

WINFORD, DONALD. 2003. *An introduction to contact linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp xvii + 416. ISBN: 0631212515.

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This is a highly engaging text that gives thorough coverage of all aspects of contact linguistics. The writing is clear and concise, and the book presents even complex issues in an entertaining and accessible style. Right from the beginning, Winford makes it clear that the field of study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that draws on theoretical linguistics and theories of second language acquisition, and that these theories are intertwined with sociocultural factors. The subsequent coverage of each of these approaches is fairly and evenly weighted. Winford frequently stresses that scholars working in different disciplines often draw the same conclusions about similar issues, but that they express these conclusions in different terms according to the disciplines that they work in. Winford unravels these competing theories and ongoing debates within and across disciplines, and presents them objectively and with clarity.

Each chapter provides an in-depth linguistic analysis of the phenomena discussed. Winford always attends to the linguistic constraints that are in operation, but pays equal attention to the sociohistorical contexts in which varieties emerge and the ways in which these factors and other social motivations can also affect the outcomes. Relevant case studies exemplify each topic, and numerous examples of varieties from around the world are given. Exercises, useful both to recapitulate information and to motivate further reading, are interspersed in the text at the appropriate points rather than placed at the end of the chapter. The reference list is impressive—over 500 works, historical as well as contemporary, are carefully woven into the text and explained for their content as well as where they fit into current debates. The book is well-structured and reader-friendly, with each chapter divided into sections with headings and sub-headings. Tables present useful summaries throughout the text. The book uses a considerable number of abbreviated terms and mentions many languages, but the comprehensive index provides for ease of cross-referencing.

Chapter 1 introduces the field of contact linguistics, provides an overview of the history of research on the subject, and includes a brief discussion of the role of sociocultural factors in contact situations. It sets out the three broad kinds of contact situation—those involving language maintenance, those involving language shift, and those involving the creation of new contact languages. This division of contexts provides the main organizational framework for the remainder of the text, and a table with these major divisions provides a useful overview of contact situations and their possible outcomes, illustrated with language examples.

Chapter 2 considers lexical borrowing in language maintenance contexts and provides many examples of English and Chinese loans in the Japanese lexicon and French influence on the lexicon of Middle English. As well as discussing the social motivations for lexical borrowing, this chapter also affords a thorough examination of the processes and products of lexical borrowing, and demonstrates that borrowings are not just direct importations of words but can be integrated in varying degrees into the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the borrowing language. Once adopted, they may then undergo further processes inter-

nal to the recipient language and may be subject to semantic change in addition to being subject to linguistic constraints.

Continuing with situations of language maintenance, chapter 3 deals with structural diffusion. Unlike Thomason and Kaufman (1988), Winford argues that direct borrowing of structural elements is quite rare. Presenting case studies from Spanish in Los Angeles, French/English contact on Prince Edward Island, the Balkan Sprachbund, and aboriginal languages in Arnhem Land, Australia, he shows that in cases of stable bilingualism, intense contact and heavy cultural presence are not enough to bring about structural changes to many minority languages, though lexical borrowing may be a conduit for some structural innovations. In situations of unstable bilingualism, high degrees of bilingualism, language shift, and processes of accommodation all seem to be factors that may lead to structural diffusion. Winford emphasizes in this chapter that no two situations are alike, and that each outcome is determined by a “complex interaction of linguistic, social, and attitudinal factors” (100).

Chapter 4 is devoted to the social aspects of code-switching, and chapter 5 to its linguistic aspects. Code-switching is defined and contrasted with borrowing and interference, and its use is discussed within the contexts of different sociolinguistic domains and situations of diglossia. Winford also discusses Communicative Accommodation Theory, where choices of code may reflect speakers’ attitudes, leading them to converge or diverge with each other via code-switching. As for the linguistic constraints on code-switching, Winford examines the merits and shortcomings of several different explanatory approaches, including the earlier equivalence-based and government-based models, and he gives a thorough analysis of the more recent Matrix Language-Frame model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993).

Chapter 6 covers bilingual mixed languages—languages that are generally considered to be made up of two languages, with components from each language remaining relatively intact. This chapter presents detailed case studies of Media Lengua and Michif, which both maintain L1 structure but incorporate features from an external source; Ma’a, which consists of L2 structure into which lexis from the original ethnic language has been incorporated; and Copper Island Aleut, where the majority of the vocabulary is derived from Aleut but which has structural components from both Aleut and Russian. In each case, Winford gives careful consideration to the sociohistorical background against which each of these languages emerged, as well as a detailed description of their structural features. Winford concludes that “there is still some disagreement over the precise origins and classification of these languages” (205).

In chapter 7, the focus changes to contexts of language shift, and contact situations are considered in terms of second language acquisition (SLA). The first part of the chapter deals with an overview of individual SLA, and considers such things as L1 influence on the structural features of the target language (TL), simplification and other strategies and processes in SLA, and some of the constraints that operate on SLA. With this background, the discussion moves to a consideration of group SLA or language shift in contact situations where the outcome is a new contact variety of the TL. Case studies of Irish English and Colloquial Singapore English are presented here. Winford ends this section by posing the question of where cases of shift should fit into a typology of contact vernaculars. Making links between these varieties and extended pidgins and creoles, he proposes that all

of these outcomes can be placed on a continuum, with cases of near approximation to the TL at one of the continuum and “radical” creoles like Sranan Tongo at the other. The final section of this chapter considers the changes that can occur to a group’s ancestral language (AL) when it is undergoing shift to a new language—changes that in some cases can lead to attrition or even language death. Winford finds the social motivations and the linguistic processes involved in these cases to be comparable to those found in pidgins or early stages of SLA.

The final part of the book deals with the creation of new languages. The treatment of pidgins and creoles in chapters 8 and 9 is, in a sense, a culmination of all the previous chapters, which makes clear the relevance and necessity of dealing with the preceding topics before discussing these particular forms of new contact varieties. In dealing with the ongoing debate on how pidgins should be classified, Winford carefully disentangles prototypical pidgins from other contact varieties, such as early interlanguage, extended pidgins, and simplified languages, and pays attention to both structural and sociolinguistic attributes. He describes the structural characteristics of prototypical pidgins and the processes of pidgin formation, particularly in relation to second language acquisition, and contrasts these with the structural properties and development of extended pidgins, exemplified with a case study of Melanesian Pidgin. Creoles are just as problematic to define as pidgins, and Winford engages with the work of Bickerton, McWhorter, Thomason, and Mufwene to justify the position that creoles should be treated as “a separate and identifiable class of languages” (308). He discusses the sociohistorical background to creole formation and shows that the outcome is different in each case, so that creoles also form a kind of continuum; and he distinguishes here between “intermediate” creoles, exemplified by Bajan, and “radical” creoles, such as those found in Suriname. Winford pays detailed attention to the competing theories of creole formation, and while there are still areas where the opinions of contemporary scholars differ, Winford concludes that there is a general consensus among creolists that “creole formation was primarily a process of second language acquisition in rather unusual circumstances” (356).

This would make an ideal textbook and should be essential reading for a high-level undergraduate or graduate-level course on contact linguistics. It does assume a fair amount of linguistic knowledge, and it also assumes that the reader has had some prior exposure to pidgins and creoles, as detailed discussions and analyses of these do not come until the last two chapters, although they are referred to throughout the book. That said, the sequencing of the chapters makes perfect sense, as the concluding chapters draw together and show the relevance of all of the preceding topics. This is also a worthwhile read for students and scholars working on second language acquisition, as well as those working on language variation and change. Perhaps, as much as anything, the book highlights the need for more cross-disciplinary approaches to language research.

REFERENCES

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