

Editorial

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Introduction: language contact and linguistic dynamics – speakers, speaker groups, and linguistic structures

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Abstract: The introductory paper to the special issue summarises key aspects of contact-related linguistic dynamics such as the communicative interfaces of modern complex societies, the multi-layered textual and discoursal repertoire of their speaker groups and the role of the speakers' cognitive mechanisms, social identity, and interactional strategies in settings of language contact. Giving an overview of the contributions, it aims to connect classic topics of language contact research with recent theoretical and methodological approaches investigated in the papers, and to highlight interconnections and interdisciplinary links that can stimulate further research on linguistic variation and change.

Keywords: contact-induced change; language contact; linguistic dynamics; methods of language-contact research; social identity; speaker groups

1 Introduction: key research questions of language contact and linguistic dynamics

Contact between languages and varieties is of major importance for contemporary linguistic variation and change. Modern societies of the 21st century can be characterised as multi-layered, multilingual, mobile, and digitally connected linguistic communities, whose speakers draw on a large communicative repertoire ranging from local to global. This includes global contact phenomena such as the influence of

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English, contacts with regional languages and varieties, and contacts within language families. From a diachronic perspective, scenarios of language contact have often played a crucial role for the history of particular languages, with repercussions at different levels of linguistic description. Contemporary contact influences in Germanic and Romance include, for example, recourse to linguistic units of Greek and Latin origin as an important source for the development of international technical terminologies, leading to new global convergences. At the level of linguistic usage, language contact concerns, e.g., language choice, code-switching/mixing and the use of borrowed linguistic units in specific communicative settings. It thus involves a broad range of cognitive, pragmatic-interactional, and socio-cultural aspects.

Research on language contact looks back on a long tradition (for recent overviews, cf. Darquennes et al. 2019; Hickey 2020; Matras 2020; Thomason 2001; Winford 2020). Classic issues concern the impact of language contact on particular language systems (see, e.g., Gabriel et al. 2020), and the relationship between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ factors of contact-induced change as well as the general relationship between contact-induced and intra-linguistic change. In addition to this macro-level focus, more recent approaches have stressed the active role of the speakers (cf. Gómez Seibane et al. 2021; Quick and Verschik 2021; Winter-Froemel 2011), and explored pragmatic (cf. Andersen 2014; Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011), sociolinguistic, and interactional aspects (cf. Zenner and Kristiansen 2014) at the micro-level of language-contact phenomena. Moreover, new methodological approaches, such as corpus linguistic, psycholinguistic and computational linguistic methods (cf., e.g., Cartier et al. 2018), have opened up new perspectives for language-contact research by analysing large corpora and providing insights into cognitive or attitudinal factors. Contact phenomena have been modelled in a broad range of approaches including cognitive semantics, generative linguistics, and optimality theory as well as sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic, contrastive-structural, and typological approaches (e.g., Haspelmath and Tadmor 2009). In this context, the inter- and multidisciplinary of contact linguistics has been pointed out (cf. Winford 2020; Zenner et al. 2018).

The aim of this special issue is to provide fresh perspectives on linguistic dynamics in contact settings by considering the interplay of micro- and macro-level dynamics. The contributions focus on language contact and linguistic dynamics in speakers, speaker groups, and linguistic structures. It is mainly Germanic and Romance standard languages that are explored – but with the paramount aim of presenting and discussing approaches that can be equally applied to other languages. In this way, the special issue brings together contributions that investigate discursive, sociological, psychological, and structural aspects of language contact. More specifically, the contributions analyse individual speaker behaviour in contact

situations, social implications of linguistic choices and structural consequences of language contact at various levels of linguistic description. Three main research questions will be addressed:

- **RQ1:** How is speaker interaction in contact settings influenced by textual and contextual factors? How do cognitive and communicative principles determine the speakers' linguistic behaviour in language-contact settings?
- **RQ2:** How do pragmatic, historical, socio-cultural, and structural factors interact in language contact?
- **RQ3:** What are structural consequences of language contact at different levels of linguistic description?

In addition to addressing these research questions, the special issue aims to focus on methodological aspects of language-contact research by integrating new approaches and by triangulating different research methods. A metatheoretical aim is thus also to argue for a broad and interdisciplinary conception in order to grasp the multi-faceted aspects of linguistic dynamics in language-contact research.

2 Studying macro- and micro-level aspects and consequences of language contact

The structure of the special issue follows the progression of the research questions from micro- to macro-level aspects of contact-induced variation and change, with many of the papers simultaneously embracing different factors and levels. A first group of papers focuses on micro-level dynamics, in particular textual and interactional settings (see **RQ1** and the papers by Gärtig-Bressan; Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen; Winter-Froemel). The societal dimension addressed in some of these papers points to **RQ2**, where the focus on the individual language users and their linguistic behaviour remains crucial, and where it is combined with historical and structural aspects of language contact (see the papers by Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner; Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz; Zenner, Hilde, Backus and Vandekerckhove). A third group of papers mainly focuses on structural repercussions of contact, thus investigating macro-level consequences at the level of the language systems, as indicated in **RQ3** (see the papers by Schirakowski; Meinschaefers).

The special issue thus includes papers that focus on particular micro-level agents and loci of contact – cf. **RQ1** –, e.g., particular text types and communicative settings such as travel guides (Gärtig-Bressan), advertisements (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen; Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz), or newspaper

articles (Winter-Froemel). At the same time, the papers investigate how language contact is negotiated between speaker and hearer (see the concept of accessibility proposed by Winter-Froemel) and they highlight the importance of particular groups of language users, e.g., tourists (Gärtig-Bressan), jobseekers (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen), journalists, and newspaper readers (Winter-Froemel). These perspectives are complemented by the focus on young language users in the papers by Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner, and Zenner, Hilde, Backus and Vandekerckhove. Being rooted in a usage-based approach to language contact as implied by **RQ1**, the focus on these different user groups introduces new perspectives and topics of general relevance into language-contact research.

At the same time, the papers address traditional issues of previous research, such as the prestige of contact languages as a key factor of contact-induced change. This issue, which is linked to **RQ2**, is investigated by confronting the recipient-language speakers' perception of foreign patterns and their attitudes towards these elements and the speakers using them (Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner; Zenner, Hilde, Backus and Vandekerckhove), and by highlighting the domain-dependent and context-dependent nature of language prestige (Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner; Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz as well as Gärtig-Bressan; Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen).

Moreover, the special issue includes papers that focus on understudied macro-level aspects and consequences of contact dynamics and contact-induced change. The fine-grained analyses of lexical repercussions of contact provide answers and new perspectives with respect to **RQ3** concerning contact phenomena that have been less intensely studied in previous research, i.e., argument structure and constructional patterns (Schirakowski), and word formation and morphosemantic change (Meinschaefer).

The geographical focus is mostly on contact settings in Europe, including both national and more regional settings (see the paper by Gärtig-Bressan focussing on the Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz focussing on Catalonia; concerning the national level, the papers present case studies on language-contact settings in Germany, France, Belgium, and Italy). The paper by Schirakowski is dedicated to the contact with English in Canadian French. Moreover, the papers include investigations on language contact with English as a source language, but also integrate other settings, such as the contact between Catalan and Spanish, which both represent officially recognised languages in the multilingual society of Catalonia, as well as regional contacts between Italian, Slovenian, Friulian, and German.

Beyond the insights into the specific contact settings, the papers contain important general theoretical and methodological innovations that can be transferred to other contact situations and languages. The special issue brings together

different theoretical frameworks and approaches, most importantly discourse linguistics and the concept of languaging (Gärtig-Bressan), sociolinguistics (Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz), generative approaches (Schirakowski; Meinschaefer), usage-based and cognitive approaches (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen; Winter-Froemel; Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner; Zenner, Hilte, Backus and Vandekerckhove). Moreover, the special issue provides an overview of different methodologies that can be adopted to study contact phenomena, rooted in text and discourse linguistics (Gärtig-Bressan; Winter-Froemel), corpus linguistics (Zenner, Hilte, Backus and Vandekerckhove; Meinschaefer), and different psycholinguistic methods such as eye-tracking experiments (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen), questionnaires and rating tasks (Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner; Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw and Van Maren Díaz; Schirakowski). By integrating and further developing particular concepts and approaches (e.g., the onomasiological focus argued for by Zenner, Hilte, Backus and Vandekerckhove), and by adopting research methods such as eye-tracking (Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen) and frameworks such as text/discourse linguistics (Gärtig-Bressan; Winter-Froemel) that have to date rarely been applied to language-contact phenomena, the special issue also highlights new methodological perspectives that will hopefully stimulate further discussion and research.

3 Summaries of the contributions of this special issue

The first group of articles explores the dynamics of text-specific constellations, discourse strategies, and speaker- as well hearer-related cognitive dimensions of language contact. In her article '*Caffè macchiato grande, Bambini and Casoni*: languaging in the text genre of travel guides', Anne-Kathrin Gärtig-Bressan (Università degli Studi di Trieste) examines a specific form of code-mixing in modern tourism discourse. The phenomenon, considered to be characteristic of this very discourse domain and termed 'languaging', consists in integrating words and word groups from the language of the country of destination into the (future) traveller's language. The paper first presents a text-linguistic classification and functional analysis of four subtext genres which can be identified in modern travel guides. It then focuses on four German-language travel guides about the Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia in order to identify the quantitative distribution of languaging, its semantic domains as well as its presumed functional role and effect on the speaker within the respective subtext genres. The analyses show, on the one hand, quantitative differences between the three shorter mainstream travel guides examined and the longer

guidebook, which is specialised in individual travel and which exhibits a significantly higher proportion of languaging. On the other hand, Gärtig-Bressan identifies pan-Italian and regional cuisine, wine, and accommodation as the typical semantic areas in which languaging is used in order to convey to the reader the impression of authenticity and cultural immersion. From a text-linguistic perspective, the paper provides evidence on how languaging elements are able to support the main functions of the respective subtext genres, e.g., the constative-asserting and evaluative function of orientation texts and the instructive function of advice texts. Finally, the study also reveals interconnections between quantitative, functional-semantic, and text-specific features, e.g., a higher percentage of languaging in advice texts, which also contain a higher degree of pragmatic languaging elements such as greetings. By combining text-linguistic and contact-linguistic perspectives and by focussing on a phenomenon of modern tourism communication which has not yet been widely explored, the study leads to innovative results. Furthermore, it develops methods which could be adapted to analyse travel guides and their subtext genres within other languages and other settings of languaging, and to provide interesting outputs in the field of applied linguistics.

The paper that follows, 'Attention to multilingual job ads: an eye-tracking study on the use of English in German job ads' by Ulrike Nederstigt and Béryll Hilberink-Schulpen (both Radboud University Nijmegen), focuses on individual speakers' perceptions and reactions to foreign-language expressions by introducing another method, namely eye-tracking, to language-contact research. Based on the observation that English is widely used in the context of job advertisements in non-English-speaking countries, the authors aim to investigate the effects of the choice of English as opposed to the choice of the local language German. In previous research, it has been postulated that the use of English loanwords can serve to attract the readers' attention. However, these effects have not been empirically tested, and it has also been suggested that the use of English cannot be expected to systematically lead to a more positive evaluation of the speaker and the message. These latter findings are corroborated in the eye-tracking experiment designed by the authors. In the experiment, four versions of job advertisements (English only, German only, English with German job title, German with English job title) were presented to graduate students in Germany in a 4×4 mixed design, analysing their eye movements and fixation on the job title and the remaining parts of the job ad as predefined areas of interest. This study was complemented by a questionnaire designed to measure the participants' attitude towards the advertisements. The authors did not find evidence for the loanwords drawing special attention or leading to a more positive evaluation of the advertisements in question. In order to explain these findings, they highlight that attention drawing – as reflected by first fixation – is fast and typically based on automatic processing. Thus, it is typically guided by other elements such as, e.g., the

company logos contained in the advertisements. The English loanwords, in contrast, were not sufficiently salient to attract first fixation, an observation that can be linked to previous findings about loanwords requiring additional processing effort. Concerning the number of fixations and the overall duration of fixation, no differences were found for the different experimental conditions. With respect to the overall results of the survey, it needs to be stressed that the results were obtained for a particular target group consisting of participants that were highly proficient in English and thereby represented a realistic target group for the job advertisements investigated. Given the fundamental importance of proficiency, it can be assumed, however, that different observations might be obtained for other types of texts and addressee groups, and it is therefore desirable that the paper will stimulate further applications of the method of eye-tracking to language contact phenomena, as also suggested by the authors in the final part of the paper.

In her paper 'Alterity marking and enhancing accessibility in lexical borrowing: meta-information techniques in the use of incipient anglicisms in French and Italian', Esme Winter-Froemel (JMU Würzburg) explores discursive strategies employed by recipient language speakers when they use newly borrowed lexical items. The contribution aims to build on previous research on techniques of flagging/alterity marking and to study these techniques within a usage-based framework focussing on the textual dimension of the use of new borrowings in newspaper articles. Based on this approach, the author proposes a reorganisation of the marking techniques and an expansion regarding the repertoire of their functions. Firstly, Winter-Froemel foregrounds the interactional dimension of speakers who use alterity markers, but also of addressees, for whom newly borrowed words pose a cognitive challenge concerning word and text comprehension. As a result, a new function of the markers gains in importance: not only do they serve to highlight new borrowings in texts but also to enhance their accessibility for the addressee. Secondly, the textual dimension of the use of marking techniques is emphasised: typically, texts contain a network of semantic and referential links, which also provide information about the incipient loanwords and thus contribute to the above-mentioned function of enhancing the accessibility of the loanwords for the addressee. In order to integrate the functions of alterity marking and enhancing accessibility, the author introduces the term of 'meta-information techniques' and proposes to distinguish three major types of markers, i.e., flagging, metalinguistic comments, and frame information. In a further step, shifting to the perspective of the addressee, she illuminates which features of reduced accessibility on a formal and semantic level can be identified in incipient loanwords, and to what extent the different types of meta-information techniques can mark alterity, enhance accessibility, or provide a combination of both. In the second part of the paper, the theoretical and classificatory reorganisation of the phenomenon under study is applied to a survey on recent anglicisms in French and

Italian. Twenty newspaper articles, ten each from large-circulation national newspapers in France and Italy, which feature a recent anglicism in their headline or lead paragraph, are examined. First, the reduced accessibility of the anglicisms is analysed. In a next step, the meta-information techniques for these anglicisms are identified, also differentiating in which parts of the text (headline, lead paragraph or text body) they occur, in order to observe whether the strategies evolve within the articles. Finally, other anglicisms occurring in the articles and unflagged occurrences of the sample's anglicisms are also taken into consideration. In a primarily qualitative analysis, the occurrences are exhaustively discussed, compared with each other, and aligned with the theoretical framework. The survey supports the author's claims that meta-information techniques can be interpreted as overt or covert indicators of a graded accessibility of anglicisms and that they can also bear the function of enhancing accessibility. The results underline the important role of frame information and suggest a number of avenues to be continued in further research, including text-specific requirements, possible quantitative tendencies, and differences between meta-information techniques in French and Italian.

A second group of papers of this special issue continues the previous reflections but foregrounds the ways in which pragmatic, historical, socio-cultural, and structural factors interact in language-contact situations. The paper by Melissa Schuring (KU Leuven), Laura Rosseel (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and Eline Zenner (KU Leuven), 'Says who? Language regard towards speaker groups using English loanwords in Dutch', focuses on the perception of contact-induced change by individual language users, thus linking observations on the micro-level of individual linguistic behaviour to shared social beliefs at the community level, as well as to contact-induced dynamics and change (see also the third research question outlined above). Adopting a cognitive linguistic, usage-based framework, the authors bring together insights from folk linguistics and societal role theory. In a questionnaire study, 177 highly educated Belgian Dutch female participants were asked about their expectations concerning the speaker of a message containing English loanwords. More specifically, they were invited to indicate their assumptions about speaker age and the societal role of the speaker. The study shows that the use of English is typically attributed to young speakers in late adolescence, and strongly linked to modern societal roles (e.g., gamers, rappers, or vloggers) in contrast to public and traditional roles (e.g., primary school teachers or farmers, respectively); for the latter group, the use of English is expected to a significantly lower degree. Concerning the evaluations of the use of English depending on the societal role of the projected speaker, the authors observe that it is only for public roles with social responsibility that a role violation reflected in an unexpected use of English is negatively evaluated. The paper thereby provides important insight into the complexity of social beliefs related to the use of English, and argues for fine-grained analyses that adequately take into account

the heterogeneity of linguistic communities and the relevance of social and socio-linguistic factors for the perception and evaluation of contact-induced variation and dynamics.

The next paper in this group by Andreu van Hooft, Frank van Meurs, Mylène van de Wouw and Pablo van Maren Díaz (all affiliated with the Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen) investigates 'First language as a determinant of implicit and explicit language attitudes: Catalan/Spanish bilinguals' general language attitudes and response to language choice in a COVID-19 vaccination advertisement'. Again, the focus is on individual language users and their attitudes, but this time in a multilingual society where Catalan and Spanish coexist (Catalonia), and with an additional distinction between explicit and implicit language attitudes being made. While the role of explicit language attitudes is investigated with the help of a questionnaire in which 358 L1 Catalan and 338 L1 Spanish speakers expressed their general attitude towards both languages, the effect of implicit attitudes is measured by means of a survey of the reactions to the use of Catalan versus Spanish in an advertisement for COVID-19 vaccination. The paper presents the first empirical survey of this kind focussing on a multilingual European society. The results confirm first-language preference as regards general language attitudes. Interestingly, however, positive attitudes towards Spanish are also found for L1 Catalan speakers, which emphasises that language attitudes are also subject to dynamics, with Catalan no longer being perceived as a means of expressing the speakers' identity and Spanish being seen as an appealing language by L1 Catalan speakers as well. Moreover, for both participant groups, it is found that the choice of the L1 is rated as being more appropriate compared to the L2, but otherwise, the data show no effects of the speakers' first language on the persuasiveness of the advertisement and on implicit attitudes concerning the advertisement, vaccination, and vaccination intention. The paper thus also underlines the complex nature of speaker attitudes in contexts of language contact, with marked differences being observed between explicit and implicit attitudes, and more subtle differences with respect to the specific aspects that were evaluated (e.g., appropriateness, demonstration of cultural respect, attitude towards the content of the message, etc.). The paper thereby illustrates the potential but also the challenges of studying language contact as perceived by individual speakers and speaker groups, and these general findings appear to be generalisable to other contact settings.

Another paper addressing the second basic research question outlined above is presented by Eline Zenner (KU Leuven), Lisa Hilde (Universiteit Antwerpen), Ad Backus (Tilburg University) and Reinhild Vandekerckhove (Universiteit Antwerpen). In 'On *sisters* and *zussen*: integrating semasiological and onomasiological perspectives on the use of English person-reference nouns in Belgian-Dutch teenage chat messages', the authors compare the use of person-reference nouns borrowed from

English with the use of heritage alternatives (e.g., *girlfriend/vriendin*, *loser/sukkel*, *sister/zus*). Through the focus on youth language, which is motivated by previous research on English as a ‘youth language marker’, the paper can be linked to the one by Schuring, Rosseel and Zenner, to which it adds further insights concerning the ways in which the semantics and pragmatics of borrowed versus heritage forms are negotiated and differentiated within the relevant speaker groups. On the basis of data from a corpus of over 450,000 private instant messages, it is observed that the heritage alternatives account for the large majority of tokens (over 85 %) and types (over 75 %), and that the Dutch nouns are dominant across all semantic sub-categories. At the same time, subtle preferences are notified for the use of English or Dutch related to particular semantic features, most importantly, a clear dominance of Dutch for person-reference nouns characterised by the feature ‘School’ as opposed to a relatively strong position of English among the person-reference nouns characterised by the feature ‘Evaluation’. The semasiological investigations are complemented by an onomasiological investigation focussing on the choice of the near-synonyms *sis*, *sister*, *zus*, *zusje*, and *zuster*. The analyses suggest that the forms of English origin are preferred when the speaker aims to express affectivity and friendship, i.e. a semantic shift of *sis/sister* to the meaning ‘(close) friend’ can be observed, whereas the Dutch expressions continue to be used for the literal kinship meaning ‘sister’. This paper thus adds a lexicological perspective to the focus on attitudes towards speakers, speaker groups and languages in the previous papers. By exploring the domain of person reference, and by combining semasiological investigations with onomasiological perspectives that have been explored more recently in contact linguistics, the authors contribute to the exploration of new theoretical and methodological dimensions of language contact research. A further important methodological contribution is the identification of ‘ambiguous’ person-reference nouns. These include, on the one hand, items for which both an English and a Dutch pronunciation is possible and for which it can be assumed that their English origin may no longer be perceived by at least part of the recipient language community (*fan*, *gangster*, *stalker*), and on the other hand, items that represent meaningful person-reference nouns in both languages (e.g., *man*, *mate*, *model*, *racist*). The methodological observations on cases of (potentially) ambiguous items appear to be relevant for other scenarios of language contact as well, particularly for contacts between genetically related languages, where similar constellations could be expected to occur with a certain frequency.

The last two papers focus on the structural consequences of language contact at the level of the language system (cf. **RQ3**). The contribution ‘The VP in language contact: on creation event lexicalization in Canadian French’ by Barbara Schirakowski (FU Berlin) is dedicated to language contact outside Europe and sheds light on contact-induced change of verbal event and argument structure. It examines the

influence of English, which is a prototypical satellite-framed language according to Talmy's typology, on French, representative of verb-framed or path languages. The focus is on the question whether semantic and combinatorial copying processes occurring in the contact between the typologically different languages can lead to changes in restrictions and lexicalisation preferences. To tackle this question, the paper concentrates on a highly significant subset of verbs, viz. verbs which, given certain language-specific syntactic and semantic conditions, have the potential to denote creation events. The analysis is grounded on an acceptability judgement task and aims to clarify whether various subtypes of creation event lexicalisations are judged differently by speakers with divergent language profiles (Hexagonal French vs. Canadian French, monolinguals vs. bilinguals). The different types of manner verbs include flexible verbs of the type *sculpter* 'to carve' that are available in activity or change of state and creation readings when combined with a direct object, inflexible verbs of the type *plier* 'to tie' that are restricted to an activity or change of state reading when combined only with a direct object, and inflexible verbs of the type *mordre* 'to bite', where the English equivalent can receive a creation reading when used in a resultative construction. Based on 40 stimuli with 20 token sets containing the different types of manner verbs, the acceptance of various types of event lexicalisation is tested in a within-subject design with respect to the distribution of the stimuli. In order to investigate the importance of individual and social language dominance of the speakers, the author compares the acceptability judgements of 30 monolingual speakers of Hexagonal French and 47 Canadian French speakers who are bilingual with English to varying degrees. She observes that in both test groups French manner verbs and direct objects can undergo the process of coercion into creation readings, depending on the adaption of the selection restrictions of a particular verb. At the same time, the data show that the Canadian French speakers accept more often a creation reading for coercion that requires overriding a structural constraint of French. The decisive factor is the possibility for this group to resort to combinatorial copying. In addition, the results reveal that the bilingual speakers had different judgement patterns under two conditions: on the one hand, they were more inclined to accept satellite-framed structures with unselected objects, which are only available in English, on the other, they were less likely to accept VPs with *faire* in which a flexible manner verb was available but not used. Both results can be plausibly related to the influence of the satellite-framed language English and can most likely be further differentiated depending on the degree of social dominance of French in the speakers' respective province or region. In this context, the complex role of individual and social language dominance becomes particularly evident. The paper convincingly argues that both structural and speaker-related aspects can influence the acceptance of event descriptions in complex and persistent settings of language contact. The elaboration of the experimental

design and its nuanced discussion also provide new methodological insights that might be of considerable benefit to future empirical research.

In her paper ‘Language contact between Italian and English: a case study on nouns ending in the suffix *-ing*’, Judith Meinschaefer explores how deverbal nominalisations on *-ing* have been borrowed from English into Italian. The investigation centres on the question whether the borrowing process is limited to importing the *ing*-nouns as simple sign-concept pairings, leaving behind the argument and event structure that the English *-ing* nouns preserve after their deverbalisation, or whether their argument and event structure can also be maintained in the recipient language. In a critical review of previous research on the topic, the author first discusses the differences identified between the borrowing of various types of *-ing* nominalisations into French, Spanish, and Italian. She then critically evaluates the common claim that argument and event structure can only be imported if the respective affix had been morphologically borrowed into the recipient language beforehand and has already been combining with native bases. In order to falsify this assumption, a thorough and large-scale corpus analysis is carried out: the *itTenTen16* corpus is identified as suitable for the design of the study and consequently searched, with all extracted forms constituting the base from which, in a first step, a randomised sample of 100 different Italian borrowed *-ing* nominalisations is created. In a second step, proper nouns and forms with less than 20 uses as nouns attested in the corpus are excluded from this list, leading to a reduced set of 81 types of Italian *-ing* nouns. The corpus tokens of this sample are then semantically analysed as well as examined in their syntactic context and submitted to a series of tests. The fine-grained analyses lead to the following results: in a significant amount of corpus contexts, it can be demonstrated that several of the sample’s borrowed Italian *-ing* nominalisations have argument structure and that some of them have complex event structure. Although the suffix *-ing* in Italian does not combine with native bases (the morphological and typological reasons for this are also discussed in depth), borrowed argument and event structures are thus nevertheless attestable. In addition to the theoretical insights gained, the paper shows how the *TenTen* corpora can be employed to study the borrowing of complex semantic features. It thus provides important theoretical and methodological advances, which will hopefully foster further research on borrowed nominalisations in Romance languages and beyond.

4 Conclusions

As demonstrated by the papers in this special issue, language contact needs to be understood as an interface phenomenon, characterised by a complex interplay of internal and external, individual, socio-cultural, and structural factors as well as

micro-level and macro-level dynamics. At the same time, the contributions highlight the potential of combining new and different methodologies in language contact studies. Adopting a framework that integrates these different dimensions, classic topics of language contact research can be re-envisioned, and new domains of investigation can be identified. The papers show how new concepts and methodologies can be successfully applied to different West Germanic and Romance languages. We hope that they will stimulate further applications of these new theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to other contact phenomena, including contacts with low-resource or endangered languages and regional varieties that are less well-documented. At the same time, it remains to be explored what insight can be gained for investigations of particular historical contact settings in and across different language families.

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