United by language contact: Linguistics and Translation-Interpreting Studies in search of a shared framework

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In its simplest terms, language contact can be defined as "the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time" (Thomason 2001: 1); the underlying assumption is primarily that of *inter*personal contact, taking place between speakers of different languages, and consequently, over time, between different linguistic systems (for example, in cases of geographical proximity between two speaker communities). Languages, however, can also be in contact in an *intra*personal setting, when used alternately by the same bilingual speakers, with those very speakers as the locus of contact (Weinreich 1979[1953]: 1); such contact can also lead to community- and system-level consequences through language shift or language change, and can be intertwined with interpersonal contact (with the birth of new languages as one possible outcome). Furthermore, these macro dimensions that characterise speakers, communities and linguistic systems are complemented at the micro level by *intra*textual and *inter*textual contact (cf. De Sutter et al. 2021). Intratextual contact is found in any kind of language use in which multiple textual units are present and can influence each other, for instance through preference, in later units, for structures or word combinations already used in the earlier ones (see Pickering & Ferreira 2008 on structural priming in general, and Loebell & Bock 2003 on structural priming across languages in code-switching contexts; also Hoey 2005 for a broader view on lexical priming). Intertextual contact is prominent in language mediation, i.e., translation and interpreting, with the source text properties impacting on the target texts. Finally, when the focus is placed on speakers, the language use perspective on language contact can also be complemented with a competence-centred one (e.g., looking at language attrition).

Multiple attempts have been made in the broader area of linguistics to find a shared theoretical framework for different types and different aspects of language contact, including formal (e.g., Myers-Scotton 2002), functional (Matras 2009) and usage-based orientations (e.g., Höder 2018). The phenomena that are typically studied in this context include a broad range of contact situations, at the level of language systems and speech communities as well as individual speakers, and on synchronic as well as diachronic planes: pidgins, creoles and mixed languages, language change, lexical borrowings, linguistic areas, code-switching, bilingualism, second language acquisition, and first language attrition constitute some of the main points of interest. Notably, translation and interpreting tend not to be included in this picture, and are instead kept separate as professional activities rather than spontaneous linguistic behaviours. This approach, however, not only fails to consider the linguistically relevant properties of mediation, but it also leads to a lack of mutual exchange of valuable theoretical, empirical and methodological knowledge. In particular, recent years have seen important theoretical proposals that have been developed within translation and interpreting studies (TIS), or have otherwise factored in the mediation processes, such as the Gravitational Pull Hypothesis

(Halverson 2017) and the Constrained Communication framework (Kotze 2022), both in line with broader usage-based approaches to language; these approaches have not been given much consideration beyond TIS, confirming Malmkjaer's (2002: 111) well-known observation about a "troubled relationship" between linguistics and the study of translation.

With this picture in mind, the overarching objective of the workshop is to highlight the core of language contact research that is common to linguistics (with its subdisciplines) and TIS, focusing in particular on theoretical frameworks that can capture both domains. While previous attempts have been made to broaden the focus so that translation and interpreting are encompassed in linguistic studies (see e.g. Meriläinen et al. 2016, Harjunpää & Mäkilähde 2016, and the papers in Paulasto et al. 2014), the topics covered have been related to fairly specific phenomena (such as reiteration, interlingual reduction, or transfer) and — to the best of our knowledge — the efforts have not led to any higher level theoretical unifications. We believe further exchange between linguistics and TIS to be desirable and mutually beneficial, for a number of reasons, the core ones being that:

1. translation and interpreting constitute cases of bilingual language contact at the intersection of several dimensions that cannot be fully understood without them – to underline but two aspects: mediation is central to disentangling direct intertextual from broader cross-linguistic influences, and translators and interpreters are special types of bilingual speakers (who should be compared to other bilinguals and included in the testing of the viability of theoretical frameworks in language acquisition and attrition);
2. both language contact research in linguistics and (empirical) TIS have recently seen significant descriptive and methodological advances that could complement the knowledge available in both disciplines;
3. the proliferation of machine-generated texts, grounded in mathematical models of language and translation, primarily in the form of Large Language Models, leads to the pressing question of how human language use changes as a result of contact with synthetic linguistic agents or texts, which requires a solid baseline in the understanding of human language contact.

The workshop is organised by members of INTERACT, an interdisciplinary network aiming to "unite theoretical and methodological expertise in language contact research" (https://interact.ugent.be). We welcome contributions by INTERACT members and non-members that present theoretical or theory-grounded empirical research on topics including, but not limited to:

1. Comparison of theoretical approaches to language contact phenomena in translation/interpreting and contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistic typology or bilingualism/second language acquisition/first language attrition;
2. Integration into linguistics and TIS of theories from related adjacent fields, such as sociology, cognitive psychology and psychophysiology;
3. Descriptive and methodological advances in the study of language contact that contribute to the development of theories;
4. Novel methodological approaches grounded in articulate and empirically testable theories;
5. New types of language contact stemming from the advances in artificial intelligence, and their significance for linguistic/TIS theories.

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