

53-513: Introduction into Contact Linguistics

Course description:

„Es gibt keine völlig ungemischte Sprache.“ (Schuchardt 1884: 5).
“Language contact is everywhere: there is no evidence that any languages have developed in total isolation from other languages.” (Thomason 2001: 8)

When speakers of different languages interact closely it is typical for their languages to influence each other. Languages normally develop by gradually accumulating internal differences until one parent language splits into daughter languages. This phenomenon of language contact is responsible for the world's vast linguistic diversity. Although contact linguistics as a new branch of linguistics subjects has only established itself since fifty or so years ago, it has recently come to be recognized a subdiscipline with robust explanatory power. The questions constituted the core of the discipline are:

1. What happens when language come into contact?
2. How can we classify the various principles of language contact and the resulting effects?

In this course, we will first discuss the confines of language contact theories in general, types of contact situation, as well as some key mechanisms in language contact situation. We will also explore multilingualism, second language acquisition and some varieties of English from a contact perspective. Following the theoretical input, we will have three practical sessions and gain hands-on experience in collecting data, as well as using some linguistic software and corpora. Students will learn how to use standard text retrieval software, including WordSmith and AntConc, and are expected to conduct a small scale independent empirical research on one of the topics discussed in the course.

Requirements:

Students who wish to take this course for credit are expected to do the required reading for each session and either an oral report (3 credit points) or give an oral report and submit a term paper (6 credit points). Special office hours will be offered for the discussion of the term papers.

Literature:

- Matras, Yaron (2009). *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mufwene, S.S. (2002). “Competition and Selection in Language Evolution”. *Selection* 3 (1): 45-56
- Schreier, Daniel & Hundt, Mariane (2013). *English as a Contact Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Siemund, Peter & Kintana, Noemi (2008). *Language contact and contact languages*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Thomason, S.G. & Kaufman, T. (1988). *Language Contact Creolization and generic linguistics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Thomason S.G. (2001). *Language Contact: An Introduction*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Winford, Donald (2008). *An introduction to contact linguistics*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.