Explaining Convergence and the Formation of Linguistic Areas

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to offer a theoretical re-consideration of the concept of 'linguistic areas' (also known as 'convergent areas', 'convergent zones', or *Sprachbünde*). I address the questions of what is a meaningful definition of linguistic areas and what constitutes the precise mechanism behind language convergence—the historical process that is associated with the structural similarities among individual languages belonging to a linguistic area. I re-examine the role of grammaticalisation in the formation of convergent zones and ask whether some cross-linguistic isoglosses are more meaningful or diagnostic of areas than others. In the centre of the discussion is the question how structural features are allowed to jump the language boundary in the first place to form cross-language isoglosses which we perceive as 'convergent zones'. On this issue I take a language-processing perspective, departing from the assumption that every change in language is ultimately a result of an innovation introduced by speakers into discourse in order to accomplish a communicative goal more effectively. This approach is anchored in an integrated theory of language contact, recently presented in Matras (2009), which views 'contact' as speakers' creative negotiation of a complex repertoire of linguistic structures along with the pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions that govern their distribution.

2. Definitions of linguistic areas

Campbell (2006) offers a detailed exposition and discussion of various definitions of *Sprachbünde* and it is not necessary to repeat the content of that useful overview here. Generally, definitions take into account one or several of the following dimensions: The numerical or quantitative dimension (cf. Thomason 2001) is used to distinguish 'areas' from other instances of contact-induced structural change by counting the number of languages and structural features involved. Implicitly, by this kind of definition, an area constitutes a density of shared features among a group of contiguous languages. It is this density that captures our attention, being a somewhat more conspicuous occurrence than the odd similar trait among two neighbouring languages. I shall return to this issue of density and saliency of contact developments below.

A well-established tradition in the investigation of convergent zones focuses its attention on shared morpho-syntactic patterns (also known as 'calques') of form-meaning mapping, rather than on shared lexicon or even grammatical lexicon. This tradition goes back to Weinreich's (1953, 1958) notion of 'convergence' as involving a model and a replica language, with replication being based on the re-structuring of inherited material. This notion is juxtaposed to the roles of donor and recipient, which are involved in the transfer of actual word-forms or morphemes from one language into another. While taken for granted ever since Weinreich's discussion of convergent areas, this definition is not entirely unproblematic. In some studies, such as Ross's (1996) discussion of two Melanesian languages, Takia and Waskia, the process of convergence (defined by Ross as 'metatypy') is said to involve strictly the re-mapping of meaning and distribution of inherited material, with no transfer of word-forms or morphemes (for a similar claim see Aikhenvald 2002 on the Amazonian Vaupes region). But it is questionable whether a cultural taboo on the transfer of word-forms, which is apparently at the root of the specific convergence behaviour in these two regions, is a useful notion for inclusion in the definition of a convergent areas. Acknowledged convergent zones such as the Balkans and Anatolia show considerable cross-linguistic diffusion of lexical material and grammatical word-forms alongside shared patterns of form-meaning mapping. For the sake of precision it is indeed useful to distinguish between contact phenomena affecting linguistic *matter* (concrete phonological shapes of word-forms and morphemes) and linguistic *patterns* (the meaningful arrangement and distribution of word-forms and morphemes) (see Matras & Sakel 2007). However, to define linguistic areas in terms of just one type of change, excluding the other, seems unnecessarily restrictive and counter-intuitive when taking into account established agreement on what does and what does not constitute a *Sprachbund*.

A further constraint proposed in the literature pertains to the sociolinguistic balance among the participating languages. It has been argued in particular by Aikhenvald (2002 and elsewhere) that convergent zones necessarily represent an historical equilibrium among speaker communities and their languages, a situation that is characterised by the absence of dominance of one language over another or even by the complete absence of diglossia, while on the other hand diglossic situations are likely to involve transfer of word-forms. Clearly, this view is not generally accepted as part of the definition of convergent areas. Ross (1996, 2001) for instance explicitly points out the diglossic relationship between Waskia and Takia, where there is no transfer of word-forms. On the other hand, numerous other situations that can be argued to exemplify an equilibrium, such as the co-existence of Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish in Anatolia, show both pattern replication and diffusion of shared

word-forms. It is also evident that diglossic situations can easily give rise not just to word-form diffusion (i.e. lexical and morphological transfer) but also to convergent patterns, as in the case of Romani dialects (Matras 2002, Chapter 8) or immigrant languages (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994).

Nor is Thomason's (2001) attempt to define linguistic areas as outcomes of either prolonged multilingualism or substrate influence particularly helpful in distinguishing convergent areas from other cases of language contact. To begin with, substrate influence—the prevalence of features of learners' variety of a language after shift into that language—is often itself an outcome of multilingualism, followed by the gradual decline of one of the languages. While substrate influence is often held responsible for the formation of ethnolects and regional varieties such as Hiberno-English (drawing on an Irish susbstrate) or Levantine Arabic (drawing on an Aramaic substrate), it is quite difficult to provide empirical proof of the effect of substrates on the emergence of linguistic areas involving several languages. Indeed, earlier theories about the Balkans as representing the outcome of a rather vague Daco-Thracian and Illyrian substrate (cf. Solta 1980, Polomé 1982) have now largely been abandoned in favour of a multilingualism-scenario (cf. Joseph 1983, Hinrichs 1999).

Finally, a tendency has emerged during the 1990s to explore pre-defined regions in regard to shared features. This trend, often referred to as 'areal typology' (Muysken 2000), takes as a point of departure the possibility that historical zones of cultural contacts also have a history of multilingualism and are therefore potential candidates for diffusion zones involving linguistic features. The approach has been tested with only partial success for some regions (cf. Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001 for the Circum-Baltic region), and with less success (in terms of identifying shared isoglosses) for others (cf. Ramat & Stolz 2002 on the Mediterranean area). While it makes sense that language contact zones should be zones of historical cultural exchange, it seems that approaching linguistic areas by searching in the first instance for a plausible cause rather than by identifying in the first instance the linguistic outcome, defeats the purpose of seeking a theoretical explanation for a high density of shared structural features in a given cluster of contiguous languages. If applied consistently, this method risks rendering not much more than a plain enumeration of features in a random area.

The question arises as to what in fact justifies or necessitates a separate and unique definition of linguistic areas in the first place. Campbell (2006) critically remarks that linguistic areas do not contain any traits, either historically or in their present composition, that cannot be accounted for and described using commonplace methods of historical linguistics and contact linguistics. There is therefore no need for a theoretical debate on the nature of linguistic areas

as particular entities. A related argument had been made by Masica (2001), who points out that linguistic areas are ultimately coincidental clusters of isoglosses, some of which may extend far beyond the zone identified for the purpose of the analysis as the area in question.

The issue with which we are concerned is therefore essentially the motivation and the opportunity that allow features to cross language boundaries and to diffuse into neighbouring languages. This is no different than the very basic question that is addressed in respect of any structural development in contact linguistics, except that in connection with linguistic areas one tends to focus on cases of pattern-replication or 'convergence' rather than on matter-replication.

3. What is convergence?

Since linguistic areas are the outcome of diffusion of structural 'patterns' across language boundaries, the principal question that needs to be addressed in this discussion is the motivation for pattern-replication and the mechanism that triggers and regulates it. An antiquated view regards convergence as the emergence of structural isomorphism or so-called one-to-one translatability among languages (see Rozencvejg 1976). But the following two sets of phrases from the convergent languages Macedonian and Macedonian Turkish, and from Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic, respectively, do not show complete isomorphic structures:

(1) Macedonian:
     čovek-ot što   dojde
     man-the   what   arrived
     'the man who arrived'

(2) Macedonian Turkish
     adam   ne   geldi
     man   what   arrived
     'the man who arrived'

(3) Kurdish (Kurmanji):
     ez dixwazim   herim mal-ê
     I   I-want   I-go   home-OBL
     'I want to go home'

(4) Neo-Aramaic (Zakho):
     ana gibin   azin l-besa
     I   I-want   I-go to-home
     'I want to go home'

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Rather than share identical morpheme configuration, each of the two pairs share pivotal structural characteristics of a meaningful construction. In the Balkan case (Macedonian/Macedonian Turkish), the relative clause is a finite predication that follows the head (unlike the historical and Standard Turkish preposed gerundial *gel-en adam* 'the man who arrived/arrives') and is introduced by a relativiser, which in turn is derived by drawing on the semantic-pragmatic properties of the interrogative as a marker of clarification, *ne* 'what', altering its illocutionary force from a question (where clarification is to be provided by the listener) to an assertion (where it is provided by the speaker). Other properties of the two clauses differ, such as the marking of definiteness on the head noun. In the Anatolian case (Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic), the modal construction is finite and the embedded predication follows the modal, while the indirect or dative-directional object follows the verb of motion. But the languages differ in marking out the case of the dative-directional object, Kurdish using an oblique suffix while Neo-Aramaic has a preposition.

In Matras (1996: 61), I described such cases of convergence as involving the activation by multilingual speakers of identical abstract communicative configurations for the organisation of functionally equivalent phrases and utterances in both languages. In terms of speakers' inventory of linguistic structures, this development was described as a 'fusion' of the mental processing procedures used for the same task in the two languages. The process of fusion, it was argued, comes about firstly by identifying items in the two languages that share properties that make them suitable candidates to serve as carriers or markers of a particular grammatical procedure. The relevant item is then functionalised to serve a new role, or "grammaticalised in its new function" (Matras 1996: 61).

The notion of contact-induced grammaticalisation has since been granted amplified attention thanks to Heine & Kuteva's (2003, 2005) work, which draws on a similar speaker-based concept according to which constructions of the two languages are matched together, and a counterpart construction to the model is selected and adjusted. It is this procedure of adjustment, involving change in environment, meaning, frequency, and more, that is referred to as 'grammaticalisation'. Following Haase (1992), Heine & Kuteva (2003, 2005) note the tendency of elements to undergo extension from concrete and basic meanings to more abstract functions, greater frequency, and a wider range of semantic and syntactic environments. They conclude on this basis that the model-replica relationship is akin to the unidirectional development path in language-internal grammaticalisation.

Heine & Kuteva (2005: 81) depict the process of contact-induced grammaticalisation as triggered when "speakers notice that in language M there is a grammatical category Mx." While it is taken for granted, nonetheless,

that linguistic change begins with innovations that are introduced by speakers at the level of discourse (cf. Croft 2000), the emphasis is placed on the formal-structural side of the development and little attention is devoted to explain what, precisely, that brief but crucial phrase—"speakers notice"—actually means. It seems useful, therefore, to try and track down the motivation and the cognitive dimensions that drive the process of grammaticalisation, back to those instances in which speakers introduce innovations into discourse in the first place.

The following few examples derive from an informal longitudinal study tracking the development of a trilingual child spontaneously acquiring German, Hebrew and English from birth/infancy (see Matras 2009). In example (5), the child, aged 4:6, has recently begun to acquire and to actively use the set of German modality particles, which generally lack direct counterpart expressions in Hebrew. In the present example he is trying to express his admiration of a drawing. Still in the process of acquiring and expanding his overall means of expression and communicative competence, he is eager to make use of recently acquired communicative devices that can enrich his speech and render his utterance more nuanced, more expressive, and so more effective. He identifies in his repertoire of linguistic structures a particular device, acquired in a German setting or interaction context, which expresses an unexpected feeling of admiration. Conscious of speaking in (5) in a Hebrew-language setting—the child uses each of his languages, German and Hebrew, with a different parent, and English outside the home—he is committed to adapting the task-effective device into Hebrew so that it may be licensed for use in the ongoing conversation.

How is this adaptation achieved? The child identifies the German word *aber* as the pivotal feature—in this case the actual formal marker—of the device. The need to accommodate to the Hebrew-speaking setting triggers a search for a Hebrew match. The polysemy of the German expression provides support: it also serves as the contrastive conjunction 'but'. The child is thus guided to a Hebrew expression that shares meaning and function, namely the Hebrew conjunction *aval* 'but'. The outcome is the use of *aval* replicating the German modality particle, in (5):

(5) Hebrew replica:
    ze   aval yafe!
    this but   pretty
    'this is very nice indeed!'

(6) German model:
     das ist aber   schön!
     this is   PART pretty
     'this is very nice indeed!'

In fact, the child's use of *avál* in this meaning and in this semantic-syntactic environment is a creative innovation; it does not reflect common Hebrew usage. The creativity shows an extension of meaning and environment, featuring a bleaching of the contrastive meaning of the conjunction and the reduction of the word's status from a conjunction adjoining two utterances to an optional, interaction-level modification of a speech act. All these are common features of the grammaticalisation process. Is this a case of grammaticalisation?

Historical linguists are often reluctant to draw analogies between individual, spontaneous usages in conversation, of the kind documented in example (5), and diachronic structural changes in languages, as documented in the earlier examples. However, without such analogies we are unable to make sense of statements such Heine & Kuteva's (2005: 81) purposeful phrase "speakers notice". While it is accepted, to be sure, that not every individual innovation will result in language change and that conditions for the successful propagation of spontaneous innovations in grammar are highly selective, it is at the same time obvious that each and every language change that is successfully propagated stems originally from an individual innovation introduced into discourse spontaneously by an individual speaker. In order to understand language change, we must therefore understand speakers' motivations to innovated and the formal pathways that are at their disposal in order to do so.

Moreover, my claim is that innovations are not purely accidental but are instead function-driven. In the case of convergent structures, the functional motivation behind innovations may be described roughly along the following lines (inspired in part by models of speech production as presented by Levelt, Roeolfs & Meyer 1999, Green 1998, and Paradis 2004; see also Matras 2009: 240-243): The bilingual speaker wishes to achieve a communicative goal in the specific context of a verbal interaction. In example (5) this goal may be described as winning over the interlocutor to share an emotional attitude toward an object. In pursuit of this goal, the speaker sets a task to be achieved by a single speech act. In our case, the task may be described as expressing admiration of the object in such a way that would trigger a verbal response or at the very least an emotional reaction on the part of the interlocutor. The speaker then scans through his/her full repertoire of linguistic structures in search of a task-effective construction. Note that for this purpose, the full multilingual repertoire remains active and there is no attempt, and indeed

no procedure, to 'switch off' or de-activate one of the language 'systems'. Once a task-effective construction is identified—in our case, the use of an assertion modified by a modality particle expressing surprise—it is vetted in regard to its usefulness in the present interaction setting. At this stage, only word-forms are selected that adhere to the acceptability requirements of the Hebrew interaction context. The key marker of the emotional mode of the construction therefore requires adaptation to the Hebrew context, if it is not to be abandoned altogether. This is the stage to which Heine & Kuteva refer implicitly as "speakers notice". The process of matching the pivotal feature of the targeted construction with a candidate expression that is licensed in the present interaction context proceeds from here, as described above.

The important point to note is the absence of any inhibition in the process of selecting task-effective constructions. The very fact that a construction that is anchored in the 'other' language (in this case, German) is a candidate for activation in a setting in which the first language is selected (in this case, Hebrew) indicates that the speaker is unable to de-activate the second language as a wholesale system. This in turn points to the existence, at all times, of an active, overall repertoire of linguistic structures that are available to the multilingual speaker. Depending on need, frequency, specialisation and effectiveness of expression of a given construction, as well as on interlocutors' feedback, among other factors, speakers may license themselves to suppress or de-select certain constructions in particular language settings, or else to generalise constructions throughout the repertoire and thus to license their use in any type of interaction setting, regardless of the choice of 'language'. Consider below the trilingual child's generalisation of an English model construction, at a somewhat later age of 6–7, once English had become the language of school, peers, and most activities outside the home:

(7) English model:
'I am cold'

(8a) German replica:
ich bin kalt
I   am   cold

(8b) German original/common construction:
mir   ist kalt
to-me is   cold

(9a) Hebrew replica:
ani kar
I am cold

(9b) Hebrew original/common construction:
kar   li
cold to-me

Note once again that the replication does not involve isomorphism, but rather the exploitation of a pivotal feature of the construction—here: the use of a present-tense existential construction with overt subject and the predicate object 'cold'—subject to the morphosyntactic constraints of the individual replica language. Thus while German pretty much follows the English model literally, in Hebrew the absence of a present-tense copula leads to a somewhat different configuration, albeit still based on the selected pivotal feature.

4. Inferred and attributable meanings

We have noted above that when introducing innovations based on the pivot-matching technique, the bilingual speaker is generalising or replicating a construction. This construction consists of a configuration pattern of form-meaning mapping that is used to convey a particular semantic-pragmatic function. The bilingual speaker generalises the construction for use irrespective of language-setting, but takes care to adapt it to the morpho-syntactic constraints of the language that is currently activated. Most notably, the construction is adapted to the constraints on the selection of context-appropriate word-forms, in other words, it must be represented by word-forms that are licensed in the context of the active language-setting. Thus it appears that the constraints on the language-specific selection of word-forms are more powerful and are adhered to more consistently than the constraints that regulate the selection of constructions: A 'balanced' bilingual who is conscious of monolingual norms may be consistent in selecting not just distinct sets of word-forms, but also distinct constructions in English *I am cold* and German *mir is kalt*, while the less secure and somewhat less experienced bilingual, but arguably also the fluent bilingual who is more prone to follow a path of convenience than adhere to monolingual norms, will continue to respect the constraints on word-form selection but will generalise the abstract outline of the construction, producing in German *ich bin kalt* for 'I am cold'.

Precisely how word-form and pattern replications are regulated is subject to variation among linguistic communities, with attitudes ranging from lenient through to a consistent degree of language loyalty and on to an actual taboo on the importation of foreign word-forms. Not seldom do we find that institutional language planning adopts an attitude that is hostile to foreign word-forms, but tolerant of replication of foreign lexical-semantic patterns (leading to the formation of calqued neologisms). How meaningful is this observation in our attempt to explain convergence and the formation of linguistic areas?

Firstly, it would seem beneficial and indeed necessary to accommodate a notion of 'constructions' into our models of speech production, distinguishing them from 'lemmas' and of course from the level of phonology and articulation. Only by acknowledging that constructions are viable entities in their own right

within a speaker's repertoire of linguistic structures can we account for speakers' creative attempts to use constructions in a creative manner, combining them with word-forms from another language, or to generalise constructions for use across the multilingual repertoire while respecting the relevant constraints on word-form selection in a given interaction setting. In other words, speakers may select constructions independently of their word forms and independently of a specific 'language' component within their linguistic repertoire.

Next, we return to the observation that speakers appear to afford themselves greater flexibility when it come to the selection of constructions than in the selection of word forms: Word forms are more conservatively and more tightly associated, by and large, with specific 'languages'[1], i.e. with sets of interaction settings, addressees, etc. Constructions tend to float more freely in the repertoire as a whole and their selection is utilitarian, bound to the communicative task at hand. The explanation I wish to propose is that constructions offer, perhaps even by definition, derived meanings that are inferred from a particular configuration of word-forms, rather than simply the sum or combination of fixed meanings that are tightly associated with concrete word-forms. I shall use the terms 'inferred meaning' to describe those meanings that are obtained via context-specific, complex configurations of word-forms, and 'attributable meaning' to refer to the more stable, transparent and consistent meaning that can be associated with a word-form irrespective of its context or formal environment.

If we take the case of multi-word configurations, such as *I am cold*, then we may, in fact, identify fixed meanings that can be attributed both to the individual word-forms selected by the child-speaker for the construction in German and Hebrew, as well as the sum of these meanings in the respective replica constructions. Thus German *ich bin kalt* could, if interpreted literally, mean 'the texture of my body may appear cold to those who might touch it'. A similar reading might be attributed to the Hebrew structure *ani kar*. Clearly, these are highly infrequent readings that are most likely to be expressed in these languages by other means. In any event, the inference that the speaker is talking in the role of an active experiencer of a bodily state is not part of that attributable meaning. Rather, it is a meaning that is intended to be inferred, in a similar way that it is inferred from the similar configuration of word-forms in English whose accumulative attributable meaning is in fact not dissimilar to that of their German and Hebrew counterparts. In other words, what the speaker is doing when replicating the English construction is creating

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[1] But consider numerous items such as English and German *internet/Internet*, which are word-forms which bilinguals in these languages can use in any setting, regardless of language choice.

a parallel configuration in the replica language with the intention of activating an inferred meaning from it that matches the meaning that is inferred from the English model construction. Similarly, the replication of German *aber* as Hebrew *avál* in (5) is essentially an imitation of the meaning that is inferred from the use of the German word-form *aber* in an environment where it is not a conjunction and so where it does not revise an anticipated causal chain that is based on an aforementioned proposition.

We thus arrive at the conclusion that speakers recognise that language word-forms are language-specific and have their fixed attributable meanings, while constructions are configurations whose specialised meanings are contextually inferred. Inferred meanings are treated cognitively on a par with the pragmatic rules of interaction: They are awarded a much more universal status as part of the more fundamental, intuition-guided primitives of human communication, rather than the more controlled, compartmentalised and analytically guided selection of, for instances, vocabulary. That speakers are less able to divide and discriminate modes of pragmatic inferences in conversation is attested not just by the pitfalls of cross-cultural communication (Scollon & Scollon 2001), but also by bilinguals' lack of inhibition in transferring communication-pragmatic modes and markers from one language to another (Salmons 1990) or indeed lapses in bilinguals' ability to control the use of pragmatic markers across their repertoire and to limit them to language-particular interactions (Matras 2000). The relatively lax constraints on the employment of pragmatic procedures leads us to the following hypothesis about the likely direction of structural convergence,

(10) Convergence direction
    inferred meanings > attributable meanings

which suggests that meanings that are contextually derived from particular configurations, rather than fixed and attributable to the individual word-forms and morphs that compose those configurations, are more likely to be treated as flexible and to be generalised throughout the repertoire; rather than remain confined to just one set of interaction settings ('language'), they can be used in any set (i.e. in any language).

The direction of replication, from inferred meaning to attributable meaning, helps resolve and explain two central questions in the discussion of convergence and the formation of linguistic areas: First, it provides a commonsense explanation for the development chain that is often referred to as the grammaticalisation chain, which essentially involves the exploitation of contextually inferred meanings for new functions. Given the flexibility and volatility of contextual inferences and the absence of inhibition to transfer

inferences from one language into another, it is not surprising that convergence tends to involve the extension of a concrete meaning or distribution, and the bleaching of attributable semantics, and so a development from concrete to abstract. What the speaker is doing here is essentially using similar contextual inferences and meaning abstractions in the replica language as are applied in the model language.

The role of pragmatic organisation and its universal character within the speaker's bilingual repertoire, uninhibited by the separation of interaction contexts and so 'languages', helps explain a frequently observed hierarchy of convergence (cf. Ross 1996, Stolz & Stolz 1996, Matras 1996):

(11) Convergence hierarchy
     discourse > clause > phrase > word

The hierarchy captures the bilingual speaker's attempt to syncretise procedures for organising and planning the utterance at the proposition level, i.e. at the level of a 'mental plan' for the expression of propositional content, in both languages. The prominence of discourse-level operations at the top of the hierarchy illustrates speakers' tendency to treat pragmatic organisation procedures as universal rather than language-specific, and strengthens our impression that context-oriented pragmatic inferences are more liable to escape language-demarcation and become generalised across a bilingual's repertoire, i.e. more likely to treated as universal rather than language-bound. Given this kind of volatility of pragmatic devices and the pragmatic inferences from certain formal configurations (constructions), one would expect linguistic areas to show a greater tendency toward convergence at the level of pragmatic devices, discourse organisation and clause combining. Convergence in these domains might therefore be regarded as 'shallow', since it is largely predictable in regions influenced by intense and prolonged multilingualism. On the other hand, tight convergence of morphological organisation at the word level might be regarded as less easily predictable and so an indication of an especially intensive history of contacts.

At present, the state of data documentation makes it rather difficult to engage in a comprehensive comparative investigation of the range of convergent constructions in linguistic areas. Much of the documentation on linguistic areas is selective in its exemplification and does not offer comprehensive coverage. The aforementioned case of Macedonian Turkish in the Balkans may serve as an illustration of the kind of consideration that might be applied to linguistic areas in order to establish the position of pragmatic inferences in the process of structural convergence. As seen above, Macedonian Turkish adopts the Macedonian and general Balkan formation pattern of complement clauses and

relative clauses, and this also extends to adverbial clauses, which are similarly finite, postposed to the main clause and introduced by a conjunction formed on the basis of an interrogative (while in Ottoman Turkish they are nominal and pre-posed to the main predicate). Macedonian Turkish further converges with Macedonian in its organisation of possessive construction as well as in the present-tense existential construction (from Matras & Tufan 2007: 219-220). In possessive constructions, the possessor now follows the possessed noun, although possessive morphological agreement is retained:

(12) Macedonian Turkish
  ruba-lar-i   *damad-ın*
  clothes-PL-3SG.POSS   groom-GEN
  'The groom's clothes'

(13) Macedonian:
  ališta-ta   *na*   *zet-ot*
  clothes-DEF   to   groom-DEF
  'The groom's clothes'

(14) Standard Turkish
  damad-ın   *eşya-lar-ı*
  groom-GEN   clothes-PL-3SG.POSS
  'The groom's clothes'

In existential constructions, the copula is expressed overtly and is followed by the predicate noun:

(15) Macedonian Turkish
  sen (i)-sın   küçük   bir   kış-çe
  you COP-2SG   small   INDEF girl-DIM
  'You are a small girl'

(16) Macedonian
  Ti si   *edno   malo   devoj-če*
  you COP.2SG   INDEF   small   girl-DIM
  'You are a small girl'

(17) Standard Turkish
  Sen   küçük   bir   kız-sın
  you   small   INDEF girl-2SG
  'You are a small girl'

However, convergence among these languages does not infiltrate the position of adpositions, where Macedonian Turkish, like Turkish, retains postpositions, or other morphological properties of the noun phrase, such as

the definite article, which is missing in Turkish and Macedonian Turkish but present in Macedonian. Word order in simple clauses remains predominantly OV in Macedonian Turkish, while it is VO in Macedonian. There is little change to inherited Turkish morphology, too. In its display of convergent versus non-convergent constructions, Macedonian Turkish thus follows the predictions expressed in the hierarchy under (11).

5. Am emergence scenario for linguistic areas

Before drawing conclusions from the above discussion about the likely scenarios that may give rise to the kind of display that is captured by the terms linguistic or convergent areas, let us first briefly review the nature of the argument pursued here. Firstly, I suggested that in order to understand what motivates processes of language change, we should trace them back to their initiation as spontaneous innovations in discourse. In the case of linguistic convergence, we are looking for the initiation of an innovation among bilingual speakers. It was argued above that bilingual speakers do not process their speech in the form of two separate linguistic 'systems', but that they have a complex repertoire of linguistic structures at their disposal. Choices are made within this repertoire in accordance with the expectations and social constraints of the given, ongoing interaction setting. The speaker's repertoire will include both word-forms and other kinds of structures, such as morphological paradigms, distribution rules, and constructions or patterns. The latter are described as fixed configurations consisting of combinations of word-forms and their distribution rules, onto which particular meanings are mapped. Constructions are thus more than plain combinations of word-forms with their respective meanings; they are conventionalised form-meaning mappings in their own right, drawn originally from inferences that accompany the distribution of lexical items in new environments.

We have established that in selecting the appropriateness of linguistic structures in interaction settings, i.e. in determining what belongs to the correct 'language', not all structures are equal: Selection constraints are applied more easily to word forms than to constructions. Constructions, being abstract mappings, are more readily treated as universal and so as applicable irrespective of language choice. It was suggested that this is due to their nature as inferred meanings that are highly dependent on context and complex configuration, by contrast with attributable meanings that are fixed and permanent and accompany a single word form consistently. The treatment of constructions as universal or global makes them more volatile in situations of language contact, and more prone to be transferred from one set of interaction settings to another. The concrete manner of transferring a construction is to identify its pivotal features and to map them onto candidate word forms

or morphs that can be legitimately selected in the active language of the ongoing interaction (the 'replica' language). Specifically, what the speaker is replicating is the construction-particular form-meaning relationship in the model language. As we established above, this form-meaning relationship is treated as an environment-particular inference based on a the more fixed, attributable meaning of the word form. The process of convergence thus entails applying the same inferential meaning to the replica word form as is applied to its counterpart word form in the model. As counterpart word forms we regard word forms that share attributable meanings. It is this extension of meaning in the replica that is regarded in some of the literature as 'grammaticalisation'.

How does this conceptual framework for convergence help us define what linguistic areas are? Firstly, by explaining how structural features 'jump' the language boundary and spread to neighbouring languages, thereby forming cross-language isoglosses. We have seen that convergence can emerge spontaneously in the speech of bilingual speakers. The process that leads to language change necessarily involves propagation of the same innovation among a community of speakers, and the adoption of a licence to use it on a regular basis. This in turn requires lax attitudes in relation to the norms of language use. A speech community that is undergoing social changes or that does not attribute too much importance to the organisation of linguistic constructions as representations of social identity might be more tolerant of change than a community with strict and stable norms, where pressure is exerted, possibly with the support of institutions, to adhere to a particular norm of usage. At the same time we are looking for speech communities that are keen to maintain the language in question, rather than abandon it.

These conditions must be met for each and every linguistic construction that is to cross the language boundary and become an integral part of the replica language. More widespread bilingualism, or alternatively high prestige of a bilingual elite, more prolonged or intense bilingualism, coupled with overall lax normative control of language use despite a commitment to language maintenance, are likely to allow replication of a larger number of constructions from the model in the replica language. Consequently, a higher density of structural isoglosses will be shared by the two languages (A and B). If the process is to repeat itself through further contacts of the languages involved (A and B) with yet another set of languages (C and D in contact with A, E and F in contact with B, G in contact with F, and so on), then the same or a partly overlapping density of isoglosses will be found across an entire network of contiguous or partly contiguous languages.

Linguistic areas are simply cases of convergence that catch our attention because of the density of shared isoglosses in a multiplicity of languages. They may come about as a result of multiple contacts either of one language

with others, or among chains of contiguous languages, enabling the diffusion of structural features across a cluster of idioms in a well-defined geographical space. Pre-conditions for areal diffusion are of course bilingualism, language loyalty that acts as an obstacle in the way of shifting to another language or even randomly adopting foreign word-forms, linguistic creativity that encourages speakers to engage in innovative constructions, and lax normative control which allows them to propagate those new constructions. Since areas are basically a manifestation of convergence, and convergence can be traced to speakers' strategies of managing complex, multilingual repertoires, areas can be expected to show similar structural features as isolated cases of convergence among just two languages. Moreover, since the liberty to treat construction as universal and not constrained by language choice applies more readily with respect to the pragmatic organisation of discourse than at the level of the phrase of word, we can expect areas as well as convergence in cases of an isolated language pair to begin at the level of the clause and discourse organisation, and to proceed through the phrase level to the word level. This leads us to the prediction that any cluster of shared isoglosses encompassing several languages is more likely to include discourse- and clause-level features than word-level features, and that if word-level features are included, then clause- and discourse-level features are most likely to be included as well.

This hypothesis is yet to be tested empirically for a variety of linguistic areas. But a glance at regions defined so far as convergent areas will confirm that the forms of clause organisation tends to be a regular domain that is prone to convergence in all of them. If pursued further, a close examination of the inventories of linguistic areas might equally yield 'layers' of convergent zones. In such context, areas that might be regarded as 'deeper' or 'more established' if they contain shared isoglosses pertaining to word-level morphology, predicted to appear later in the history of convergence. An inventory of shared isoglosses would in this way help determine the position of a convergent area on a scale of greater vs. shallower 'depth' of contacts.

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Geographical Typology and Linguistic Areas

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