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Summary

The present study deals with linguistic borrowing in Latin America from the perspective of typology and sociolinguistics. It is based on an extensive corpus of spontaneous speech collected in Ecuador, Paraguay and Mexico. The goal of this study is to identify cross-linguistic regularities in borrowing. The recipient languages selected for analysis are Ecuadorian Quechua, Paraguayan Guaraní and Mexican Otomí. They are all different in their typological profile but similar in their contact with Spanish, the donor language. Accordingly, differences in the outcomes of borrowing are ascribed to typological differences while similarities in the outcomes are explained by means of analogous contact situations. The assumption is that the comparison of borrowing tendencies in typologically different languages sheds light on how linguistic structure influences the outcomes of contact and the extent of such influence vis-à-vis nonlinguistic factors.

The book consists of three parts. The first part is theoretical as it deals with the conceptual foundations for the analysis of linguistic borrowing and develops a causation model of contact-induced language change, with linguistic and nonlinguistic causes interacting with each other at different levels. The first part provides an ample discussion of parts of speech, borrowability and morphological typology and presents the research program of the investigation.

The second part is descriptive in nature as it accounts for the donor language and the recipient languages in terms of their historical development, sociolinguistic status, dialectal variation and typology. It deals with the intensity and duration of contact in each situation and the expected degree of influence between the languages involved. The sociolinguistic characterization of the recipient languages in terms of their diglossic position and the societal levels of bilingualism is an indication of the pressure exerted by the donor language on the recipient languages. Finally, the classification of the languages in terms of parts of speech, morphological type, dialectal variation and other linguistic features is the point of departure for the analysis of borrowing types. The description of the languages in the second part results in specific predictions about the borrowing behavior of each language.

The third part represents the analytic core of the book. It elaborates on the findings from the analysis of corpora and compares these findings to the predictions for each language so as to test the validity of the borrowing hypotheses. Lexical and grammatical borrowings are addressed separately in terms of their contribution to overall borrowing, their morpho-phonological adaptation to the recipient language, and the use of Spanish borrowings. The use of borrowings is tested for dialects and sociolects in order to determine the influence of dialectal variation and bilingualism as factors modeling the borrowing behavior of languages. The findings of lexical and grammatical borrowing are evaluated in terms of the changes they have led to in the typology of the borrowing languages.

The investigation points out the interplay of linguistic and nonlinguistic factors in the modeling of borrowing. The distribution of borrowings in any given language cannot be explained by either type of factor. The interplay of factors at different levels is shown by the dynamic nature of the causation model proposed for the explanation of contact-induced changes. On the other hand, while linguistic constraints can be overridden by nonlinguistic factors, the outcomes of borrowing are determined in principle by the structure of the participating languages. Not everything goes in linguistic borrowing: structural restrictions in the form of basic typological parameters set the limits of language mixing. In general, these parameters are resistant to change in normal and contact situations, and they have been largely preserved in the recipient languages under scrutiny after hundreds of years of contact with Spanish, even though changes are attested in less crucial typological features.

Nonlinguistic and linguistic causes interplay in such a way that the pressure exerted by the donor language on account of the hegemonic position of its speakers may induce structural changes in the recipient language, but these changes are co-determined by the latter's linguistic system, the level of societal and individual bilingualism, and the attitude of speakers towards language mixing. In any case, linguistic borrowing is an adaptation to discursive and communicative needs imposed by the dominant language, particularly in multicultural and multilingual contexts. In this perspective, the Amerindian languages studied here are survivors of a long history of intense contact because they have been flexible enough to adapt to the new socio-communicative settings of the Spanish-speaking colonial society.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that scales of borrowing or hierarchies of borrowability are not cross-linguistically valid. Typological, sociolinguistic and historical considerations are necessary to refine their predictive capacity. For example, the often assumed predominance of lexical over grammatical borrowing can be reversed in a context of rapid language shift and increasing levels of bilingualism, provided grammatical borrowings accommodate to the structure of the recipient language.

The study necessarily leaves several questions unanswered. Some of them concern the relation between code switching and borrowing, the relation between phrasal borrowing and code switching, the influence of semantic restrictions or distributional rules on the use of loanwords, the influence of language loyalty on language mixing in situations of diglossia and intense contact, and the diachronic study of borrowing on the basis of historical records. These and other questions make up an agenda for future research in the field of language contact.