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THE INTERPLAY OF LANGUAGES: UNDERSTANDING CONTACT THEORY IN MULTILINGUAL SETTINGS

ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ ЯЗЫКОВ: ПОНИМАНИЕ ТЕОРИИ КОНТАКТОВ В МНОГОЯЗЫЧНОЙ СРЕДЕ

This paper conducts a literature review of language contact theory which outlines major concepts and research methods related to multilingual studies. The paper investigates the initial works by Weinreich and Haugen about language interference and expands their studies on borrowing and code-switching and linguistic convergence. The paper examines language shift and merging phenomena in multilingual communities alongside their influence on how languages interact with one another. Language contact research benefited greatly from the 1950s and 1960s onwards as the studies uncovered its meaningful social and political and cultural dimensions.

Key words: language contact theory; code-switching; convergence; multilingual setting.

Приводится обзор литературы по теории языковых контактов, в котором излагаются основные концепции и методы исследования, связанные с исследованиями многоязычия. Работа анализирует основополагающие труды Вайнрайха и Хаугена о языковой интерференции и развивает их исследования заимствований, кодового переключения и языковой конвергенции. Рассматриваются явления языкового сдвига и слияния в многоязычных сообществах, их влияние на характер взаимодействия языков. Исследования языковых контактов получили значительное развитие с 1950–1960-х годов, когда в них были выявлены важные социальные, политические и культурные аспекты.

Ключевые слова: теория языковых контактов; кодовое переключение; конвергенция; многоязычная среда.

As a branch of sociolinguistics, language contact theory is vital in studying the problems in which two or more languages come into contact in a multilingual setting. The theory starts from Weinreich's [1957] and Haugen's [1950] work, which covers language transfer, borrowing, code-switching, interference, convergence, language shift, and language merging. These processes show languages' dynamic and developing nature as they coexist and impact other languages in various social, political, financial, and cultural conditions. This paper will add an in-depth view of language contact theory, including its main components, theoretical foundations, and consequences for multilingual societies. Interference is one effect of language contact that leads to the unintentional intrusion of features of one language into another at the phonological, syntactic, morphological, and semantic levels and can occur in both directions. Borrowing Linguistic influence happens when people who speak different languages interact, such as in trade, migration, and colonisation. This often leads to languages

borrowing words, mixing, or changing over time. Borrowing is another essential practice of borrowing lexical items, phrases and even grammatical structures from one language to another [Haugen 1950]. Such process is familiar, amongst other things, in bilingual societies with frequent interactions of languages that enrich the system, but often in an altered way. Code-switching, which was extensively documented as a linguistic phenomenon, denotes the experimental use of two or more languages in one conversation. Code-switching has multiple functions, such as conversational efficiency, expression of identity and strategic ambiguity. This is particularly the case when bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm in a given community. Thus, it testifies to the adaptability and flexibility of linguistic practice.

The second result of language contact is known as language shift, which means that one language is substituted for another as the community's primary mode of communication. Fishman [1965] cites economic, social and political factors as contributors to language shift on a sociolinguistic basis. As time passes, the subordinate language gradually stops being used and disappears altogether. This often happens in immigrant communities when young people learn the language of their new country, which can lead them to use it more and gradually forget their native language. The other equally important side of language contact is convergence. In convergence, languages in contact start picking up each other's syntactic and grammatical structures [Mueller, 1965]. The nice thing about this process is that it shows that languages inherently involve a dynamic process, i.e. they adapt and reinforce each other. By converging, new linguistic forms may rise, whereby converging contributes to the diversity of the linguistic landscape of multilingual societies. Language merging is an advanced linguistic interaction that combines two or more languages to form a new linguistic system. In the formation of creoles and pidgins, for example, the phenomenon is mainly seen in professionals who have to use a language most speakers understand because speakers always present several combinations or languages they are not fluent in.

The theory of how languages influence each other comes from classical linguists who studied and explained it in their research. Weinreich [1957] has shown an essential aspect of this process of phonic interference, and Haugen [1950] found it in his linguistic borrowing study. In considering the social and political realms of language policy, Ornstein [1959] also explored the effects of language policy on linguistic interaction and mechanisms of language alternation and transference into a new language. In linguistic, social, cultural, and political views, language contact theory is not only known to be about linguistic analysis but also has implications. Language contact condition's identity formation, the levels at which people integrate into society, and how power operates by influencing social hierarchies, shaping linguistic norms, and determining access to economic and political opportunities. Governments and institutions that apply language policies that either assist or exacerbate linguistic diversity also significantly depend on socio-political factors, such as national identity, migration patterns, and education systems, and governments are particularly substantial in performing that role. This explains why understanding the mechanisms of language contact is crucial for creating language policies that can successfully reconcile linguistic unity with preserving the linguistic heritage. Additionally, technological progress and globalisation have shortened the way language contact is made, which has intensified language contact and

linguistic hybridisation as well as the emerging new communication practices. Not only do social media, global mobility and digital communication platforms, amongst others, enable the interaction of various linguistic communities, but they also enrich the study of language contact.

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