

## **Slavic-Albanian Contact Situations and Language Change**

The determinant linguistic features of the Balkans are the result of structural language change induced by language contact and directed towards a Sprachbund as a particular, convergent group of languages and an interlinguistic continuum with no impermeable barriers. We need to account for and distinguish prior structural changes that have resulted from contact from those which have resulted from internal development. The paper addresses issues of Slavic-Albanian linguistic interference, integration and dis-integration in a continuum of linguistic contact situations from separation to symbiosis, and within polylingual and polyethnic societies. The paper is based on recent field data from areas of contact with dominant and non-dominant Albanian-Slavic bilingualism in Albania and Montenegro.

No strong correlations between the qualities of bilingualism, code switching strategies, bilateral linguistic accommodation, past language change situation and social praxis can be identified. Two phonologies and two grammars coexist in bilingual individuals, whereas parts of the lexicon tend to form a joint stock of highly semantically specialized lexical items. There is a gap between the language of our bilingual informants and their speech behaviour. In speech behaviour involving actual interference, the 'alien' L2 substance can be used both with 'alien' L2 or 'one's own' (L1) rules with very different degrees of integration into 'one's own' L1. It is claimed that, at the present state of research, there is no possibility of finding out any strong correlation between the types of language change and the types of language contact situations, including the possibility of balanced bilingualism without dominance.

Some outlines for future research are provided.