Editorial

# The pragmatic turn in studies of linguistic borrowing

## 1. Pragmatic borrowing at the intersection between contact linguistics and pragmatics

A wealth of research, especially since the mid-20th century, has documented that borrowing is a key product of language contact (Haugen, 1950; Weinreich, 1953; Clyne, 1972, 2003). Linguistic borrowing concerns the incorporation of a structure or form from one language system (the source language, SL) to another (the recipient language, RL). To avoid unfortunate implications of ownership embedded in the term 'borrowing', terms such as 'copying' or 'replication' are sometimes preferred instead (Johanson, 2002; Matras, 2009) to refer to this concept, which encompasses ''all kinds of copying processes, whether they are due to native speakers adopting elements from other languages into the recipient language, or whether they result from non-native speakers imposing properties of their native language onto a recipient language'' (Haspelmath, 2009:36).

In many respects, it makes sense to talk of a recent shift in focus – a 'pragmatic turn' – in research on linguistic borrowing, which implies a reorientation of its *locus* from the borrowed lexemes per se, to how the use of borrowed items is constrained by cultural, social or cognitive factors. This is a development towards socio-pragmatics (Andersen and Aijmer, 2011) which is congruous with a more general shift towards usage-based as opposed to structuralist approaches to language contact (Backus, 2014; Zenner and Van de Mieroop, in this issue; see further Rodríguez González, 1996; Gómez Capuz, 1997; Khoutyz, 2009; Terkourafi, 2009; González Cruz and Rodríguez Medina, 2011; Onysko and Winter-Froemel, 2011; Fiedler, 2012; Winter-Froemel and Onysko, 2012; Kavgić, 2013; Andersen, 2014; Onysko, 2016). While research on borrowing has traditionally focused on inventory issues, the semantics of individual forms and their degree of morphological and phonological adaptation, there is now a growing body of research that considers factors that may be seen to motivate borrowing, such as the emblematic nature of individual forms and their potential for expressing notions like 'coolness', urbanism, youth, globalisation, etc. – reflecting common associations with particular usage groups – as well as the presumed or observed pragmatic effects of selecting a borrowed item in place of its domestic alternatives. Borrowing may also be related to the more general social prestige of the source language culture, mental processing, precision, creativity, markedness or the like.

This pragmatic turn is especially evident from recent contributions to this journal, as shown by three articles which can be considered central to this research field. Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011) explore the pragmatic motivations for lexical borrowing in remote-contact situations. Lexical borrowings are shown to have specific stylistic and pragmatic effects, especially when they compete with near-synonyms in the RL. Such effects can be utilised by language users in ongoing discourse and scrutinised via the methodology of pragmatics, which can thus explain the motivation for the choice of a borrowed form (see e.g. the article by Andersen in this special issue, which associates lexical choice with negative or positive connotations). Borrowing is closely related to linguistic innovation, and Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011) suggest explanatory factors such as ''flattery, insult, disguise, taboo/emotional markedness, prestige/fashion, and changes in the world/need for a new name'' (Onysko and Winter-Froemel, 2011:1553). Other studies of pragmatic borrowing are concerned with how discourse-pragmatic items are copied from one language to another. Terkourafi (2009) looks into the use of *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Cypriot Greek, showing that these politeness markers are gradually bleached and lose much of their speech-act signalling potential when they are adopted in a recipient language. Instead they come to function as discourse markers that locally manage sequential aspects of discourse structure, especially related to conversational closing and self-repair (Terkourafi, 2009:234). Finally, Andersen (2014) presents a general framework for the study of borrowing of discourse-pragmatic items through the notions of functional stability, shift and

adaptation. His study incorporates another significant aspect of the 'pragmatic turn' in studies of borrowing, namely the increased focus on phraseological units and the co-text in which individual borrowed forms are used (Andersen this issue, Fiedler this issue; see also Gottlieb, 2012; Fiedler, 2012). Andersen (2014) argues that a range of syntagmatic and contextual factors should be explored, such as utterance placement, scope, orientation, degree of syntactic integration and collocational features. In a case study of how the expletive *fuck* is used in Norwegian discourse, he shows that phrasal and collocational patterns of expletives in the SL may either be adopted wholesale as so-called collostructions (Stefanowitsch and Gries, 2003), with several alternating forms emerging in the RL, or one specific instantiation of a SL collostruction may be adopted as a fixed phrase.[1]

Thus, the term 'pragmatic borrowing' has come to be used – adequately in our opinion – to refer to the scientific meeting ground between contact linguistics and pragmatics, and in a more specific sense, to the integration of discourse-pragmatic features from a source language into a recipient language.

To our knowledge, this journal issue is the first special issue devoted to pragmatic borrowing. Its individual contributions illustrate a range of aspects of pragmatic borrowing from English into other languages.

In the following, we present our general conception of pragmatic borrowing in more detail, as well as an overview of the contributions to this special issue.

## 2. The strands of pragmatic borrowing research and the contributions to this special issue

A range of studies exploring the role of socio-pragmatic context in lexical and terminological borrowing could be mentioned; however, as updated and comprehensive surveys are provided by Treffers-Daller (2007/2010) and Andersen (2014), our purpose here is not to provide a full literature review, but rather to point at various strands of research that require scholarly attention and illustrate a wide variety of pragmatic borrowing phenomena.

As indicated above, the field of research which we refer to as pragmatic borrowing captures various aspects of pragmatics, and its different strands include motivational factors, the discourse-pragmatic products of borrowing, as well as post hoc effects.

Firstly, **motivational factors** include prestige and other drivers of innovation that seem to trigger the choice of an item from a particular source language. Among the work that has motivation as its focus we find most notably Galinsky (1967:71), who sees the use of Anglicisms in German as "[p]roviding national American color of settings, actions, and characters, (2) establishing or enhancing precision, (3) offering or facilitating intentional disguise, (4) effecting brevity to the point of terseness, (5) producing vividness, often by way of metaphor, (6) conveying tone, its gamut ranging from humorous playfulness to sneering parody on America and 'Americanized' Germany, (7) creating or increasing variation of expression" (see also Carstensen et al., 1993–1996; Pfitzner, 1978; Plümer, 2000; Onysko and Winter-Froemel, 2011; Prćić, 2014). The emblematic nature of borrowings is underlined by most research within this strand, and individual items may serve to demonstrate speakers' ability to code-switch (Poplack, 1980:614) or convey a 'token function'. An example of the latter is the use of *okay!* by young Kurdish children in eastern Turkey when addressing Western tourists, whose function is to symbolise "an attitude favourable in principle toward communication in a foreign, Western tongue" (Matras, 2009:147).

Such motivational factors are addressed in **Eline Zenner and Dorien Van de Mieroop**'s investigation of how English is used in the Dutch reality TV show *Expeditie Robinson*. In this case, English insertions occur in interactions aimed at performing identity and delineating the boundaries between in-groups and out-groups. The authors offer an in-depth qualitative analysis of the way English borrowings function in their local, discursive environment, thus shedding further light on the metaphorical and discursive function of code choice (Blom and Gumperz, 1972). Their analysis shows how English multi-word units are mainly linked to a limited number of participants who form a salient ingroup with its own discursive norms encompassing a regular use of English lexemes and multiword units. Next, the analysis focuses on an interesting opposite: a speaker who also uses English frequently but who does not attain any notable social prestige among his co-participants for doing so. The two contrasting cases illustrate the locally emergent nature of the social meaning of borrowed phraseological units in spontaneous conversation. Thus, their contribution unveils significant aspects of the interactional and discursive function of borrowing, and adds to the ongoing paradigm shift in research on borrowing from a structuralist to a socio-pragmatic perspective.

Secondly, the prototypical **products of pragmatic borrowing** are items which operate at the discourse-pragmatic level of communication, i.e. which carry signals about discourse structure, speaker attitude, the speech act performed, information state, aspects of politeness, etc. Examples of items that have been studied are discourse markers, such as the use of *d'accord* in Brussels Dutch (Treffers-Daller, 1994) and *so* in Spanish (Lipsky, 2005), interjections (Haugen, 1953/

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[1] The difference is illustrated by the fact that the full collostruction *holy* [*moly/crap/shit/fuck*] is adopted from English into Norwegian, while only the phraseme *what the fuck* has been adopted into the RL (and not the whole SL collostruction [*who/where/what/why/how*] *the fuck*).