

**Ralph Ludwig, Peter Mühlhäusler, and Steve Pagel (Eds.):
Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact**

(Cambridge: University Press. 2019. 383 p.)

Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact is a part of the ‘Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact’ series. The voluminous series consists of many interdisciplinary studies produced by various researchers with a common theme: interaction between languages or, as defined in the literature, language contact. This particular book focuses on linguistic ecology. Empirical case studies and theoretical approaches can be seen throughout this compiled work.

The work has five main topics. In the first part, the authors argue about the evolution of the concept ‘ecology’ in linguistic science and present a theoretical framework. They indicate that metaphors being fundamental for abstract thinking and cognition can be called ecological as there are strong interactions between language, society, and the environment; thus, different languages are different tools for interpreting the outside world. Naturally, these ideas are not unprecedented, and they take us back to the famous Sapir Whorf Hypothesis, or linguistic relativity, which claims that people's languages shape their perceptions or cognitions (Gumperz & Levinson, 1996). Accordingly, the authors suggest that relativism ideas are ecological too and they demonstrate the legitimate roots of ecolinguistics. The authors suggest that two predominant views are present in the concept of the ‘ecology’ metaphor: one related to the linguist Salikoko Mufwene, who views ecology in relation to the evolution of language as a historical process and another being ecolinguistics. Theoretical linguists who study ecolinguistics focus more on the connection between linguistic and environmental ecosystems in a more dynamic sense. However, the authors suggest a third, holistic alternative in this book, synchronizing the former two based on raw empirical data of language contact between speakers in a multidisciplinary way by leaning on the concepts of Edmund Husserl’s view: wholes, parts, and foundation. Therefore, they suggest a model with three levels: historically constituted macroecology, intermediate ecological level, and micro or discourse ecology.

In the sequel, Gadet and Pagel discuss the use of the notion ‘natural’ in linguistics, indicating that the term ‘natural’ has two main fields of application in linguistics: one being ‘natural data’ and the other ‘natural trends and features in and across languages.’ They state that what is called ‘natural’ in linguistics is inevitably circular.

In the second part about the ecology of speaker and space, Lorenza Mondada substantiates a series of analysis from a meeting of an urbanistic project show, suggesting that the ecology of the linguistic activity such as the positioning of the participants, spatial configurations, the bodily postures of the chairman, the linguistic structure of the proposals affect the course of interaction heavily. Juan Carlos Godenzzi, on the other hand, demonstrates a case study of Spanish of

Limaon urban interactions in the concept of intermediate ecological level. The urban language spaces of the participants are evaluated according to density, diversity, mobility, mixing, variation, and stability. “One important insight is that higher levels of space are not only constituted physically but are also found in sociocultural concepts or entities” (Ludwig et al., 2019, p. 39; on Godenzzi’s study).

Part three focuses on macroecology and examines historical accounts and time. Cyril Aslanov presents a comprehensive and thorough overview of French influence in the Levant in the concept of diachronic linguistics from the old crusader contexts through the Ottoman era and to the post-Ottoman period. He mentions French becoming the acrolect of non-Muslim minorities of the time in the area. He also mentions French contact with many languages of the Levant region such as Arabic, Greek, Armenian and Turkish and their influence on the French language. In the next section of part three, Silke Jansen offers an ecological linguistic window on personal names of some particular indigenous American groups, the Antillean natives, due to Spanish colonial contact in the early 16th century. Jansen explains the naming patterns of both Iberian and Antillean people of that time, points out the major differences and argues that the language contact between the two sides caused the emergence of a new naming system related to the social norms of the ‘encomienda system.’

Part four is comprised of empirical works of various researchers; Kriegel, Ludwig, Salzmann, Schröder, Rudd, Dermakar, Gadet, Pfänder, Pagel, on the matter of hybridization in an ecological linguistic sense, exemplifying the regions of Mauritius and Northern India, the vernacular of Camfranglais and Sheng from Africa, Francophone groups of Cairo and finally Chamorro from the Pacific islands of Mariana. The importance of a scalar approach instead of a binary one and the terms ‘conventionalization’ and ‘structural integration’ is emphasized. Among the abovementioned African examples, the authors indicate that conventionalization in terms of copying is much more dominant than situational copying. In this part, it is mentioned that empirical analyses based on the three-level model need to be situational and in order to elaborate the highly dynamic interactions of situational contact. In addition to *code-copying*, they come up with more detailed terms such as *code hybridization continuum*, *conventionalized systemic integration continuum*, and *structural systemic integration continuum*. They argue that it is situational pragmatic discourse parameters that naturally determine the linguistic choices of speakers.

Finally, in part five, Mühlhäusler makes two main displays, suggesting methodological aspects to deal with linguistic ecology by practical studies. The author highlights that the pursuit of one simplified general formula is a fallacy and that each language is different, thus requires different formulas and approaches, while discussing the ecological approach to language planning. The author defends the opinion that language diversity is productive, suggesting that

the well-being of languages is not due to overriding others, but it is provided by maintaining the diversity and the interrelations between them. Therefore, language planning should include the embedding of languages in the cultural, economic, and ecological context.

Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact is a brilliant compilation of rewarding studies. Beyond any doubt, the book will be a valuable addition to the library of the researcher who is interested in phenomena such as language contact, diachronic linguistics, language diversification, and ecology. The reader is not led towards generalization but is motivated to adopt new methods depending on subject languages, which brings an innovative approach to the theoretical framework of the literature on the matter, as different approaches are treated in the book. Finally, this book is highly recommended to linguists, linguistics students who study these fields, and the enthusiastic layperson, although some may find the content a bit too technical to comprehend.

References

- Ludwig, R., Mühlhäusler, P. & Pagel, S. (2019) *Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact: Conceptual Evolution, Interrelatedness, and Parameters*. In: Ludwig, R., Mühlhäusler, P. & Pagel, S. (eds.) *Linguistic Ecology and Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 3-42.
- Gumperz, J. J. & Levinson, S. C. (1996) *Rethinking linguistic relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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