

Language contact

Reconsideration and reassessment

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The most cursory glance at linguistic publications in the past two decades or so reveals a wealth of literature on language contact: articles, monographs, edited volumes, special issues of journals (see the references in the literature section to this chapter).^[1] It is perhaps true to say that one of the major impulses for research in the past two decades must surely have been the publication of Sandra Thomason and Terrence Kaufman's large-scale study (1988) of various contact scenarios with many generalisations about the nature of contact and the range of its possible effects. Due to the carefully mounted cases and several stringent analyses, this study led to the re-invigoration of language contact and its re-valorisation as a research area and as a source of language change. At the same as highlighting the field of language contact within linguistics the study also allowed for virtually any type of change as a result of language contact, given appropriate circumstances to trigger this.

Contact studies from the 1960s and 1970s are not anything like as copious as in the ensuing decades. There are reasons for this. While the classic study of language contact by Uriel Weinreich was published in 1953, the following two decades were years which saw not just the heyday of early generative linguistics but also of the rise of sociolinguistics and it was those two areas of linguistics which were to dominate the research activity of scholars for several decades.

Language contact was at the centre of work by scholars somewhat outside the mainstream. Smaller departments at universities, dealing with non-Indo-European languages or Indo-European ones apart from the Germanic and Romance languages, often produced research in which contact was pivotal. But for scholars in the English-speaking world, or dealing with varieties of English, language contact was not a primary concern during the 1960s and 1970s. Apart from the dominance of other approaches to linguistics at this time, there were further reasons for the relative neglect of language contact. Older literature which looked at contact tended to assume uncritically that contact was always the source of new features registered in particular languages, assuming that the presence of at least two in any particular scenario. Furthermore, early studies did not necessarily provide rigorous taxonomies for the types of language contact and their effects (though Weinreich is a laudible exception in this respect). Nor did they usually distinguish individual tokens of language contact and the contact of language systems and the indirect metaeffects which the latter situation could have.

Overviews of aspects of language which also touched on contact did of course have relevant chapters, e.g. that by Moravcsik (1978) in the Greenberg volumes on language universals. And the early 1980s did see studies of language contact, e.g. Heath (1984), but other explanations for the triggers of language

change were preferred, at least in mainstream language studies, such as varieties of English, see Harris (1984), an influential article arguing against the role of contact in the rise of varieties of English in Ireland.

1 Recent studies of language contact

The stimulus provided by Thomason and Kaufman (1988) is in evidence, directly or indirectly, in the many publications which appeared during the 1990s and into the 2000s. Some of these are in a more traditional style, e.g. Ureland and Broderick (eds, 1991), but others show a linguistically more nuanced analysis of the effects of contact, see the contributions in Fisiak (ed., 1995) and Thomason (ed., 1997) along with the typological overview in Thomason (1997). Indeed these publications often contain a blend of contact studies and a further approach in linguistics, consider the sociolinguistically based investigation of language contact in Japan by Loveday (1996).

The 2000s opened with a number of analyses of different linguistic scenarios. There is the general overview of language contact and change by Frans Coetsem (Coetsem 2000) along with the overview article by Thomason (2000), the study of contact within the context of the Slavic languages^[2] by Gilbers, Nerbonne and Schaeken (eds, 2000) and the investigation of lexical change due to contact in King (2000)^[3], to mention just three of the publications from this year.

2001 saw the publication of Sandra Thomason's introduction to language contact (Thomason 2001) and of the volume on language contact and the history of English (Kastovsky, and Mettinger eds, 2001) as well as the overview of features in English-lexicon contact languages (pidgins and creoles) by Baker and Huber (2001). The latter type of investigation had a successor in volumes such as that by McWhorter (2000) and the full-length study by Migge (2003) and in the special journal issue by Clements and Gooden (eds, 2009) while Clyne's 2003 monograph examined language contact between English and immigrant languages in Australia. Contact and bilingualism is also an avenue of research which has been pursued in recent years, see Myers-Scotton (2002) as a representative example.

Language contact, linguistic areas and typology

Research into language families and linguistic areas received considerable impetus during the 2000s. The native languages of northern South America were scrutinised in Aikhenvald (2002). This vein of investigation was continued with Aikhenvald and Dixon (eds, 2006). Johanson (2002) looked at structural change in the Turkic languages which can be traced to contact (see Johanson this volume as well). Similar studies from the early 2000s, e.g. Haspelmath (2001), attest to this revitalised interest in the study of linguistic areas (Matras, McMahon and Vincent, eds, 2006).

Language typology and its connection with language contact is a theme in studies which congregate around families and areas, see the contributions in Haspelmath, König, Oesterreicher and Raible (eds, 2001), Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm (eds, 2001), Aikhenvald and Dixon (eds, 2006), and also in association with the issue of language development complexity, see the chapters in Miestamo, Sinnemäki and Karlsson (eds, 2008) and the study by Mufwene (2008).

Furthermore, there are languages whose entire development and history is dominated by contact with other languages: Romani and Yiddish are good examples for this situation, see (Matras ed., 1995; 2002) and (Jacobs 2005) on these two languages respectively.

Several studies of contact have stretched backwards to reach greater time depth using the tools of contemporary linguistics.^[4] Ross (2003) is an example of this in his investigation of prehistoric language contact. Salmons and Joseph (eds, 1998) look at the evidence for and against Nostratic, an undertaking in which contact is centre-stage. On contact and early Finno-Ugric, see Laakso (this volume), on contact and Arabic, see Versteegh (this volume).

The investigation of languages which have virtually no written records presents a special set of problems. This is particularly true of native American languages (Mithun, this volume), of African languages (Childs, this volume), of Australian languages (McConvell, this volume) and of languages in New Guinea (Foley, this volume).

Language contact and mixed languages

Not unrelated to this type of situation is that of mixed languages, the result not just of contact but of fusion, to which the attention of the scholarly community was drawn by a number of seminal publications, among the earliest of which was Muysken (1981) which presented the case for Media Lengua, a mixture of Quechua and Spanish (see Muysken 1997 for a later overview). A broader perspective was provided by the collection of studies on a number of mixed languages to be found in Bakker and Mous (eds, 1994). Cases of mixed languages have also been reported in language endangerment situations, e.g. that of light Walpiri in Northern Australia (O'Shannessy 2005). An instance of a mixed language from the Slavic area would be Surzhyk which consists of a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian, see Grenoble (this volume). A further example is Trasianka (a mixture of Belarussian and Russian). The Romance languages also have similar mixtures which arose due to contact, e.g. that between Portuguese and Spanish in the border areas of Brazil and Uruguay, see remarks by Lipski (this volume) on *portunhol / fronterizo*.

Language contact, obsolescence and death

Language obsolescence (Dorian ed., 1989) and language death (Nettle and Romaine 2000, Romaine, this volume; Harrison 2007) are further issues closely related to language contact. After all, the endangerment of language always goes hand in hand with contact with one or more dominant languages which threaten the continuing existence of the minority language, or indeed in many cases leads to its disappearance.

Language contact and grammaticalisation

The study of grammaticalisation received significant impulses from the research of Elizabeth Traugott, Bernd Heine and Paul Hopper in a number of landmark publications, such as Traugott and Heine (eds, 2001), as well as the accessible textbook, Hopper and Traugott 2003 [1993]. In the context of the present volume the focus on grammaticalisation and language contact^[5] was made in the programmatic article by Heine and Kuteva (2003) which was followed up by the full-length study

Heine and Kuteva (2005), see Heine and Kuteva (this volume), as well.

Language contact and older hypotheses

The assessment of language contact in the history of established languages is a matter which has varied in the relevant scholarship. For the history of English it is clear that the influence of other languages – bar Latin, Old Norse and Anglo-Norman – has been played down by the majority of scholars in the field.^[6] But in recent years, a re-examination and re-assessment of the role of contact in the development of the Germanic dialects in the period subsequent to transportation to England has taken place. Specifically, the role of British Celtic in this context has been highlighted by publications such as Filppula, Klemola and Pitkänen (eds, 2002) and Hickey (1995a), re-connecting to an older hypothesis put forward by German and Scandinavian scholars in the first half of the twentieth century, see Preußler (1938), Dal (1952) and Braaten (1967). Contact as a source of change has been further extended to encompass later, non-standard features of English such as the so-called Northern Subject Rule, see Klemola (2000). For details on the ‘Celtic hypothesis’ in the history of English, see Filppula (this volume).

Language and/or dialect contact

It is obvious that the difference between language contact and dialect contact is more one of degree than of kind. The interaction of dialects with one another is a topic which received considerable impetus from Peter Trudgill’s 1986 study *Dialects in Contact* after which the treatment of this subject was seen as on a par with that of languages in contact. Given the great diversity of varieties of English, this approach proved to be fruitful in the anglophone world and has been adopted by many scholars since, especially by considering the notion of accommodation together with existing data not hitherto analysed from this perspective. Dialects in contact are treated in this volume in the contribution by David Britain, Paul Kerswill (in the context of the formation of new varieties) as well as Salmons and Purnell (in the context of American English).

Language contact in English studies

In English studies the significance of contact in the rise of non-standard vernaculars was given increasing recognition during the 1980s. Rickford (1986) is a well-known example of work in this vein, here with specific reference to dialect transportation and contact at overseas locations. Not all scholars saw contact as a prime source of new features in varieties, some put more emphasis the continuation of vernacular traits to new locations, the so-called retentionist hypothesis – a key article for this view is (Harris 1984) – enjoyed greatest favour among Anglicists. However, by the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, the considered case for contact in certain scenarios regained acceptance and was underlined by key publications such as Mesthrie (1992) which showed clearly the role of contact in the rise of South African Indian English. The dichotomy of contact versus retention continued to occupied scholars and into the 2000s, see Filppula (2003) which provides a fresh look at the arguments for and against contact. This question has been considered for many varieties English at very different geographical locations, e.g. Bao (2005) which examines substratist influence on the aspectual system of

English in Singapore. On contact and African Englishes, see Mesthrie (this volume) and on Asian Englishes, see Ansaldo (this volume).

Vernacular universals and contact

The notion of vernacular universals is something which has been dealt with by anglicists in recent years, above all by Jack Chambers (see Chambers 2004). It refers to features found across varieties of English in different parts of the world and postulates that their occurrence is due to universals of language developments (here specifically new dialect formation in the English context, see Gold 2009, for example). The issue has spawned a number of publications the most comprehensive of which is the volume by Filppula, Klemola and Paulasto (eds, 2009) in which vernacular universals are viewed within the framework of language contact, see the introduction to this volume and also the contribution by Donald Winford (Winford 2009).

Socio-linguistic perspectives on language contact

An emphasis on the social aspect of a language contact is found in many publications, e.g. Loveday (1996), especially particular in studies of pidgins and creoles (Holm, this volume; Schneider, this volume). Studies like Siegel (1987), where the plantation environment of the Fiji Islands in the nineteenth century is investigated, implicitly adopt this stance. The role of substrate in the rise of these contact languages has also been pursued in other publications by Siegel (1999, 2000, this volume). In a far-eastern context this issue has also been broached, see the discussion in Matthews (this volume).

In handbooks on sociolinguistics and models of socially-determined language change, chapters on contact can also be found, e.g. Sankoff (2002) in the *Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (Chambers, Trudgill and Schilling-Estes eds, 2002).

A broader view than just the social setting is offered in considerations of a language's ecology, see the discussion by Ansaldo (this volume).

Contact in urban environments

In the past contact studies did not usually deal with the rural-urban dichotomy, probably because at the time at which the contact is assumed to have taken place this division was not relevant for the communities in question. However, contemporary investigations of contact, either interlinguistic or intralinguistic, are frequently of urban scenarios, e.g. Silva-Corvalán's 1994-study of Spanish and English in Los Angeles or Hickey's 2005-study of language variation and change in Dublin, where dissociation (Hickey 2000), triggered by with internal contact between differing varieties in the city, has been the driving factor. Other urban environments have provided still other types of change and development through contact, e.g. the creative language mixture found in the Sheng and English codes in urban Kenya (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997).

Overviews of language contact

The increase in the data^[7] on language contact^[8] has led to more general reflections on the nature of contact and its effects. This is something which can be observed in

other fields as well. Once most of the groundwork has been done and large bodies of data have been collected, scholars begin to reflect on the status of the field as a scholarly endeavour. It is in this light that one can view publications like those by Donald Winford, e.g. Winford (2005, 2008), and indeed the chapters in the first three sections of the present volume, *Contact and linguistics*, *Contact and change* and *Contact and society* respectively.

A further sign of the maturity of a field is the publication of handbooks dedicated to it. This shows that it has become sufficiently mainstream for it to appear in dedicated courses at universities and hence to be worthy of handbook treatment. The readiness of publishers to accept such volumes is evidenced by the handbooks by Goebel, Nelde, Stary and Wölck (eds, 1996), Donald Winford (Winford 2003) and Yaron Matras (Matras 2009) and indeed by the present volume itself.

Lastly, one can mention the centre-stage treatment of language contact accorded in handbooks of historical linguistics, such as McMahon (1994), McColl-Millar (2007) and Campbell (2004).

2 Generalisations concerning contact⁹

It would seem that language contact always induces change. History does not provide instances of speech communities which adjoined on one another, still less which intermingled, and where the languages of each community remained unaffected by the contact. However, there may well be a difference in the degree to which languages in contact influence each other, that is a cline of contact is often observable, indeed to the extent that the influence is almost totally unidirectional. Furthermore, influence may vary by level of language and depend on the nature of the contact, especially on whether bilingualism exists or not and to what degree and for what duration (see the discussion by Muysken, this volume).

Internal versus external reasons

It is scholarly practice to distinguish between internal and external reasons for language change (Hickey 2002b). To make this more explicit one can state that internal change is that which occurs within a speech community, generally among monolingual speakers and that external change is induced by contact with speakers of a different language.

Opinions are sharply divided on when to assume that contact is the source of change. Some authors insist on the primacy of internal factors (e.g. Lass and Wright 1986) and so favour these per se when the scales of probability are not biased in either an internal or external direction for any instance of change. Other scholars view external reasons more favourably (Vennemann 2001, 2002a, this volume) while still others would like to see a less dichotomous view of internal versus external factors in change (Dorian 1993, Jones and Esch, eds, 2002). The role of contact in the diversification of languages is also a theme in the seminal monograph by Johanna Nichols (1992), a theme which is taken up by her in the contribution to the present volume.

Substrate and superstrate

A lot of attention has been paid in the literature to the relative social status of two languages in contact situations. Two established terms are used to label the language with less status and that with more, namely, ‘substrate’ and ‘superstrate’ respectively. The superstrate is regarded as having, or having had, more prestige in the society in which it is spoken, though just precisely what ‘prestige’ refers to is something which linguists like James Milroy have questioned. Nonetheless, there would seem to be a valid sense in which one of two languages has, or had, more power in a contact situation. Asymmetrical levels of power in a contact situation play a definite role in the results of contact.

Relative status and direction of influence

The standard wisdom has been in traditionally been that the language with more status influences that with less, i.e. borrowing is from the superstrate by the substrate. This is, however, a simplistic view of the possibilities of influence in a contact scenario. Vocabulary, as an open class with a high degree of awareness, is the primary source of borrowing from the superstrate. Again French and Latin in the history of English are standard examples.

However, if contact persists over many generations, then the substrate can have a gradual and imperceptible influence on the superstrate, leading in some cases to systemic change at a later time. This type of contact can be termed ‘delayed effect contact’ (Hickey 2001) and may well be the source of syntactic features in English which it has in common with Celtic (Poussa 1990, Vennemann 2002b; Isaac 2003). This line of pursuit is followed by Filppula (this volume) who presents the arguments for Celtic influence on English. In addition to structural parallels there is further evidence here. Consider the fact that in Old English *wealh* was the word for ‘foreigner’ but also for ‘Celt’. The word came to be used in the sense of ‘servant, slave’ (cf. *wielen* ‘female slave, servant’ with the same root, Holthausen 1974: 393) which would appear to be an indication of the status of the Celts vis à vis the Germanic settlers.^[10] Not only that, the meaning of ‘servant’ implies that the Germanic settlers put the subjugated Celts to work for them, this in turn meant that there would have been considerable face-to-face contact between Celts and Germanic settlers and between the children of both groups. As the latter context was one of first language acquisition it provided an osmotic interface for structural features of Celtic to be transferred to Old English. Given that written Old English was dominated by the West Saxon standard, it is only in the Middle English period that the syntactic influence of Celtic becomes apparent in the written record, e.g. in the appearance of possessive pronouns in cases of inalienable possession.

Where does it start? The locus of contact

It is a convenient shorthand to claim, for example, that language A borrowed from language B. However, this is already an abstraction as the appearance of borrowings in a speech community can only be the result of actions by members of this community. If one puts aside cases of ‘cultural’ borrowings, e.g. from Latin or Greek into later European languages or from English into other modern languages, then it is probably true that borrowing of ‘system’ material – inflections, grammatical forms, sentence structures – can only occur via bilinguals. This view has a considerable tradition. Weinreich (1953) saw the true locus of contact-induced change in the bilingual individual who moves between two

linguistic systems. Some scholars go further and consider bilinguals as having a single system, e.g. Matras (this volume) who considers that bilinguals “do not, in fact, organise their communication in the form of two ‘languages’ or ‘linguistic systems’”. The awareness of linguistic systems on the part of speakers is a difficult issue to resolve. It may well be that in pre-history and in non-literate societies today the awareness of the separateness of languages was less than today. If one or both of the other languages a bilingual uses is the sole language of a further country the bilingual’s awareness of switching between languages increases. Matras (this volume) maintains that bilinguals “operate on the basis of established associations between a subset of structures and a set of interaction contexts”. The communicative competence of the bilingual then includes making the appropriate choices of structures for communication in given contexts. Whatever the degree of awareness of bilinguals of the separateness of their linguistic (sub)systems, the presence of competence of two languages in bilinguals fulfills the precondition for the adoption of material from one language into another. The next, and crucial, question is how borrowings made on an individual level spread throughout a community and are accepted by it. This step is essential for borrowings to become part of a language/variety as a whole and hence be passed on to later generations as established features. This issue will be addressed in ?? below.

What can be attributed to language contact?

The current volume is dedicated to analyses of language contact, the situations in which it is or was to be found and the results it engenders or has engendered. This focus should not imply a neglect of changes, indeed types of change, which are not due to language contact. Consider for instance, reanalysis by language learners. A specific instance of this is provided in the pre-history of Irish. The common Celtic precursors of all the Celtic languages inherited the complex suffixal inflections from still earlier stages of Indo-European when these were central to morphology. Sometime before the Celtic languages appeared in writing (in the first centuries BC) the languages changed their typology. They began to abandon suffixal inflections as a means of indicating grammatical categories and adopted a new system whereby these categories were indicated by changes to the initial segments of lexical words, so-called initial mutation. This typological shift came about by children reanalysing phonetic changes at the beginnings of words (external sandhi) as having systemic status (for a fuller discussion, see Hickey 2003b). This is an entirely language-internal change, though the original trigger for the phonetic changes, which were later re-analysed, may have been due to contact.

Pushing the question back

Contact treatments tend to push the question of origin back a step but do not necessarily explain how a phenomenon arose in the first place. For instance, if one believes that the VSO word order of Insular Celtic (Eskola, this volume) is due to contact with a Semitic language (Pokorny 1949), present in the British Isles before the arrival of the Celts, one still has not accounted for the rise of VSO in the source language.^[11] Thus contact differs from explanatory models of language in that it offers more or less plausible accounts for the appearance linguistic features. However, the explanation of contact mechanisms and speaker strategies in contact situations can indeed have explanatory value.

The history of contact phenomena

It can be salutary to bear the attested history of contact forms in mind. The paths of contact may be multiplex and varied. Take, for instance, the immediate perfect of Irish English which is (rightly) regarded as a calque on Irish.

(§) *Tá sé tar éis an gloine a briseadh.*
 [is he after the glass COMP break-NON-FINITE]
 ‘He is after breaking the glass.’

Both the Irish and the Irish English structure have gone through historical developments while in contact. Originally, the structure could be used in both Irish and Irish English with future, i.e. prospective, reference and it is attested from seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in this sense. However in both languages, the prospective use declined and an exclusively past, i.e. retrospective, use came to the fore, gradually replacing the former one (McCafferty 2004).

Contact in hindsight

If centuries lie between the period of contact and the present it may be difficult to reconstruct the social circumstances of the contact. However, the nature of the contact can often be gleaned from the results it engendered. To illustrate this consider lexical changes in the period immediately after the coming of the Anglo-Normans to Ireland in the late twelfth century. Many loans from Anglo-Norman appear and not a few of them are ‘core’ vocabulary items like the words for ‘boy’ (*garsún* < Anglo-Norman *garçon*) and ‘child’ (*páiste* < Anglo-Norman *page*). Given that Anglo-Norman was the superstrate in the late Middle Irish period why should the Irish have borrowed such ‘non-cultural’, core items as ‘boy’ or ‘child’? The answer would seem to lie in the manner in which these words entered Irish. Assume that they were not borrowed by the native Irish, but rather that the Anglo-Normans used them in their variety of Irish. It is a historical fact that the Anglo-Normans lived in the countryside among the Irish and gradually shifted to their language. During the shift period an intermediate variety was spoken by the Anglo-Normans in which they used words from their own language like *garçon* and *page*. Because of the power the Anglo-Normans had in Irish society, the native Irish adopted core vocabulary items of their variety of Irish and, for example, the negation structure *Níl puinn Gaeilge agam* [is-not point Irish at-me] ‘I cannot speak Irish’ which shows the negative use of French *point* (Rockel 1989: 59). The likelihood of this scenario can be strengthened by considering that the Anglo-Norman loans in Irish did not necessarily replace the native Irish words. For instance, the Anglo-Norman loan *páiste* exists side by side with the original Irish word *leanbh* [lʲænəv] ‘child’. For ‘boy’ Irish has two words: *garsún* (with the later form *gasúr*) and the original *buachaill* [buəxɪlʲ].

To use a metaphorical term, the Anglo-Normans ‘imposed’ parts of their second-language variety of the Irish language on those who surrounded them in late medieval rural Irish society.

Category and exponence

In borrowing one must distinguish between systemic and non-systemic elements. The latter are typical individual words or phrases, pragmatic markers, sentence adverbials or other free-floating elements which are not part of the grammatical structure of a language. Such elements travel well because they do not require integration into system of the borrowing language and can be picked up by adults in a contact situation. Indeed they often migrate from one language to the another via code-switching (Muysken, 2000; Gardner-Chloros, this volume). In Irish, for instance, English *well, just, really* have been borrowed and are used continually by native speakers, although the grammatical structure of Irish and English are very different.

When looking at systemic elements, one must bear an essential distinction in mind, namely, that between a grammatical category and the exponence of this category. The reason the distinction is essential in contact studies is that some languages borrow a grammatical category but not the manner of expressing in in the source language. Indeed it may be true that adopting a category rather than its exponence is not so much a feature of borrowing but of transfer in language shift (see the discussion of the borrowing of structural elements in Winford, this volume).

Transfer in language shift

The term ‘borrowing’ implies that the speakers of the language adopting some element or category from a source language do not switch to the latter. The Middle English borrowings from French are an example of this. However, many contact situations involve language shift. When viewing the past few centuries in Ireland one can see that the majority of the population was originally Irish-speaking and that they gradually transferred to English, particularly during the nineteenth century. There was no general schooling for the Irish before the 1830s so that the native Irish learned English by picking it up – in adulthood – from others who had a somewhat better knowledge of the language. This is a situation of unguided adult second language acquisition. Here the transfer of features from the background language (Irish) to the new language (English) was at a premium. An obvious example of this is accent: initially, adult learners of a second language use the phonetic realisations of phonological units from their first language when speaking the second one.^[12] This can still be recognised in rural western forms of Irish English where the phonetic realisation of /ai, au, o:, u:, ʌ/ is the same in English as it is in Irish.

The search for categorial equivalence

On a grammatical level one finds similar behaviour: speakers involved in language shift transfer categories from their native language to the new one they are moving to. But what if the new language does not have an automatic equivalent to a grammatical category in the background language? This triggers a search for categorial equivalence. Take, for instance, the habitual aspect of Irish. This has no formal parallel in English so that speakers during language shift would not have found a ready equivalent to it. Instead what happened is that the non-lexical verb *do* was co-opted to express an habitual in Irish English, as can be seen in the following example.

- (§) *Bíonn sí ag déanamh imní faoi na leanaí.*
 [is-HABITUAL she at doing worry about the children]
 ‘She does be worrying about the children.’ (vernacular Irish English)

What one say here is that the category ‘habitual aspect’ was transferred during the language shift process from Irish to Irish English. The exponence which was chosen derives, however, from the co-option of *do* to express this category. The verb *do* is suitable for the expression of habitual aspect as it deontes the carrying out of an action. This means that a construction of the kind ‘X does be Y-ing’ had a high probability of diffusion and acceptance in the community of new English speakers which arose in Ireland in the early modern period.

Recall, furthermore, that for the vast majority of Irish speakers, the language shift took place in a non-prescriptive environment, one in which creativity was not restricted by notions of correctness. This meant that then a degree of restructuring occurred in English which is normally only found in creolisation scenarios (Hickey 1997).

Neglect of distinctions in language shift

Just as speakers search for equivalents in the target to categories of their native language during language shift, so they also neglect distinctions in the target language which are not found in their native language. This neglect may become established if the transfer variety of the target language stabilises and becomes focussed, as has been the case with Irish English.

The relative infrequency of the present perfect in Irish English has been remarked on by many authors since the nineteenth century (Hickey 2007: 142-5). As this verbal category does not exist in Irish one can surmise that it was neglected by learners of English in the period of language shift. In Irish English actions which began in the past and continue into the present, or which are relevant to the present are expressed by the simple present or past, which ever is appropriate.

- (§) a. *I know her since a long time now.*
 b. *Tá aithne agam uirthi le tamall fada anois.*
 [is knowledge at-me on-her with time long now]
 c. *He’s married for ten years.*
 d. *Tá sé pósta le deich bliain anuas.*
 [is he married with ten years down]

What does not get transferred in language contact?

Not only is there a neglect of grammatical distinctions during contact with shift, as just outlined, but there are certain categories which appear never to be transferred. Consider the following short table which shows features which do not occur in contact varieties of Irish English where one would expect the greatest influence of Irish grammatical structure (Hickey 2007: 142).

- 1) Verb-initial sentences or clauses

	<i>Dhíol mé mo theach..</i>	‘I’ll come by around eight.’, lit. ‘come-FUTURE I...’
2) Post-posed adjectives	<i>an fear bocht</i>	‘the poor man’, lit. ‘the man poor’
3) Post-posed genitives	<i>teach Sheáin</i>	‘John’s house’, lit. ‘house John-GEN’
4) Absence of personal pronoun in present tense	<i>Ní thuigim tada.</i>	‘I don’t understand anything.’, lit. ‘not understand-1ST_PERS_SG ...’
5) Autonomous verb form	<i>Rinneadh an obair.</i> <i>Rugadh mac di.</i>	‘The work was done.’, lit. ‘done-was the work’ ‘She bore a son.’, lit. ‘born-was a son to-her’
6) Possessive pronoun and ‘verbal noun’	<i>Bhí sé á bhagairt.</i> <i>Bhí sé á bagairt.</i>	‘He was threatening him.’ / ‘He was threatening (to do) it.’, lit. ‘was he at-his threatening’ ‘He was threatening her.’, lit. ‘was he at-her threatening’

Table 1. *Non-occurring features of Irish in Irish English*

The absence of some of these features can be accounted for by the lack of typological fit between the two languages. For instance, item (5) was rendered via the English passive and item (6) was expressed using a simple direct object. But items (1) to (4) seem to be of a different nature (see Corrigan this volume for further discussion). They would appear to derive in Irish from parameter settings: (1-3) are dependent on the setting for direction of modification and (4) for that of the pro-drop parameter. Irish there is post-modification (VSO, N+Adj, N+Gen) and a positive setting for pro-drop. In English the reverse is the case. It would appear that Irish speakers switching to English intuitively recognised this and never used the Irish values in their shift variety of English.

Non-binary categories in contact

The results of contact are not always obvious at first sight. Where something is borrowed – a sound, a word or a structure – which hitherto did not exist in the borrowing language, the matter is fairly clear. But of the following situation? A language has a certain grammatical device X and so does another language with which it is in contact. However, X in the second language has a much greater range of applications than in the first language. In the course of time, the first language expands the range of contexts in which it can use X. Here is a concrete example. Irish allows fronting of elements of a sentence in order to topicalise them. The process involves clefting, that is a dummy verb form a main clause with the topicalised element and the remainder of the sentence is contained in a followed relative clause.

- (§) a. *Is go Gaillimhe atá sé imithe.*
[is to Galway that-is he gone]
'It's to Galway he's gone'.
b. *Is mór le Máire atá a mac.*
[is great with Mary that-is her son]
'It's friendly with Mary her son is.'

This example shows the difficulty of deciding whether contact is the source of a non-binary category, i.e. one of degree and not of presence vs. absence. Indeed such instances highlight the nature of linguistic argumentation in contact scenarios which operates with statement of probability but nothing more concrete. In the final analysis it is a question of individual preference just how much weight one accords contact accounts.

Permeability of linguistic systems

There is nothing in the structure of a language which is excluded from borrowing/transfer through contact. Given sufficient intensity and duration, all linguistic sub-systems can be affected, even the core morphology. Nonetheless, there are areas of language which show a much greater movement in a contact situation. Single words and phrases as well as pragmatic markers and sentence adverbials are borrowed easily (Matras 1998). The reason is clear: such elements do not require integration into the grammatical system of the borrowing language and can be accommodated without any degree of restructuring. In a language shift situation syntactic variation can occur as a result of transfer during the shift phase, often due to the development of alternative strategies to reach equivalents to grammatical categories and structures of the outset language, e.g. relative clauses in South African Indian English (Mesthrie and Dunne 1990) whose speakers have South Asian ancestors. Among the other motivations for borrowing/transfer are (i) the resolution of ambiguity and (ii) the filling of gaps in paradigms for which the following examples can be given.

Borrowing to resolve ambiguity

A well-known instance where a borrowing helped to resolve internal ambiguity – or at the very least potential ambiguity – in the morphology of a language is provided by the third person plural pronominal forms in *th-* (*they, them, their*) which derive from Old Norse during the Old English period. The position before the borrowing was such that both the third person singular and plural pronominal forms began in *h-* (*hē, hī*) and the difference between the third person masculine singular and the plural was that between /e:/ and /i:/. Borrowing the Old Norse forms thus increased phonetic distinctiveness of the singular and plural forms, though it also produced suppletion in this morphological paradigm (Werner 1991).

Borrowing to fill gaps in paradigms

There have been many cases where a gap in a morphological paradigm has been filled by a borrowing from a further language. The borrowing can take the form of a direct loan from a language or of a lexical creation made by scholars, e.g. the

Latinate adjectives of English such as *marine* (noun: *sea*), *aquatic* (noun: *water*), *equestrian* (noun: *horse*), which appear in the early modern period.

Borrowing, or creation on the basis of external models, does not have to be the path taken. Consider, for instance, the paradigmatic pressure which arose in English with the demise of a clear distinction between the singular and plural of second person pronouns. This issue was resolved language-internally for the majority of vernacular varieties which now show a pronominal distinction between the singular and plural second person, e.g. *y'all*, *y'uns*, *youse*, *yez* for you-PLURAL. But in the case of Caribbean Englishes, the form *unu* – a borrowing from input West African languages to the area – filled the gap (Hickey 2003a).

Convergence scenarios

There are cases where a certain instance of change could derive from both an internal development, often 'tension' in the language system, and the influence of another language (Hickey 2002a). A good example is provided by the development of stress patterns in the dialect of Irish. Briefly, the situation is as follows: Old Irish (600 - 900) had lexical root stress but in Middle Irish (900 - 1200) long vowels developed through vocalisation of voiced fricatives in non-initial position. This led to tension with initial short vowels and long vowels in later syllables. The three major dialect areas reacted differently to this tension.

(§) Long vowels in unstressed syllables

North (Ulster)	Post-initial vowels are shortened
West (Connacht)	Maintains the original stress pattern, possibly with syncope of initial short vowel in some cases
South (Munster)	Stress is shifted to post-initial long vowels
<i>scadán</i> 'herring'	
North 'V.VV >	'V.V / 'skadan /
West 'V.VV >	'V.VV / 'skuda:n /
South 'V.VV >	V.'VV / skə'da:n /

The shift of stress to non-initial long vowel might look like a purely internal solution to the tension between quantity and stress which existed prior to this. However, the south is the region where the influence of Anglo-Norman, which had non-initial stress for long vowels, was greatest. In addition it is known that Anglo-Norman affected varieties of English in the south-east of Ireland, inducing stress on non-initial long vowels. All one can say of the development in the south of Ireland is that it is a typical convergence scenario: there are cogent arguments for both an internal and external motivation for the stress change. In the absence of any clinching evidence either way, one maintains that both sources are possible, i.e. both 'converged' to produce the observed output (see further the discussion of convergence in Matras, this volume).

Internal developments which favour borrowing

A more nuanced view of the convergence scenario would ask whether internal changes can render a language more susceptible to borrowing. Recall that English

is unique among the Germanic languages (Roberge, this volume) in requiring possessive pronouns in instances of inalienable possession.^[13] The inherited Old English type involved a dative of relevance as seen still in modern German, e.g. *Er legte ihm die Krone aufs Haupt* [he laid him-DATIVE the crown on the head] ‘He laid the crown on his head’. This type of structure disappears in early Middle English and is replaced by one in which the possessive pronoun is used (see gloss). Now the Celtic languages were, and still are, remarkable in demanding the use of a possessive pronoun for inalienable possession. Could British Celtic of the Old English period have provided the model for the English marking? The answer is ‘yes’, but it is important to point out that the demise of overt dative marking (contrasting with the accusative) provided an impetus for alternative marking of possession. In this situation the likelihood of the adoption of a strategy from Celtic with which Old English was in contact was much increased.

Contact and geographical spread

Features which cluster in geographically confined areas and are found in languages which are not genetically related (Noonan, this volume), or only distantly so, are said to characterise a linguistic area, such as the Balkans (Joseph, this volume), or in a larger framework, South Asia (Schiffman, this volume). For this to occur, many centuries of prolonged contact and population interaction would seem to be required, especially as the common features of such areas belong to the closed classes of the languages involved, typically to the morphology and syntactic structure. Furthermore, the languages of a linguistic area show not only internal coherence but also recognisable external boundaries with languages immediately outside the area (Haspelmath 2004: 211).

But there are also cases where features show a considerable geographical spread without the preconditions of linguistic areas being met. Usually, single features are involved and often these are features which involve the sound systems of the languages in question. The following is a small selection of such features (with differing distribution sizes) taken from European languages.

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Geographical spread</i>
Front rounded vowels, /y/ and /ø/	The north and centre of Europe, excluding the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula
Uvular /r/ [ʀ]	A wide band from northern France to southern Sweden
Initial voicing of fricatives	Flemish, Dutch and southern dialects of English
Vowel epenthesis in syllable-coda clusters	The Netherlands and the north Rhenish dialects of German
High mid to front realisation of /u/ [ɯ]	Scotland and Northern Ireland (all varieties of English, Scottish Gaelic and Irish)

Table 2. *Features with a considerable geographical spread*

Such features are often prosodic or realisational (uvular [ʁ], for instance, Bergs 2006) and while their geographical diffusion may be due to low-level copying of speech habits, they can in time achieve systemic status as is postulated for the spread of prosodic factors in the South-Asian context which resulted in systemic tone contrasts for many languages (Matisoff 2001).

Regularisation and language contact

The result of language contact for the borrowing language is of interest when compared to internal developments. The latter tend to produce regularity in the grammar of a language. This is particularly true when the internal change can be traced to phenomena in early first language acquisition which are carried through to into adulthood, leading in some cases to community-wide change. This is probably how the Middle High German regularisation of gender took place: disyllabic words in final *-e* became feminine because the vast majority were feminine anyway. Thus a word like *der Blume* ‘flower’ became feminine (> *die Blume*) masculine (Kluge and Seebold 2002: 134) making it conform to the established pattern of words like *die Sonne* ‘sun’, *die Decke* ‘cover, ceiling’, etc.

contact and simplification (Trudgill, this volume)

Regularisation is generally not the result of language contact, unless a regular system or sub-system is adopted from another speech community as a result of prolonged, intensive contact.

In general, re-analyses and regularisations are due to internal change, at least on the morphological and syntactic levels.

Language contact may, however, disrupt the system of a language and lead to subsequent regularisation through re-analysis (see the initial mutations of Irish mentioned above)

3 Terminology in contact studies

In the discussion so far various terms have been used – borrowing, transfer, imposition. These are not always used with the same meanings by all authors so that it is advisable to offer some clarification.

1) *Borrowing*

Items / structures are copied from language X to language Y, but without speakers of Y shifting to X. In this simple form, borrowing is characteristic of ‘cultural’ contact, e.g. Latin and English in the history of the latter, or English and other European languages today. The borrowings are almost exclusively confined to words and phrases.

2) *Transfer*

During language shift, when speakers of language X are switching to language Y, they transfer features of their original native language X to Y. Where these features are already present in Y the transfer is imperceptible but where they are not in Y the transferred features represent an innovation. For grammatical structures one can distinguish (i) categories and (ii) their exponence (means of realisation). Both (i) and (ii) can be transferred, or in some cases, only (i), see the discussion of habitual aspect in Irish English.

a) *Supportive transfer*: a feature in language X is also found in language Y ensuring its continuation in the shift variety of language Y. Example: Irish has a distinction between second person singular and plural for pronouns. This fact meant that in Irish English this distinction, available in vernacular varieties, was supported and continues to this day.

b) *Innovative transfer*: a feature in language X is not found in language Y so that its transfer constitutes an innovation in Y. Example: The immediate perfective of Irish (*They're after sinking the boat*) was transferred to Irish English, representing an addition to the aspectual distinctions already available in English. This type of transfer is also referred to as *interference*, especially in the context of guided second language acquisition where the evaluative implication of 'interference' is often intentional.

3) *Imposition*

A community contains two groups: a minority with high-status and a majority with low-status. The minority acquire the language of the majority, eventually relinquishing their original native language. In the process the majority adopt features of the shift variety of the high-status minority. Example: Anglo-Norman and Irish in late medieval Ireland where the Anglo-Normans 'imposed' features of their shift variety of Irish on the native majority population.

N.B. There is a use of 'imposition' which goes back to van Coetsem (1988), continued by van Coetsem (2000) and taken up, most notably, by Donald Winford (2003, this volume) which is essentially the same as 'transfer' as defined in (2) above.

4) *Metatypy*

Discussing a Melanesian case-study, Malcolm Ross (1996, 2001) coined the term 'metatypy' to denote the sharing of organisational structures across languages in a situation where social attitudes disfavour the replication of concrete, word-forms whose origin in another language is easily identifiable.

Metatypy is what gives rise to a *Sprachbund* or language alliance, where two or more languages are in contact over a lengthy period and become structurally more and more similar, as has happened with diverse Indo-European languages in the Balkans (Joseph 1983) and with Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages in India (Emeneau 1980). But what happens to languages during this growth in similarity and how this process occurs are less well known. It is often assumed that languages simply grow more similar to each other, converging on some kind of mean. However, almost all case studies show a one-sided process: one language (the primary lect) adapts morphosyntactically

to the constructions of another (the secondary lect), with no change occurring in the latter. (Ross 2003: 183)

5) *Convergence*

A feature in language X has an internal source, i.e. there is a systemic motivation for the feature within language X, *and* the feature is present in a further language Y with which X is in contact. Both internal and external sources ‘converge’ to produce the same result. Example: The progressive form in English. The two main views on this are: (i) it was an independent development in English (Visser 1963-73, Mitchell 1985) or (ii) it results from contact with Celtic (Dal 1952, Preußler 1956, Wagner 1959, Braaten 1967). A type of progressive structure in which a gerund was governed by a preposition existed in Old English: *ic wæs on huntunge* ‘I was hunting’ (Braaten 1967: 173). The step from structures like *ic wæs on huntunge* to *I was hunting* is small, involving only the deletion of the preposition. The fully developed progressive form appears in Middle English, but the apparent time delay between the contact with Celtic in the Old English period and the surfacing of the progressive later can be accounted for by the strong tradition of the written standard in Old English (Dal 1952: 113). The progressive is found in all the Celtic languages and can be clearly recognised in the Irish structure *ag* + verbal noun as in *Tá mé ag caint léi* [is me at talking with-her] ‘I am talking to her’. This in itself is a good example of a locative expression for progressive aspect and is typologically parallel to Old English *ic wæs on huntunge*. In both Old English and Celtic one had a progressive aspect, realised by means of a locative expression and with a similar functional range (Mittendorf and Poppe 2000: 139). Both languages maintained this aspect and English lost the locative preposition, increasing the syntactic flexibility and range of the structure, perhaps under the supportive influence of contact with Celtic.

N.B. ‘Convergence’ is used here to refer to the coming together of internal and external factors to produce the same output, but the term can also be used to mean that two languages become more similar in structure, usually by one language approximating to the other (Ross 2001: 139).

Notes

- (i) Granted, the term ‘borrowing’ is imprecise (nothing is ‘borrowed’ from A to B), but the term is established in the field and its use ensures continuity with existing literature. The term ‘copying’ is in fact more accurate: speakers of language A copy features found in language B into their own language. This usage is found in Johanson (2002) and in both Johanson and Pakendorf (this volume).
- (ii) Van Coetsem’s use of the term ‘imposition’ has two disadvantages: it denies the use of the intuitively more obvious ‘transfer’ and precludes the use of ‘imposition’ in the sense under (3) above. However, in other respects the approach initiated by van Coetsem has distinct merits, such as his

highlighting of the relative linguistic dominance of languages. This can best be illustrated by an example. Consider the position of English and Spanish in the south-west/west of the United States, especially in the large urban centres such as Los Angeles. First, Spanish influenced the English of the Chicanos, then after some time, the type of English they developed had a reverse influence back on their Spanish because for many their English has become more dominant (see the discussion in Fought, this volume). The same is true for other large immigrants groups, especially in later generations, e.g. the Turks in Germany whose Turkish is now influenced by German but for the first generation of immigrants in the 1960s Turkish was the dominant language and this influenced the kind of German they spoke.

6 Conclusion

There can be little doubt that the value of contact explanations in linguistics has increased with the greater level of differentiation and nuance provided in the many analyses presented in the last twenty years or so (Thomason, this volume). It has ensured that, where linguists investigate language change and the rise of new features, the option of contact is viewed seriously. There should be no a priori preference for contact accounts nor should there be for purely language-internal explanations either and indeed the possibility of a combination of contact and internal developments should also be considered.

The amount of contact-induced change can vary in the development of a language. The period of contact, its intensity and duration, and the social setting are all factors which need to be weighed up carefully. Furthermore, languages naturally continue to develop after the dust of contact has settled. Some contact features establish themselves, especially in varieties which derive from earlier language shift, but other recede if not accepted by the speech community in later generations. A balanced consideration of all these factors is essential in determining the effects of contact on a speech community and, in the long term, the language change which it results in.

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[Footnotes]

- ~1 Indeed there is now a dedicated electronic journal for language contact studies (accessible at www.jlc-journal.org).
- ~2 On contact and the Slavic languages, see further Grenoble (this volume).
- ~3 See Zuckermann (2003) for another lexical investigation of contact, this time in the context of modern Hebrew.
- ~4 This work can involve using evidence from archaeology as well (Fortescue 1998).
- ~5 This work had been anticipated to a degree by Bisang (1998).
- ~6 Some scholars did consider contact with Celtic along with other possibilities when examining particular instances of change in the history of English, see Ellegård (1953).
- ~7 New data bases have been explored to offer new vistas on language contact, e.g. Ansaldo (2009) which looks at language contact and change in a South-Asian context.
- ~8 On matters concerning the collection of such data, see Bowerman (this volume).

- ~9 In the following sections the majority of examples are taken from languages in Ireland. There the history of English and Irish is characterised by permanent contact and mutual influence so that many examples of different phenomena are attested (Hickey 1995b). Given that I know this material best, I have chosen to use it for illustrations. However, similar situations and influences can be found in other scenarios of contact for other languages.
- ~10 Compare in this context the similar use in modern Greek of the word ‘Filipineza’ (female immigrant from the Philippines) for ‘maid, domestic servant’.
- ~11 Proto-Semitic is generally regarded as having VSO (Hetzron 1987: 662). How this arose is unaccounted for.
- ~12 If fossilisation sets in, this situation can in fact become permanent.
- ~13 There are various terms for this phenomenon. A common one is to refer to it as internal possessor construction.

[End footnotes]