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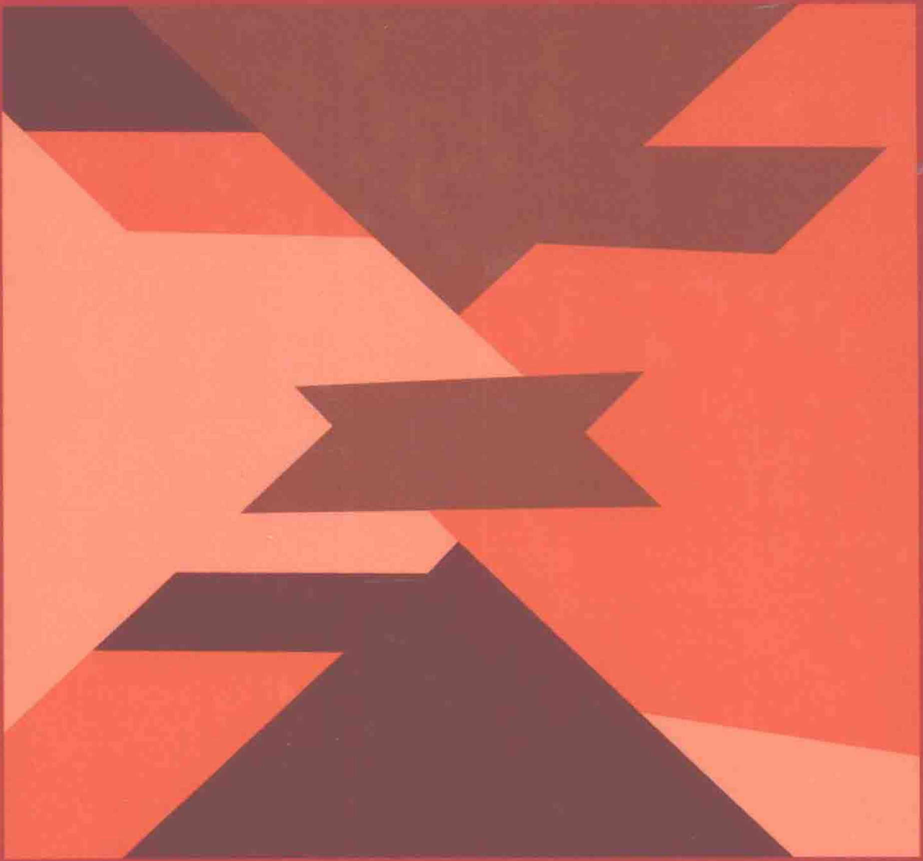

Multilingual Discourse Production

Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives

EDITED BY Svenja Kranich, Viktor Becher,
Steffen Höder and Juliane House

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Volume 12

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Introduction

Viktor Becher, Steffen Höder, Juliane House &
Svenja Kranich
Universität Hamburg

The aim of the present volume is to present research into a fairly under-researched area of language contact. Whereas studies of language contact phenomena that arise through direct interaction between speakers of different languages have been thriving in the last few decades (see e.g. Heine & Kuteva 2005, the papers collected in Matras 2007, and most of the papers in the volumes by Siemund & Kintana 2008 as well as Braunmüller & House 2009), the type of contact situation where the contact between two languages takes place through translation or other types of multilingual discourse production has received little attention. The present volume will focus on this specific type of contact situation and will thus help to shed light on such questions as: Which types of contact-induced variation and change can we observe in translated texts? Do language contact effects through oral translation (as discussed by Koch, this volume) differ decisively from contact effects through written translation? Are there particular factors that influence the outcome of language contact through translation (e.g. language-internal factors like typological distance between source and target language or language-external factors like the prestige associated with the languages involved)? Which role does the historical-cultural background to the translation activity play in favouring or inhibiting borrowings and interference from the source language into the target language?

The broad spectrum covered by the articles collected in this volume makes it particularly useful for anyone interested in general mechanisms and trends in variation and change through translation and other types of multilingual discourse production. Previous work on language contact through multilingual discourse production has generally been conducted from one out of two perspectives: either the perspective of translation studies or the perspective of historical linguistics. In both fields, studies can be found which argue convincingly that translated texts often exhibit features which can be interpreted as borrowing or interference from the source language, and that in some cases these features find their way into monolingual (i.e. non-translated) text production in the target language. Examples from translation studies include for instance the studies by Baumgarten (2008) and Becher, House & Kranich (2009); a relevant study from the perspective of historical linguistics can be found for example in Höder (2010). The present volume represents a novel approach in bringing together the work of scholars from both disciplines. The dialogue encouraged in this way brings together important insights from both research schools, which will help to increase our understanding of language contact through multilingual discourse production.

The perspective from translation studies is particularly useful in highlighting features of translations *qua* translations. The concept of the parallel corpus, containing source and target language texts aligned on word or sentence level, has led to the emergence of a new subfield of translation studies, corpus-based translation studies, where translations are systematically compared to their source texts as well as to non-translated target language texts. First studies from this emerging discipline suggest that translations tend to exhibit a variety of features that distinguish them from non-translated texts. Leaving aside the ubiquitous (and uncontroversial) tendency of source language interference, the following features are among the most important ones that have been hypothesized to be characteristic of translated texts (citations from Baker 1996):

- *Explicitation*: "an overall tendency to spell things out rather than leave them implicit in translation"
- *Simplification*: "the tendency to simplify the language used in translation"
- *Normalization*: "a tendency to exaggerate features of the target language"
- *Levelling out*: "the tendency of translated text to gravitate towards the centre of a continuum"

It is still unclear whether these so-called "translation universals" (Baker 1996) (a) are actually shared by all or most translated texts and (b) can really be called translation-specific (some critical voices are House 2008; Pym 2008, and Becher 2010). Nevertheless, the field of corpus-based translation studies has provided us with some interesting pointers that are worth being pursued in studies on language contact through translation: If translations really tend to be more explicit, simpler etc. than non-translated texts, these features should also have an influence on the outcome of language contact situations involving translation.

The historical linguistic perspective, on the other hand, helps us to understand the importance of the specific features of the contact situations. The typological and structural differences of the languages and their respective domains as well as their social functions within a given society or speaker group have long been acknowledged as important factors having an impact on language change mechanisms in general. On the other hand, the importance of the differences between text types and varieties in language contact situations has often been underestimated, although language contact always involves contact between specific varieties (but not vice versa, see e.g. Höder 2011). Even the distinction between written and spoken language (see e.g. Koch & Oesterreicher 2007) has not always received the due attention of historical linguists in the past who have tended to overgeneralize findings based on written data – a clear violation of the Uniformitarian Principle.

Both perspectives are necessary, since the linguistic profile of translated texts is on the one hand influenced by a number of constraints that may be constant across translation scenarios; on the other hand, translations are always translations from a language A, with all its specific typological properties, textual history and pragmatic-stylistic conventions, into a language B, with its own, different features. In historical linguistics, typical properties of translations as opposed to monolingually-produced texts are seldom taken into account. It is rarely asked whether these properties could potentially reflect typical tendencies ascribed to translations in translation studies, e.g. the tendency to make use of more explicit verbalization strategies. In contrast, studies from the field of corpus-based translation studies tend to focus too strongly on general features of translated texts that are hypothesized to be "universal", overlooking the impact of specific features of the languages involved (see Becher 2010 for detailed criticism of some studies).

The above considerations suggest that we need a perspective that integrates established insights from both translation studies and historical linguistics to achieve a fuller understanding of language variation and change in multilingual discourse production. It is the aim of the present volume to take some steps towards such a perspective.

This volume comprises twelve chapters and is divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with language contact leading to long-term changes. The second part discusses recent language change from a diachronic perspective, and the third part is devoted to studies of language contact from a synchronic perspective.

The first chapter in Part 1: "A tentative typology of translation-induced language change" by Svenja Kranich, Viktor Becher and Steffen Höder, three of the editors of this volume, is, as its title suggests, a first attempt at devising a typology of translation-induced language change. The authors hypothesize both several general principles governing language contact through written discourse and more specific translation-related ones. They then outline their tentative typology designed to test the hypothesized principles and try it out in two case studies. The results of these test cases are also used in this chapter to carefully review some general issues surrounding translation-induced language change.

In Chapter 2 "Travelling the paths of discourse traditions: A sample analysis of the lexical innovation *blisfulnesse* in Chaucer's *Boece*", Ursula Schaefer shows that it was not the written Latin language as such, but rather certain discourse traditions or discourse-stylistic norms which exerted an influence on the English literary language. The author discusses the role of translation as an important factor in norm innovation using a concrete example, and she shows that while it may certainly be the case that individual translations may be the cause of changes, it will generally be discourse norms that act as decisive linguistic-textual transfer conduits. While new forms in a translation may well be considered innovative on the level of a linguistic norm, they can, at the same time, be regarded as conservative on the level of a specific discourse norm.

Beatrix Weber's chapter "Evidence of language contact in the Parliament Rolls of Medieval England. *Notwithstanding*-constructions as a case of *Nachbau*" discusses the interplay of language contact in late medieval England and *Ausbau* in the genre 'legal and administrative text' exemplified here by the Parliament Rolls of Medieval England that can be accessed electronically in the trilingual (Latin, French, English) corpus PROME. Similar to Schaefer, the author emphasizes the crucial role of genre-specific discourse norms in language contact. Documenting in her corpus the existence of parallel linguistic structures such as English *notwithstanding* and its Latin and French equivalents, the author shows how such stylistic conventions cut across language borders and concludes that English *notwithstanding* constructions follow the Latin/French models in this particular genre leading to what she calls *Nachbau*, i.e. a genre-specific type of calquing.

In the fourth chapter "Translation-induced formulation of directives in Early Modern German cookbooks: An example of a translatorial effect", Andrea Wurm looks at the different realizations and distributions of instructions in translations of medieval French cookbooks into German. The author presents detailed analyses of the path of diffusion and adoption of a particular form of these directives, the plural imperative, highlighting certain changes in the stylistic norms of recipes in cookbooks that may originate in particular terminological choices made by individual translators in their translations, which then set off stylistic changes over time.

Chapter 5 "Battlefield victory: Lexical transfer in Medieval Anglo-Latin" by Olga Timofeeva presents and discusses a number of constructions related to military registers (such as e.g. 'gain victory') taken from the Anglo-Latin chronicles of the Old English period. The author compares this data with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and with military terminology in other Latin sources outside England, and finds evidence for the existence of comparable expressions. The results of the author's analyses of text samples produced in Latin by writers also competent in

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the Old English register in question point to the operation of L1 English influence on the Medieval Latin lexicon.

The second part of this volume devoted to more recent contact-induced language change opens with a chapter by Silvia Hansen-Schirra "Between normalization and shining-through: Specific properties of English-German translations and their influence on the target language". On the basis of data from the Saarbrücken English-German CroCo Corpus, the author looks at the influence of translations on the target language by examining specific register features of popular-science texts in English, German and in translations from English into German. She shows how over the last decades phrasal and syntactic complexity in typical patterns in this register has changed in the German texts, possibly through translational impact. In addition to such a product-based approach, the results of an eye-tracking-cum-questionnaire study designed to establish whether and how the documented changes affect comprehensibility are also presented in this chapter.

The next and seventh chapter by Juliane House "Linking constructions in English and German translated and original texts" is also based on a tripartite corpus of popular science texts: original texts in English and German and translations from English into German. The corpus used here is the diachronic Hamburg covert translation corpus where texts were sampled from two time frames: 1978–1982 and 1999–2002. House examines the impact of English discourse norms on German norms via translations from English into German specifically as regards the behaviour of the constructions *for example/for instance* in her data. The results of her analysis reveal the preference of certain novel co-occurrence patterns in the translations, but not in the original German texts, where other linking devices are preferred. In her conclusions the author suggests that the substantial difference in the use of the linking constructions analysed may have blocked English impact on German text conventions.

Chapter 8 "Features of writtenness transferred: Faroe-Danish language of distance" by Karoline Kühl is a chapter that does not consider translation as a factor in language change. Rather the author looks at how non-translational written discourse behaves in contact situations between Danish and Faroe in the bilingual setting of the Faroe Islands, and how hybrid features of writtenness may emerge in this environment. Focussing on a bilingual situation with two literary standard languages, she presents several case studies investigating contact influences both on languages as a whole and written discourse in particular and the differences between the two. The author makes use of the factors outlined in the typology of language change suggested in chapter one of this volume, pointing out that transfer of communicative conventions need not be caused by translation situations because the text production by bilinguals in highly bilingual situations is equally susceptible to such transfer.

The third part of this volume opens with Svenja Junge's chapter "Corporate rhetoric in English and Japanese business reports". This chapter investigates the realization of a global business genre in two very different cultural settings and two typologically distant languages and raises the question of whether and how a cultural filter is being applied in translation given these conditions. The study presented in this chapter is based on a small corpus of the genre 'letters to stakeholders', which are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively with a focus on source language interference, cultural filtering and author-reader interaction.

The next and tenth chapter "Assessing the impact of translation on English-German language contact: Some methodological considerations" by Stella Neumann presents and discusses two different methodological approaches to explaining the influence of translation on original text production in the target language: a corpus-based approach and an experimental approach focussing on cognitive processing during text production. Neither approach alone is found to be able to provide evidence of any direct impact of translation on original target language text production. Method triangulation is suggested as a means of controlling or intervening variables.

Chapter 11 "The impact of English on Spanish-language media in the USA: A qualitative analysis of newspaper articles" by Carolin Patzelt examines the influence of the English language on Spanish-language newspapers published in the US. As opposed to the standard claim of an excessive world-wide migration of lexical anglicisms, the author's analysis of a corpus of articles from eight different US newspapers shows that the influx of anglicisms is in fact carefully monitored. A rather different picture emerges from the author's analyses on the morphosyntactic level: here she observes an influx of English morphosyntactic structures apparently caused by direct translation from English newspaper articles into Spanish. The author hypothesizes that it will be these Spanglish constructions that will lead the path to an emergent US variety of Spanish.

In the final chapter of this volume: "Revisiting a translation effect in an oral language", Karsten Koch looks at translation-induced effects of English on the Salish languages spoken in the Pacific Northwest of North America. Using new fieldwork data, the author examines whether English word order affects Salish word order in translation tasks. The Salish languages are oral languages, so this chapter raises the important question as to the possibility and extent of multilingual discourse effects in oral as opposed to written transmission. From his analyses, in which he combines phonetic, syntactic, pragmatic and historical-comparative aspects, the author concludes that what one might, at first sight, interpret as translation effects on Salish word order, are in fact native forms, and he cautions against restricting work on multilingual discourse effects to written texts as this would lead one to ignore important prosodic cues.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume provide rich insights into a wide spectrum of multilingual discourse production sites, written and oral data, genres, methodological approaches and phenomena investigated. Given such a variety of research interests, all the chapters assembled here are united in their aim to shed light on the causes, manifestations and effects of contact-induced language change. The editors hope that this volume contributes to paving the way for further research.

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PART I

Diachronic perspectives: Long-term changes

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