

Review

Languages in Contact 2010

Piotr P. Chruszczewski, Zdzisław Wąsik (eds.)

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Contact linguistics has traditionally dealt with the influence various languages have on one another when speakers of two or more languages and milieus interact. Such studies have usually dealt with comparative studies into the phonology, morphology and syntax of the languages in contact. Nowadays, research into this area has been supplemented with the findings offered by the studies of micro- and macrolinguistics, including studies of the sociological factors which influence speakers when switching between various categories, including the language shifts and levels represented by the languages.

The 2010 volume of *Languages in Contact* contains 17 research papers which touch upon such issues as the status of languages, substrate and superstrate languages and cultural shifts along with various factors involved. They offer both traditional and new approaches that draw on comparative linguistics, anthropological linguistics, evolution of languages and questions of multilingualism. The book contains an extensive collection of research papers dealing with various issues, such as a general introduction to contact linguistics (Ronald Kim), historical issues, examples and

outcomes in contact situations (Elżbieta Mańczak-Wohlfeld, Dariusz Piwowarczyk, Steven Dewsbury, Jerzy Welna, Marta Dąbrowska), examples of methodological approaches to contact (Witold Mańczak), social factors in contact situations (Jacek Mianowski, Agnieszka Stępkowska, Marco Tamburelli, Marcin Zabawa) as well as studies into phonology and morphology in contact situations (Stanisław Prędoła, Andrei Avram, Władysław Cichoński, Louise Beaulieu, Joanna Janecka, Anna Wojtyś, Łukasz Stolarski), and examples of corpus studies (Marcin Bęćłowski, Marcin Zabawa).

In this volume, the paper by Ronald I. Kim Uriel: *Weinreich and the birth of modern contact linguistics* presents Weinreich's overall contribution to research into language contact and extends that information beyond the milestone book *Languages in Contact*. It is stressed that Weinreich's research is rooted in the social context of language, as only an overview of such factors can offer a better understanding of the mechanisms and causes of language change. Other works than those by Weinreich are referred to in order to indicate the actual considerations of every possible relevant cultural factor shaping speech communities and contact situations.

The paper by Elżbieta Mańczak-Wohlfeld: *The nature of English as a foreign language in Poland* investigates the outcome of the spread of English, which is demonstrated by the formation of various circles of linguistic competence of the speakers. The phonetic and lexicogrammatical features of such a spread are detailed, while stressing the innovation and strategies employed in new languages by the varieties of New English spoken by non-native speakers.

Stephen Dewsbury's paper, *Vanishing Cheshire dialect words* explores the opposite processes of the vanishing and perseverance of local dialect words. On one hand, the Cheshire variety in the north-west midlands of England is being affected by standardization under the influence of Standard English, on the other, reasons are mentioned that can cause others to remain in use.

Jerzy Welna's paper *Good: ill and healthy: ill. The fates of a Scandinavian loanword in Medieval English* researches language contacts between English and the language of the Vikings throughout the Middle Ages. The semantics of borrowings are examined and various conclusions regarding the evolution of the meaning of the words 'healthy' and 'ill' are illustrated by numerous examples.

Two of the papers deal with a discussion of the processes and outcomes of contact between languages. Dariusz Piwowarczyk in *Language contact and language death in Ancient Italy: The case of Oscan* describes language contact, language variation

and the sociolinguistic aspects of a dead, fragmentarily-attested, arcane language. Marco Tamburelli in *The vanishing languages of Italy: Diglossia, bilingualism, and language shift* presents examples of Italian diglossia and multilingualism in order to put forward important questions regarding the distinction between these notions. The questions involve both language internal factors, such as stability of the phenomena, as well as external factors influencing the development of both. Marta Dąbrowska, in *Indian youth and the English language* investigates perceptions of the use of English in various contexts according to social domain conditions. Non-homogenous results are reported in the study, depending on the background and nationality status.

Witold Mańczak's *The never-ending story – the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans* explores the methodological questions of the relatedness of European languages based on the genetic relatedness of vocabulary. Detailed methodological issues are covered, and the comparison of vocabulary in parallel texts is based on statistical data in several languages.

An important section of the book covers questions of comparative phonology and morphology. Important methodological issues are involved in each study, and the comparative method is widely adopted. Stanisław Prędoła in the paper, *On the morphology of Dutch and Afrikaans* discusses morphological contrasts existing between the noun and the verb in the two contemporary languages, and explains the simplification of the verb morphology in the latter. Andrei A. Avram's *The epenthetic and paragogic vowels of Pijin: Internal development or substrate influence?* explores approaches to a pidgin spoken in the Salomon Islands in terms of vowel harmony and explains how it can be better accounted in terms of vowel copying, or substrate influence. Władysław Cichocki and Louise Beaulieu's paper: *Factors contributing to the retention of traditional phonetic features in Acadian French*, investigates the two dimensions of geolinguistic variation in traditional phonetic features in the Atlantic region of Canada. The measures of the retention of stereotypical phonetic features are found to be only partly related to the level of conservatism in Acadian and the sociohistorical model by Flikeid. *Of ðæm or bi him – on the scribal repertoire of Latin-English pronominal equivalents in the Lindisfarne Gospels* by Joanna Janecka and Anna Wojtyś investigates English equivalents for Latin pronouns in the texts of Latin gospels. Attention is drawn to the various context- or language-structure dependent forms that govern their interpretation. Łukasz Stolarski in *Palatalization of consonants in Polish before /i/ and /j/* aims to present a study of the degree of consonantal palatalization in Polish in phonetic contexts. The issue under investigation

concerns the questions of whether the examined language variation originates in spatial (or regional) and social differences.

Marcin Zabawa in *English-Polish language contact, the young generation and the new media: The use of English in Polish Internet blogs written by young people* investigates the scope of English borrowings in Internet blogs written in Polish. Various methodological problems are discussed and solutions are proposed; yet, common sense is maintained, and a thorough criticism of the material is proposed.

In terms of contents, the book encompasses a variety of academic papers presenting material which offers insight into a multitude of areas involved in up-to-date academic research. The authors also provide a well-organised bibliography section, which offers wide information on further reading. The book can be recommended for young researchers or postgraduate students who want to gain in-depth information on the possibilities for research topics and methodology in contact linguistics, anthropological linguistics and comparative studies. Finally, the book can be recommended as a starting point for any discussion or seminar, as well as a reference for a variety of academic subjects.