Language Contact

Most societies in today's world are multilingual. 'Language contact' occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence each other. This book is an introduction to the subject, covering individual and societal multilingualism, the acquisition of two or more languages from birth, second-language acquisition in adulthood, language change, linguistic typology, language processing, and the structure of the language faculty. It explains the effects of multilingualism on society and language policy, as well as the consequences that long-term bilingualism within communities can have for the structure of languages. Drawing on the author's own first-hand observations of child and adult bilingualism, the book provides a clear analysis of such phenomena as language convergence, grammatical borrowing, and mixed languages.

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11.1 The continuum of contact-induced creativity and innovation.
In those very few societies in which monolingualism is the norm, bilinguals are sometimes asked which language they dream in. The answer is, of course, invariably: ‘It depends what or whom we are dreaming about.’ That tends to put monolinguals in their place: they show respect for the rhetoric. In fact, the correct answer is that as bilinguals we are unable to keep our languages entirely apart even in our dreams. We may associate certain expressions or phrases with particular events, gestures, or faces, but in our dreams as in our everyday conscious communication we strive for the absolute liberty to use our entire linguistic repertoire freely, with no constraints, and we adore those moments when we can converse with fellow bilinguals who understand and even encourage us to do so. Language contact is about the way we live with the expectation that even our dreams should be monolingual, about how we bypass these restrictions and mix our languages in actual conversation, and about the way in which even monolinguals sometimes end up enriching and re-shaping their own form of speech thanks to their interaction with bilingual individuals. This is essentially the idea that is presented, in somewhat more detail, in the following chapters.

I feel fortunate to have been raised in a multilingual environment and in a multilingual family, and I owe many of the insights that I am able to present here as my own to the stimulating and compelling circumstances that allowed me to participate, observe, and reflect on the way individuals and societies practice language contact. I am also privileged to have had the opportunity, over the years, to discuss issues of language contact at the professional level with many colleagues and friends, among them Greg Anderson, Peter Auer, Ad Backus, Peter Bakker, Giuliano Bernini, Walter Bisang, Simone Bol, David Bradley, Kate Burridge, Michael Clyne, Bernard Comrie, Bill Croft, Eva Csató, Guy Deutscher, Christina Eira, Viktor Elšík, Patty Epps, Marcel Erdal, Nick Evans, Dan Everett, Jonathan Fine, Victor Friedman, Friedel Frohwein, David Gil, Eitan Grossman, Dieter Halwachs, Ian Hancock, Martin Haspelmath, Bernd Heine, Peter Hendriks, Kees Hengeveld, Kristine Hildebrandt, Lars Johanson, František Kratochvíl, Masha Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Tanya Kuteva, Patrick McConvell, April McMahon, Felicity Meakins, Miriam Meyerhoff, Marianne Mithun, Pieter Muysken, Carol Myers-Scotton, Johana Nichols, Shana Poplack, Mark Post, Carmel O’Shannessy, Angelika Redder, Gertrud Reershemius, Jochen Rehbein, Jeanette Sakel, Eva Schultze-Berndt, Zdeněk Starý, Thomas Stolz, Uri Tadmor, Johan van der Auwera, Peter Wagner, and Debra Ziegeler; my thanks to all of them.
My students and collaborators in the Manchester Working Group on Language Contact have been a precious source of inspiration. For many hours of thought-provoking discussion I wish to thank Asma Al-Baluchi, Adele Chadwick, Claire Chen, Veliyana Chileva, Andrea Donakey, Francesco Goglia, Lucy Hottmann, Heveen Ali Kurdi, Sandy Lo, Mohamed Fathi Osman, Barbara Schrammel, Veronica Schulman, Maryam Shabibi, Ellen Smith, Declan Sweeney, Anton Tenser, Anne-Marie Thomson, and Şirin Tufan.

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During the preparation of the book I benefited from audiences’ comments in reaction to invited keynote addresses at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain in Roehampton and at the Workshop on Language Variation and Contact-Induced Language Change at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Linguistic Typology in Paris, as well as from reactions to seminar presentations at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, at the universities of Cologne, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, York, Jerusalem, Prague, Melbourne, and Sydney, and at the Australian National University in Canberra and the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University, Melbourne. I began writing the book during a research visit at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, in the spring of 2004, and I am grateful to Bernard Comrie and Martin Haspelmath for facilitating my stay there. I completed the manuscript in 2007 during my stay as International Linkage Fellow sponsored by the Australian Research Council and as Distinguished Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology.
Typology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, by invitation of Sasha Aikhenvald and Bob Dixon.

The ideas expressed in this book are grounded not just in the experience of language contact, but also in a general appreciation of what language is. I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my teacher Jochen Rehbein, who, more than anyone, prompted me to reflect critically on the meaning of categorisations, labels, and models in linguistics, to search for the inner function of linguistic forms in the very purpose of linguistic activities, and to appreciate, unapologetically, the broad range of human communicative activities as an integrated whole and as the key to the study of the language faculty. I feel that his past years of guidance and inspiration have shaped my approach to the following chapters even more than they had influenced some of my earlier work, and I therefore dedicate this book to him.

Last but certainly not least, my love and very special thanks to Tom, for being the most wonderful ‘Ben’ that he is, and for always helping me see the world in full colour.
## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>First person</td>
<td>LOC</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>NEG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>Ablative</td>
<td>NEUTR</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>NOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>Aorist</td>
<td>OBL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATT/R</td>
<td>Attributive</td>
<td>PART</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>Complementiser</td>
<td>PASS</td>
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<td>CONSTR</td>
<td>Construct state</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Copula</td>
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<td>DAT</td>
<td>Dative</td>
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<td>DEF</td>
<td>Definite (article)</td>
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<td>Deixis</td>
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<td>DET</td>
<td>Determiner</td>
<td>PROG</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>GEN</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>REM</td>
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<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>SG</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSTR</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>SUBJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITR</td>
<td>Intransitive</td>
<td>TR</td>
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- **LOC**: Locative
- **M**: Masculine
- **NEUTR**: Neuter
- **NOM**: Nominative
- **OBL**: Oblique
- **PART**: Particle
- **PASS**: Passive
- **PAST**: Past tense
- **PL**: Plural
- **POSS**: Possessive
- **PRED**: Predication
- **PRES**: Present tense
- **PROG**: Progressive
- **REL**: Relativiser
- **REM**: Remote
- **SG**: Singular
- **SUBJ**: Subjunctive
- **TR**: Transitive