EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

This thematic issue mainly includes a selection of the papers presented at the workshop *Language Contact in Grammar: Limits and Consequences*, organized at the "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy in November 2022, by the members of the research project *Contrasting Contexts of Language Contact in Synchrony and Diachrony*, supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-1097, within PNCDI III. Therefore, five of the papers (Brinkmann, Banks, Barbu, Cui and Tham, Xu and Pan) originate in talks given at the workshop, whereas the paper authored by Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu was added to this issue given its thematic congruence.

Although the papers deal with contact situations identified all over the word (Mexico – Brinkmann; New Guinea, Australia, North and South America, Siberia, Africa – Banks; Croatia – Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu; Romania – Barbu; Singapore, China – Cui and Tham, Xu and Pan), the thematic unity of the volume is ensured by the fact that all the papers investigate some of the consequences of different types of language contact at the grammatical level, both morphological and syntactic. Hence, some papers deal with morphological issues (Brinkmann, Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu), and the other ones with syntactic or morphosyntactic issues (Banks, Barbu, Cui and Tham, Xu and Pan).

The papers included here illustrate different types of linguistic contact: bilingualism of a local language and an official language (Yucatec Maya and Spanish in Brinkmann's paper; Istro-Romanian and Croatian in Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu's paper), areal contact in Banks' paper, dialect contact in Xu and Pan's paper and indirect written contact, via translations from English in Barbu's and Cui and Tham's paper). Methodologically, most of the research presented in the papers is based on corpus study (Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu, Barbu, Cui and Tham, Xu and Tham), while Brinkmann's research takes advantage of her own data extracted during fieldwork, and Banks' research uses mostly the data available in the literature.

Brinkmann's paper focusses on the influence of language contact between Yucatec Maya (the local language) and Spanish (the official language) on pronominals. In contact with Mexican Spanish, the Maya pronouns changed their morphology, their functions, the case assignment mechanism, and the conditions under which they occur in discourse. The conclusion of the research is that bilinguals display optionality regarding certain pronominals that exist at interfaces (Sorace 2011[1]), and that actually no influence of Spanish can be found in the Mayan pronominal system.

In the next paper, **Banks** analyses the phenomenon of switch-reference, codified by a morpho-syntactic verbal affix system, whose main function is to track the continuity/ discontinuity of subjects across clauses and in some languages, objects as well. This is an

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[1] Sorace, A., 2011, "Pinning down the concept of interface in bilingual development", *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism,* 1, 2, 1–33.

areal phenomenon occurring in clusters in certain language groups of New Guinea, Australia, North and South America, as well as individual groups in Siberia (Yukaghir, Tungusic) and Africa (Omotic, Cushitic). Highlighting the importance of typological similarities in changes produced by language contact (especially for the Australian area), Banks concludes that switch reference can be the result of diffusion and morphological borrowing or, more rarely, parallel development.

Helmrich and Uță Bărbulescu are interested in what it was called in the literature (Kovačec 1971[2]) *aspectual suppletion* in the Istro-Romanian verb system. In Istro-Romanian, there are two main groups of verbs, one inherited from Romance, one borrowed from the Chakavian variety of Croatian. The Croatian-derived verbs are specified for aspect, while the Romance ones are not. The authors analyse the aspectual values of seven pairs of verbs in the existing corpora and they conclude that the behaviour of these pairs of verbs is very diverse, therefore one cannot properly speak of aspectual suppletion in this case.

Barbu focusses on the morphosyntactic influence of English on Romanian, through English compound loanwords of the type noun/adjective-modifier + noun-head. She identifies two main cases: changing the English head with a Romanian cognate and changing the order of the elements of the compound so that two variants coexist. Her corpus study suggests the emergence of a new syntactic pattern in Romanian, owing to English influence.

Cui and Tham are interested in a novel use of the word *xiangxin* 'believe' in Singapore Mandarin. In this new pattern, the preverbal nominal refers not to the believer, but rather to the subject of the propositional complement of *xiangxin* 'believe', functionally analogous to passive *believe* sentences in English (as in *X is believed to…*), but without any passive morphology. Analysing corpus data from Mandarin newspapers in Singapore and Mainland China, they identify an emergent adverbial use of SgM *xiangxin* 'believe' as an instance of language contact-induced change and in particular, as translation-induced language change (Heine and Kuteva 2003[3], 2005[4]).

The last paper, **Xu and Pan**, focusses on a case of pseudo-optionality in Chinese Wu, a variety where certain adverbs can "optionally" appear in both preverbal position and postverbal position. Their conclusion is that these "optional" constructions, which are somehow problematic for the Minimalist Program, are in fact the result of language contact between Wu and Mandarin Chinese.

Adina Dragomirescu[5] *and Alexandru Nicolae*[6]

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[2] Kovačec, A., 1971, *Descrierea istroromânei actuale*, București, Editura Academiei.

[3] Heine, B., T. Kuteva, 2003, "On contact-induced grammaticalization", *Studies in Language*, 27, 3, 529–572.

[4] Heine, B., T. Kuteva, 2005, *Language contact and grammatical change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

[5] "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy/University of Bucharest, adina.dragomirescu@lingv.ro.

[6] "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy/University of Bucharest, alexandru.nicolae@unibuc.ro.