speaking *pacca Malayalam* deserves further inquiry.

²⁶ Though speaking in a manner that is too close to the newspaper language (*accadibhasha* /at̪eːat̪ib̪haːʃa/ ‘print language’) sounds infelicitous.

Thinking more about the interaction between ideologies of contact, pureness, and language change, these observations taken together predict that variation in metalinguistic awareness of language boundaries should (at least partially) explain geographical and social differences in the direction of language change.

Most importantly, it is not up to linguists to decide what counts as “Malayalam;” what counts as “Malayalam” is an ever-moving target which speakers themselves have and will continue to define and redefine, however heterogeneous those subpatterns may be. Historically, via Sanskrit, and currently, via English, non-Dravidian material has been considered to be Malayalam by speakers, while at the same time being held somewhat separate. This phenomenon is not unique to Malayalam; I would argue it occurs to different degrees in all languages. However, the examples in this chapter show that any linguistic framework used to describe the vocabulary and phonology in a high-contact language like Malayalam must capture its hybrid nature.

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