

Reindl, Donald F. 2008. *Language Contact: German and Slovenian*. Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer. xii + 233 pages.

Donald F. Reindl's *Language Contact: German and Slovenian* draws on existing research, as well as his own work, to give a concise overview of German-Slovene contact and make his book a convenient starting point for inquiry into this corner of Slovene linguistics. His book is divided into 10 chapters, the first of which gives an introduction and sociolinguistic background to the topic of language contact as it concerns German and Slovenian. In this chapter he gives a broad overview of the geography and history of the region, including a distinction between Slovenian dialects and the Slovenian literary language. Reindl does not explain what is meant by 'German', referring to it numerous times in the chapter but failing to define it in terms of its relationship to Slovenian, as well as its own internal history. Although he mentions two Germanic peoples in 1.1.2 (*Historical Contacts*), he does not provide any information about the dialect(s) of German that are involved in this contact. As his discussion of German ultimately turns to influence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the location of modern-day Slovenia just south of Austria, the reader is left to assume that it is Austrian German (and therefore Bavarian dialects) that has had the most contact with Slovenian. Only in his sections on German enclaves in Slovenian territory (found in 1.1.4), does Reindl specifically mention Bavarian dialects. Where Reindl provides clear detail is the manner in which these dialects came into contact with Slovenian. He provides historical information about tribal contact between Bavarians and Slovenians, beginning in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, and discusses the process by which German-speaking landowners began to gradually assume political authority in Slovenian territory. Slovenian speakers and German speakers were living side by side for centuries before German came to be the dominant language of the region, thus there was great potential for adstratal influence (which Reindl turns to in 9.2, his discussion of former German enclaves). As the prestige of German increased, however, and as German began to dominate socio-politically (and become the primary language of education, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), Slovenian exerted less influence on German than at previous times (with the obvious exception of the German enclaves).

Chapter 2 focuses on methodology. This chapter is of particular importance, as it sets the tone for the entire book. The author states the need to be wary of instances which appear to point to German influence but may in fact be entirely unrelated to German. He notes that his approach in determining relevant influence of German on Slovenian relies on linguistic universals and the comparative method, and he briefly discusses the importance of both, relating them to the context of his current study. Citing the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, he explains that if a universally marked feature in a speaker's first language is introduced into the speaker's second language, where it does not exist, the introduction of this feature is likely due to the interference from the speaker's first language. However, if the feature in question is not universally marked, it is more difficult to attribute the emergence of this feature strictly to language contact. Reindl stresses that although a given sound or construction may occur in German, that does not preclude it from being a common occurrence in Slavic languages or in the world's languages in general. Thus, it is necessary to compare such features in other Slavic languages, as well as other Indo-European languages and even language in general, before coming to the conclusion that it is influence from German. In Chapter 3, Reindl discusses lexical borrowing, which he describes as 'the most superficial layer of language', and explains why lexical influence plays such a minor role in his book. Primarily, Reindl considers only those lexemes which contribute something new to the phonology or morphology to be relevant to his current study.

Chapters 4–8 deal with specific linguistic phenomena that have been or could be interpreted as contact-related. Chapter 4 concerns phonology, including an analysis of accent, phonemic pitch, front rounded vowels, diphthongs, final devoicing and uvular *r*. Chapter 5 deals with morphology, and covers gender leveling, case confusion, loss of the vocative, verbal prefixes, compound prepositions and loss of adverbial morphology. Chapter 6 discusses syntax, and includes verb-second positioning, phrasal verbs, preposed and postposed genitive possessives, postpositions and definite and indefinite articles. In chapter 7, Reindl addresses syntagms and collocations, such as reflexive constructions, rhetorical patterns, turns of phrase and similes and proverbs. Chapter 8 closes the in-depth analysis with semantics: semantic extension, semantic confusion, *onikanje* and grammatical gender.

Chapter 9 highlights an often overlooked aspect of language contact between German and Slovenian, that of the influence of Slovenian on German. The influence of German on Slovenian is clear even in Standard Slovenian, whereas there is no evidence of Slovenian influence on Standard German, which makes the contact situation appear unidirectional at first glance. Reindl, citing his own research and previous scholarship, notes that one must look at the dialect level in order to have a fuller picture. In this chapter, he describes some of the ways in which Slovenian has influenced dialects of German spoken in regions with large Slovenian minorities, such as Styria and Carinthia. Reindl notes that beyond the lexical level, Slovenian may have had phonological influence on Carinthian German. He writes that many believe the use of apical *r* and the backing of /g, k/ to /h, ʔ/ in Carinthian German to be the direct influence of Slovenian. In addition to these areas, there was considerable adstratal contact in German enclaves in Slovenia. The communities of Kočevsko, Sorica, and Rut had

centuries of contact with Slovenian and were isolated from other dialects of German. Reindl mentions the lack of umlaut in Kočevsko German, hinting that Slovenian may have played a role in this, as it also lacks umlaut (cf. 4.2.3 for Reindl's treatment of umlaut in Slovene dialects). Lack of umlaut is often found in Bavarian dialects, but as Kočevsko was settled by Franconian dialect speakers, the absence of umlaut is unusual and bears further analysis. The contact situation in such German enclaves has received far less attention and warrants further study, as Reindl himself stresses, but he writes that dwindling speech communities and relative inaccessibility of older studies makes this a difficult task. Precisely why these studies are inaccessible is unclear.

Finally, Chapter 10 provides an overview of Reindl's conclusions. A chart summarizes his findings, giving the approximate likelihood of German being responsible for a particular phenomenon, as well as a description of the speech variety in which this might be heard (i.e., in the standard language, only in dialects or as an archaism). The book also contains a subject index, a word index, a biographical index, a geographical and political index (which provides a list of geographical and political locations, along with a translation in English, and where they may be found in the text) and an extensive list of references, which point the reader to a wealth of information on the subject of not only Slovenian and German, but language contact in general, as well as linguistic universals and other topics of interest to the general linguist. Notably absent from his bibliography are significant works in the field of contact linguistics, particularly those of Thomason and Kaufman (1988), Weinreich (1953), and Vildomec (1971).

This work contains very little treatment of lexical borrowing. Reindl writes that although lexical items are among the most likely to be borrowed, they often have little effect on the morphology or phonology of the language. He rightly focuses attention away from the lexicon, citing the low significance of lexical borrowing, and onto deeper levels of language, such as phonology, morphology and syntax. In his section 3.1 he notes that although numerous lexemes of German origin exist in Slovenian (Carinthian and Styrian dialect areas, where contact with German has been the most sustained), they do not generally contribute to the phonology or morphology of Slovenian in the dialects or the standard language, and he declines to detail such borrowings in his work. Reindl does not rule out this sort of influence entirely, however. In 3.4 he gives the example of the word-initial combination *ža-*, citing six examples in which this occurs in inherited Slavic words (e.g., *žaba* 'frog' and *žar* 'glow') and twelve examples of initial *ža-* resulting from contact with German (e.g., *žajbelj* < OHG *salbeia* 'sage' and *žaga* < OHG *saga* 'saw').

Another aspect of Reindl's approach is his care not to ascribe to language contact all phenomena which appear to result from German influence. Instead, he analyzes each of the given instances, which could be attributed to contact scenarios, ruling out other causes before suggesting that German influence is the most likely. His approach is tri-fold, examining the data cross-linguistically (based on linguistic universals), comparatively (using similar examples in other Slavic languages) and geographically (taking into account other languages in the area, which may have influenced Slovenian in a particular case, as well as potential areal influence).

Two of the examples in which Reindl draws on language universals to bolster his argument are the negative article *nob(ed)en* and compound numeral constituent ordering. The negative article *nob(ed)en* (6.5.3) appears to be formed from the root for ‘one’, along with a negative prefix. Its perceived etymology, along with its syntactic function, mirror the German counterpart *kein*, as in the example: Sl. *Noben otrok ni hotel pomagati*. Ger. *Kein Kind wollte helfen*. ‘No child wanted to help.’ Although similar constructions are found in other Slavic languages which have had significant contact with German (e.g., Lower and Upper Sorbian), Russian, which is beyond German influence, also uses such a construction. Furthermore, Reindl notes that this is a universal pattern, citing English *none* and Latin *nullus* as examples, making it very unlikely that this *nob(ed)en* appeared as a result of German influence. Bezlaj (1982) also notes the similar construction in German, but makes no mention of German influence.

Turning now to morphology, Reindl describes Slovenian compound numeral constituent ordering (5.2.5) as it relates to German. Here, he states that most Slovenian dialects use ones-tens ordering (OT) when combining numerals, as German also does (though he notes that some dialects, notably Prekmurian, have only partial OT ordering). Slovenian renders 21 as *enaindvajset*, just as German has *einundzwanzig* (‘one and twenty’). Citing his own previous work (Reindl 2003a), Reindl stresses that this fashion of rendering compound numerals is very rare cross-linguistically. Given the highly marked nature of such ordering, and the fact that it is not native to Slavic languages, Reindl concludes that compound numeral constituent ordering in Slovenian is clearly imitative of German. This is a departure from twentieth century scholarship in Slovenian. He observes that grammars of Slovenian give both TO and OT ordering as allowable, but Reindl argues that OT ordering is the more frequent, especially in the literary language. His previous research into the markedness of OT ordering, as well as his statement that this is the norm in most Slovenian dialects, is one of the things that distinguishes this work from previous scholarship.

Reindl also investigates several instances in which language contact seemed to be the clear factor in the emergence of particular features in dialects of Slovenian. Two of these are the existence of front rounded vowels and the phrase *kaj za en*. Because of their markedness cross-linguistically, and because they exist in two languages that are adjacent to Slovenian (German and Hungarian), it is logical to assume that Slovenian dialects borrowed front rounded vowels from one or both of these languages. The dialects that are most often cited as having front rounded vowels phonemically are those of Prekmurje, which borders on both Hungary and Germany. Reindl points out, however, that the dialects that have developed these front rounded vowels are in areas that are least adjacent to Germany and dialects such as those spoken in Carinthia, which have the most contact with German, have no front rounded vowels. Furthermore, the inventory of front rounded vowels in Slovenian dialects does not match that of German, which ‘has four qualitatively distinct front rounded vowels (/y Y Ø œ/)<sup>1</sup> with quantitatively distinct pairs for the non-reduced vowels (/y: y Ø:

<sup>1</sup> Reindl provides these symbols in IPA. ‘y’ and ‘Y’ correspond to tense and lax ‘ü’, respectively.

Ø/)' (Reindl 2008: 44). Slovenian has only /y/ and sometimes /Ø/, which would be a poor imitation of the German system. Reindl brings comparative evidence from other Slavic languages to bear, citing the existence of the allophone /y/ in Russian, when /u/ occurs between soft consonants (e.g., *люди* 'people' /lʲudʲi/ = [lʲydʲi]). He also points out that Old Church Slavic likely had front rounded vowels as allophones, and that Czech may have had an intermediate [y] stage in the development of *u* > *i*. For these reasons, Reindl concludes that the emergence of front rounded vowels in these dialects of Slovenian was an internal Slavic development, although German and/or Hungarian may have acted as a catalyst in some way, an issue to which we will return below.

Many have viewed the phrase *kaj za en* as an obvious Germanism, a calque from the German *was für ein* ('what kind of'). Section 6.4.5 provides the Slovenian example *Ne vem, kaj za ena ženska je bila*, the German for which would be *Ich weiß nicht, was für eine Frau sie war* ('I don't know what kind of a woman she was'). Although the two phrases share a clear affinity, Reindl shows that Bulgarian and Russian both have similar constructions (Bg. *Що за човек е?* 'What kind of a man is he?' Ru. *Что это за книга?* 'What kind of a book is that?'), and it is much harder to make a case for German influence to explain those examples. Far more likely is that this is simply a common way for both Germanic and Slavic languages to construct this phrase. Reindl does note that the use of the indefinite article *en* distinguishes the Slovenian phrase (as well as that of kajkavian Croatian) from the Russian and Bulgarian phrases. Because of this, as well as the fact that the phrase contains a preposition but takes the nominative case in all of the Slavic examples, Reindl suggests that the phrase bears closer investigation. It is unfortunate that he does not investigate further himself, as he goes into detail about this construction and leaves the reader wondering about the answer. It is a surprising contradiction to the greater part of the work, in which he comes to some conclusion at the end of his analysis.

Finally, Reindl weighs the probability of influence from German on Slovenian by considering the potential influence of other regional languages, as well as areal phenomena, which might be responsible for a given feature. One example in which he uses this method relates to the backing/rounding of *a*. As southern dialects of German (which are those that have had the most contact with Slovenian) tend to back or round the vowel *a* to [ɔ] or [ɔ̞], the similar backing of *a* to [ɔ] in some dialects of Slovenian seems to point to German influence. Citing previous scholarship, however, Reindl cautions that Hungarian /a/ is realized as [ɔ], making Hungarian an equally likely source for this change (4.2.6). Likelier still, Reindl stresses, is that the backing or rounding is an internal Slavic development, as it occurs in many dialects that beyond Hungarian influence. He proposes that, although this sound change appears to be related in all three languages, it is difficult to be certain which language was responsible for the initial change.

Reindl's book cites many occasions in which the direct role of German influence on Slovenian may or may not be founded, and in the process the reader learns to be wary when analyzing a given phrase of feature in a dialect of the language or the standard language itself. Nevertheless, what is perhaps most intriguing about Reindl's

methodology and his insistence on scrutinizing any would-be contact scenario is what it says about German's indirect role in influencing Slovenian. Reindl discusses this in his treatment of German as a catalyst of latent potential, as well as an actor in preserving an element lost in other Slavic languages.

In addition to the possible role German may have played in encouraging the development of front rounded vowels, detailed above, Reindl also describes German's role as a catalyst in the emergence of the indefinite article *en* (6.5.2). Citing evidence of indefinite articles based on the numeral 'one' in German-adjacent Slavic languages like Polabian, Lower Sorbian and Czech, Reindl writes that the evidence is strong that German has had some influence on the rise of an indefinite article in these languages. Slovenian dialects have also developed an indefinite article, such as that found in the Carinthian dialect of the Rož Valley: *an / ana / anu* (which correspond to German *ein / eine / ein*). Despite what appears to be direct influence from German, Reindl notes that there is a definite universal tendency to develop indefinite articles from the word for 'one', and he cites previous scholarship, which argues that this development may even be a Balkan phenomenon. In this way, Reindl shows that, rather than directly borrowing this feature, latent Slavic tendencies may have been catalyzed by the proximity of German.

Another way in which German may have had indirect influence on Slovenian is in the preservation of features that may otherwise have been lost (and have been in other Slavic languages). A prime example of this are the "half" numerals (5.2.6) that existed in Slovenian until at least the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which appears to be around the same time that they became lost in German. Slovenian had at least nine "half-" numbers, beginning with *poldrug* '1½' and *poltretji* '2½', going all the way up to *poldseti* '9½' corresponding to German *anderthalb*, *dritthalb* and *zehnthalb* ('1½', '2½' and '9½', respectively). Reindl points out that this same series also existed in Russian, but died out in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (*полтора* '1½' and *полторацма* '2½' being the only extant forms today). Upper Sorbian is reported to have retained the series up through at least 11½ (US *poldwanata*), and Lower Sorbian up through 6½ (LS *polsedzma*). Reindl cites the need for further research to determine more definitively how long such half numerals existed in Russian, but he writes that one can reasonably assume that German influence acted to preserve these forms longer in nearby Slavic languages.

This book approaches language contact with the assumption that contact-induced change can only be assumed if all language internal means of that change have been exhausted. Reindl makes this clear in Chapter 2, when he outlines his methodology and his reliance on linguistic universals and comparative analysis to inform the likelihood of German influence. This is a break with traditional approaches to language contact, in which ruling out internally motivated change is not necessary to posit external influence. While Reindl's method is laudable in some respects, as it seeks to avoid ascribing to German influence what may be internal change, the danger is that it may be over-cautious. It is possible that such a rigorous application of linguistic universals and comparative method will find no influence in instances which likely did have some external cause.



An interesting case is that of the front rounded vowels, which Reindl discusses in 4.2.3. As shown in detail above, he argues that, although these have traditionally been viewed as evidence of contact from German and Hungarian, internal evidence suggests that the phenomenon can be explained as internal to Slavic. This is directly in contrast to the approach taken by Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 57–64), which states that because something *may* have occurred internally, does not mean that it *must* have occurred internally, and without help from an external source. They write that although a change may have occurred internally in one language, this does not mean that it occurred internally in another and that external influence can therefore be ruled out (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 58). Reindl also points out that Carinthian Slovene, which has had the most substantial contact with German, does not have front rounded vowels (the implication being that if German were to have this influence anywhere, it would be in Carinthian Slovene). This is a dangerous assumption to make for two reasons: first, it again runs counter to the more traditional approach by claiming that if a change did not occur in a particular contact situation, it cannot be said to have occurred in another. Secondly, this argument presupposes front rounded vowels to be a universal feature of German, which they are not. It is precisely in Bavarian dialects that front rounded vowels occur *least* often, making Carinthian Slovene a less-than-ideal candidate for borrowing the feature from their Bavarian speaking neighbors. In the end, Reindl is ignoring the middle road, given by Koletnik (2001: 61), which is one that he embraces elsewhere in his book—that of external influence as a catalyst (whether it is German or Hungarian in this case).

As Reindl notes, the book is not an exhaustive treatment of this enormous topic. There remains a great amount of work to be done, especially in the field of dialect research. In section 1.4, the author cites the broad scope of the study and the necessity of sacrificing detail and the systematic study of dialects for a general overview of German-Slovene language contact. In addition, as Reindl stresses in Chapter 9, one must consider the bi-directionality of language contact in the case of German and Slovenian. Far more attention has been paid to German influence on Slovenian in past works than the other way around, and Reindl does well to consider this and include some information on the topic (as well as something of an exhortation to the reader to keep this linguistic ‘two-way street’ in mind).

The book would benefit from a map of the area, highlighting the dialect areas covered in the discussion of language contact. Although the expert in this field is likely familiar with the regions in question, and even some of the smaller dialect areas mentioned, the non-specialist may be left wondering precisely where these particular dialects are spoken and how close they are to the surrounding countries/language areas that are purported to have such influence. A map that shows the countries in question, along with shaded portions to detail the areas where Slovenian is spoken and some delineation of the dialect zones, would be a great complement to the work. This is something that I felt was missing from the study, and it would not be difficult to remedy for future editions. That said, the book successfully summarizes the language contact situation on the ground and provides ample detail to support the idea that German influence, although significant, is not responsible for drastic changes in the Slovenian language.

It is a welcome addition to serious scholarship in the field of Slovene linguistics, as well as contact linguistics in general, and it is written in a way that is accessible to the interested layperson but scholarly enough for the specialist. This book provides the reader with access to wide-ranging data on German-Slovene language contact and a starting point for further inquiry.

Although this work does depart from previous research and provide some new insights into the field of Slovene linguistics, it draws heavily on the work that has gone before it, and it is here that it has its greatest strength.

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