
Reviewed by Jeff Good (University at Buffalo)

The present volume consists of twelve chapters, along with an introduction by the editors, and its general focus is the relationship between language contact and language change in morphological and syntactic constructions. Its orientation is broadly functional-typological rather than formal, though, on the whole, specific theoretical stances are backgrounded in favor of an emphasis on presentation of the descriptive facts. While the chapters are not of even quality, the collection would seem to represent a good snapshot of the current state of functionally-oriented work in this area.

The introduction emphasizes the need to examine a variety of factors when attempting to account for patterns of variation and change that have been significantly influenced by language contact and the importance of adopting a fine-grained approach to their analysis. Three possible factors, in particular, are singled out: the role of speakers’ multilingual competences and social attitudes in change, the extent to which change in endangerment contexts may have distinctive properties, and the interrelationship between language-internal and contact-induced change. While these factors are represented in various ways throughout the volume, in this review, I will divide the chapters in a different way: first focusing on those addressing general concerns (Aikhenvald, Grant, Heine, and Matras) and then turning to those comprising more detailed case studies (Chamoreau, Estrada-Fernández, Epps, Fernández Garay, Kriegel, Manterola, Stolz, and Bruno).
Yaron Matras’s contribution is the broadest in its orientation, developing a model for language change in contact situations that emphasizes how multilingual speakers may employ their repertoire of lexicogrammatical codes in ways that result in change to a language itself. He considers, for instance, the effects of the choice to use one code over another for expressive purposes and the fact that real-time production constraints may result in the “accidental” use of an element from one language when speaking another. Many of the specific points, perhaps better defended in other work (e.g., Matras 2009), are more asserted than argued for, giving the chapter an overall programmatic feel.

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald’s chapter considers the extent to which contact in language obsolescence situations may have different grammatical effects from other contact situations. Data from South American languages is especially prominent, and it is concluded that the extent and pervasiveness of the changes in these contexts, rather than their specific nature, is what is noteworthy. No striking new conclusions are reached, but the collection of less familiar examples of change during obsolescence is valuable in its own right. Creolists will no doubt see parallels between the examples Aikhenvald discusses and what is known to happen during creolization.

The paper by Bernd Heine continues his recent line of research on the relationship between language contact and processes of grammaticalization (see, e.g., Heine & Kuteva 2005). Data involving the development of auxiliaries is drawn from many languages of Europe, and he defends the following implication: When language contact prompts the development of new grammatical uses of a morpheme, if a grammaticalizing element has taken on a function associated with a later stage of grammaticalization, it will also have taken on functions associated with earlier stages. This is clearly a non-trivial theoretical claim that would be
difficult to articulate without existing models of grammaticalization. It, therefore, stands as a strong argument for grammaticalization theory, which is significant given criticisms that have been made against the idea that there can be such a thing as grammaticalization theory (Campbell & Janda 2001).

Anthony P. Grant’s chapter, the last of those covering more general topics, examines cross-linguistic patterns of borrowing of discourse markers and conjunctions. It is the most traditionally typological in orientation, making use of a varied language sample in order to arrive at implicational hierarchies, and he uncovers significant tendencies, for instance, that languages will usually borrow words with comparable function to English but before borrowing words with comparable function to and. The chapter’s coverage of a wide range of languages can make it hard to follow at times, but this does not detract from the value of the survey on the whole.

The remaining chapters of the volume focus on specific languages or groups of languages. Claudine Chamoreau’s contribution, one of four considering languages of Latin America, examines comparative constructions in Purepecha (an isolate of Mexico), focusing on the extent to which the language’s ways of expressing comparison do or do not follow patterns found in Spanish, the socially dominant contact language. These range from a construction employing an applicative suffix which cannot be plausibly linked to any Spanish grammatical pattern, to one which is a transparent borrowing of the Spanish mas...que ‘more...than’ construction, to one which makes use of the Spanish element entre ‘between’ in a way that is not attested in Spanish. A strength of this chapter is that it offers a glimpse into an entire system of encoding a given function to see where contact has and has not been a factor in its development.

Ana Fernández Garay’s chapter looks at the argument marking system of Tehuelche, a member of the small Chon family of South America, focusing on the apparent development of a
marked nominative system from a language that would have originally been ergative-absolutive. She suggests that this was triggered by contact with another local indigenous language, Mapudungun. The claim seems reasonable, though, at least on the basis of the presented data, still speculative in nature.

The contribution of Patience Epps considers a polyfunctional element with a form like *ni*, found in a number of languages of the Vaupés region of the Amazon, which has a copular function as well as more grammaticalized ones. The Vaupés is noteworthy for containing languages which have clearly converged grammatically but do not show signs of significant lexical borrowing due to strong cultural restrictions against readily visible language mixing. Epps’s study, however, focuses on a case of apparent grammatical convergence where there is shared form across languages, demonstrating that even in a contact area where there is strong cultural pressure against formal/functional overlap among lexical items across languages, exceptions can arise in ways that make it look more like other parts of the world.

Zarina Estrada-Fernández’s chapter examines the development of modal auxiliaries in Pima Bajo and considers data from related Uto-Aztec languages as well as the possibility that contact with Spanish may have been a factor in their rise. The main question posed is the extent to which the appearance of these auxiliaries can be explained as the result of “internal” or contact-induced grammaticalization. No clear conclusion is drawn in this regard, but it seems likely that Spanish contact was an important factor.

The chapter by Julen Manterola, one of two looking at languages of Europe, is a detailed study of definite and indefinite articles in Basque. The discussion is intended to serve as a kind of corrective to analyses of these elements that can be found in the literature on
grammaticalization, suggesting that previous work has been based on an imperfect understanding of Basque diachrony.

**Carlo Bruno’s** chapter considers comparative data from Latin/Romance and Greek in the domain of perfect constructions. The discussion focuses, in particular, on the ways in which each language’s development of superficially similar constructions has diverged and argues that these divergences are connected to other aspects of the languages’ grammars, especially regarding the morphosyntax of their participles. The paper, therefore, emphasizes how a language’s internal grammatical properties may constrain its pathways of change.

**Thomas Stolz’s** contribution comprises a detailed case study of the functions of the indefinite marker *un* in Chamorro, which has been borrowed from Spanish. He is concerned, in particular, with the ways in which the functions of the Chamorro indefinite article overlap with those of its Spanish source element and concludes that Chamorro appears to have borrowed only those functions of the Spanish marker associated with earlier stages of grammaticalization.

The chapter by **Sibylle Kriegel** is the only one focused on creoles in the volume. It examines some post-creolization developments in the syntax of Mauritian and Seychelles Creole. She argues that syntactic divergences among the closely related languages can be connected to the fact that the Seychelles saw significant numbers of Bantu speakers enter after the slavery period while Mauritian is now undergoing close contact with the Indic language Bhojpuri.

The diversity of the topics covered by the chapters in this volume means that almost any scholar with an interest in patterns of language change and language contact is likely to find something of interest here. Creolists specifically will not find much discussion of the issues that uniquely animate the subfield, but, it is noteworthy that, since a number of the chapters focus on situations where a more socially dominant language (e.g., Spanish) has exerted influence on a
less socially dominant language (e.g., Chamorro), the specific dynamics of contact considered 
often bear similarities to those associated with the most well-known cases contact language 
formation.

A clear deficiency of the volume is that connections among the chapters are never made 
explicit. The casual reader would never discover, for instance, the thematic overlap between 
Stolz’s analysis of Chamorro and Manterola’s discussion of Basque, or that, even though both 
Stolz and Manterola cite other work of Heine’s work extensively, the chapter by Heine earlier in 
the book is also quite relevant to their arguments. Indeed, I did not find a single internal citation 
anywhere in the volume. Various other editorial concerns are probably not disconnected from 
this issue, for instance, the lack of idiomatic English in some chapters. Of course, issues like 
these do not detract from the significant contributions made by individual chapters, and any 
reader interested in learning more about the complex interrelationships between contact 
situations and language change, especially in parts of the world or in language groups that they 
may be less familiar with, will find much of interest here.

References

Campbell, Lyle & Richard Janda. 2000. Introduction: Conceptions of grammaticalization and 
their problems. Language Sciences. 93–112.

Heine, Bernd and Tania Kuteva. 2005. Language contact and grammatical change. Cambridge: 
CUP.

Matras, Yaron. 2009. Language contact. Cambridge: CUP.