

IMPLICATIONS OF CONTACT LINGUISTICS FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDY

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Abstract: Contact linguistics (CL) explores the effects of sustained interaction between dissimilar language communities upon the morpho-phonemic, lexical, and syntactic features of each community's code(s). This paper demonstrates through modern and ancient language situations that language orality (rather than transcription) is the primary mechanism for contact-induced language change. CL is a subfield of sociolinguistics, which explores the influence of independent social-environmental factors upon dependent language choices and usage. CL specifically studies how structural and semantic features can be exchanged mutually when codes-in-contact share sustained interactions, whether or not they possess equal status. Implications of studies by a variety of authors will be brought to bear upon our understanding of the *speech production* reported in such New Testament texts as John 20:16; Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14; of language identifiers such as John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; Rev 9:11; 16:16; and of unlabeled Semitic speech, such as Matt 27:46//Mark 15:34; Mark 5:41; 7:34. (Article)

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1. *Introduction to Language Contact and Sociolinguistics*

Certain perennial inevitabilities of human societies include death, taxes, . . . and language contact. The first we owe to the broken nature of the creation and the second to the exigencies of bureaucracy, while the third is creditable to God's penchant for mass diversification. Given that some 400,000 species of beetles populate our planet and more than 7,500 types of apples are grown across its surface, the fact that there are more than 7,100 different *living*

languages today (not to mention countless dialects) should come as no surprise; it seems par for the divine course and points to the inevitability that codes will collide with considerable frequency. So, it is only natural to ask: What are the effects of repeated collisions (sustained contact), and what is to be expected when it comes to a New Testament that is borne out of contact-rich circumstances?

Broadly speaking, Sarah Thomason observes that “language contact is the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time”¹—though, as she notes, of greater interest is what happens when “non-trivial” contact takes place, such as when groups of people from differing language communities communicate in a sustained manner. Contact phenomena are ubiquitous as well as inevitable, for language never exists within utter isolation. So, whether one is looking at diachronically stable insular communities that neighbor each other, or at mass migration that results in a population transplanted to a region in which another language is the standard, contact does occur and many kinds of changes unfold over generations.

We can relate the subfields of contact linguistics and sociolinguistics in this manner: the first of these (which is the focus of this paper) is concerned with the effects and outcomes of sustained contact and interaction between communities with different languages (such as borrowing, calques, emergence of pidgins and creoles, and various others forms of convergence). While acknowledging these phenomena, the latter tends to examine the relationships that develop between societies and their languages and the variations that emerge therein. Both subfields access qualitative and quantitative analyses. With respect to the field of sociolinguistics, Allan Bell observes that, as it developed in the latter twentieth century and has emerged in this present century, practitioners tend to follow one of four main approaches.²

1. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 1.
2. Bell, *Guidebook*, 6–14.

(1) A sociology of language approach based on an American Structuralist approach and focused on macro-linguistics, being heavily shaped by founder Joshua Fishman, who initiated the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*.³

(2) A critical-constructivist approach that has shown increasing interest in the effects of globalization on language use and how language is both a constructor of society as well as having been constructed by it. Prominent scholars include Jan Blommaert and Monica Heller.⁴

(3) An ethnographic-interactional approach that directs its attention to the language behavior of individuals and small groups. Prominent and formative scholars included John Gumperz and Dell Hymes, the latter founding the journal *Language in Society*.

(4) A variationist approach to sociolinguistics, which Bell calls “the dominant paradigm” in the US at this time.⁵ Its founder was William Labov, and the field tends to focus on variations in vowel and consonant pronunciations.⁶ Labov himself pioneered early studies that explored language change, and he founded the journal fittingly titled *Language Variation and Change*.

Though each approach has its distinct emphases, it is not uncommon to find research that draws from different traditions simultaneously. It is interesting to look at the topics covered in Uriel Weinreich’s *Languages in Contact*, which includes not only discussion of the “mechanisms and structural causes of interference” due to language contact (ch. 2), attendance to the dynamics of bilingualism (ch. 3), consideration of socio-cultural settings of language contact (ch. 4), language standardization and group identification (ch. 4 and Appendix), and even work on the “measurement of interference” (ch. 2).⁷ Ultimately, this work would seem to cut across all four of the approaches identified by Bell.

Similarly, a recent compendium on language contact by van Gijn et al. embraces both macro- and micro-linguistic concerns.

3. See Fishman, ed., *Readings*.

4. Blommaert, *Sociolinguistics of Globalization*; Heller, *Paths to Post-Nationalism*.

5. Bell, *Guidebook*, 11.

6. Labov, *Principles*.

7. Weinreich, *Languages*.

Its subtitle is *Bridging the Gap between Individual Interactions and Areal Patterns*, and its editors state at the outset that “contact linguistics is the overarching term for a highly diversified field with branches that connect to such widely divergent areas as historical linguistics, typology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and grammatical theory.”⁸ The work sets out to offset that “risk of fragmentation and lack of interaction between different sub-branches of contact linguistics.”⁹ As Moisés Silva has quipped, discourse analysis “includes everything.”¹⁰

Contact linguistics (like sociolinguistics in general), then, concerns itself with exploration into how social circumstances influence language choices (per the Lazarsfeld Formula) and that, in turn, positions one to consider the possible avenues of influence and also related outcomes emanating from that contact. CL straddles traditions within the field of sociolinguistics, though its interest in how social interactions involve speakers of different languages means it shares deep affinity with the ethnographic-interactional tradition described above (albeit in recent decades it has been significantly influenced by the critical-constructivist approach), and identification of what the effects of this contact look like.¹¹

8. van Gijn et al., eds., *Language Contact*, 1.

9. van Gijn et al., eds., *Language Contact*, 1.

10. Silva, “Discourse Analysis,” 102.

11. Stephen Murray (*American Sociolinguistics*, 57–93) discusses early work at the intersection of language contact and sociolinguistics, including the key roles played by Einar Haugen, Weinreich, and Fishman. He notes that many of the people who explored the effects of language contact were themselves raised in multilingual homes and environments. Closely connected were the individuals (and academic groups) that concerned themselves with the ethnography of speaking (discussed in Murray, *American Sociolinguistics*, 94–143), including such researchers as William Bright, Charles Ferguson, Gumperz, Susan Ervin-Tripp, and Hymes. In many cases, their formative upbringing similarly involved a multilingual environment. Cross-disciplinary work runs throughout this broad field: language in connection with psychology, anthropology, sociology, and more. And between academic interests, personality quirks, and the politics of academia, movement between locations sometimes hampered—at other times promoted—identifiable academic groups. Among the establishing and more comprehensive works that define this field is Weinreich, *Languages*. More recent volumes that direct their attention to language contact and reflective next-generation developments include Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*;

2. Non-Trivial Language Contact Outcomes

Against this background, we can identify concepts pertinent to language contact and then apply them to study of the New Testament, remembering that there is an underlying assumption running through this piece that processes are common to human societies in general, and thus phenomena that researchers observe in living languages today generally present us with considerations of possible phenomena and processes that may have occurred in an ancient language situation as well. The *actual* changes that take place as a result of contact depend to some degree on the mental linguistic capacities of human beings, on any number of contextual parameters (relating to sociology, politics, religion, and relative prestige), and sometimes on the policies imposed by a dominant group that seeks to force a particular outcome (which are identified as intervening variables).

We will begin with the kinds of change effected by regularized language contact and then turn our attention to where this may shape biblical studies, with a particular view to the emergence of the New Testament within the Second Temple period. An orientation to the possibilities can be drawn from Thomason's monograph.¹² She frames it this way: "It is not just words that get borrowed: all aspects of language structure are subject to transfer from one language to another, given the right mix of social and linguistic circumstances."¹³ She includes, of course, sound systems (phonology), word structure (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and lexical semantics—though she admits subsequently, "Trying to sort out the linguistic results of language contact plunges us immediately into a region of enormous complexity,"¹⁴ all the while arguing simultaneously that *claims* of *unbor-*

Thomason, *Language Contact*; Winford, *Introduction*; Hickey, ed., *Handbook*; van Gijn et al., eds., *Language Contact*; and Pfadenhauer et al., eds., *Global and Local Perspectives*.

12. Thomason, *Language Contact*, esp. chs. 4–9 (some of these materials were anticipated in the early volume cowritten with Kaufman [see Thomason and Kaufman, *Language Contact*]).

13. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 11.

14. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 59.

rowable features present in this or that language lack sufficient foundation.¹⁵

Also of interest is Thomason's discussion of *predictors* of contact-induced change. She notes that, sometimes, imperfect learning of a language may indeed lead to borrowing of features; furthermore, one may have limited knowledge of a second language (L2) and still bring some of its features into their native language (NL). However, persons known to be fluent in both their first language (L1) and an L2 *still* tend to transfer features, and Thomason prefers to reserve the label of *borrowing* for this latter situation.

Thomason furthermore proposes a borrowing scale, reflecting conditions that include both linguistic and social determinants.¹⁶ For example, "non-basic" vocabulary items are most easily borrowed since they simply get inserted into existing constructions. She suggests that superficial phonological (e.g., stress) and syntactic (e.g., word order) features are the next easiest features to borrow, whereas inflectional morphology features are among the most resistant to borrowing. Somewhere closer to the middle of this borrowing spectrum lie lexical function words (e.g., conjunctions and adverbial particles). Relatively more intense degrees of sustained cross-linguistic contact increase the likelihood of the borrowing of function words, basic vocabulary, and derivational affixes—though Thomason cautions that "any borrowing scale is a matter of probabilities, not possibilities," adding that typologically similar languages (one might think, here, of Hebrew and Aramaic) make borrowing (and, I might add, code-switching) easier to perform because the language share "typologically congruent structures."¹⁷ Ironically, borrowing can occur even in the total absence of bilingualism. Thomason cites the example of the British explorer Captain James Cook borrowing the word "taboo" while in Tonga in 1777 and then using it in his voyage narratives.¹⁸ Clearly, the word has caught on.

In total, the mechanisms for contact-induced change include *code-switching* (alternation between two codes in the *same* speech

15. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 63.

16. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 69–74.

17. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 71.

18. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 72.

act/situation) and its linguistic sibling, *code-alternation* (in which bilinguals use one language for a particular situation and their other language for conversations in different environments). There also exists what Thomason calls passive familiarity: monolingual Americans have no problem using words like *tsunami* and *Gesundheit* and, if they have lived amongst Jewish neighbors, may readily use borrowed words such as *schlep* and *schmuck*—despite the fact that most do *not* know Japanese, German, or Yiddish.¹⁹

True contact-induced borrowing may yet assume rather different directions. One of these is *maintenance of equivalent* words in both languages. Familiar to most English speakers are parallel vocabularies that resulted from the Norman Conquest of England roughly one millennium ago. Among them are food words with Germanic-versus-French derivation respectively, such as *cow~sheep~swine* versus *beef~mutton~pork* (which terms evidence their own prior history of borrowing, such as French *pork* < Old French *porc* < Latin *porcus*). Today, criminals can enjoy the privilege of being convicted bilingually when one code alone would surely have done the job, being adjudged guilty in both Germanic and Latinate terms of “*breaking* and *entering*” or of “*aiding* and *abetting*.”

On the opposite end of the contact-induced spectrum of potential changes, lexical *loss* can result from changes in socio-cultural factors. For example, few English speakers today can identify the word *tow-head* as designating a blond, curly-haired *bairn* or *waif*, much less would they know that *tow* is combed flax which is fair in color and wavy in texture and can thus be applied metaphorically to a blond child. Yet some lexical loss seems spontaneous: Anglo-Saxon words for a “man”—*thane*, *wera* and *mann*—saw the first of these drop out of general use, and the second retained only in a compound (*werewolf*), although the third has remained in regular usage, albeit with a semantically narrowed meaning [+male, +human], especially as understood by younger speakers.²⁰

19. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 139. Thomason also delves into more nuanced mechanisms and “extreme language mixture,” including pidgins, creoles and mixed languages (142–52), but these will not be discussed at this time.

20. From among contact writers, we also shall briefly acknowledge the encyclopedic and essential volume, Hickey, ed., *Handbook*, which includes defin-

3. *Relevance of Language Contact for Biblical Studies*

So much has been published in recent decades that explores the multilingual situations that affected Jewish Palestine and the Greco-Roman world of the first century, that here I can acknowledge the existence of this work but *cannot* discuss it. Hughson Ong and Sung Min Park are among the most recent, though see multiple publications by Stanley Porter, Bernard Spolsky, and others.²¹

Among my favorite comments relevant to this matter is a brief remark in a century-old source, the classic (and encyclopedic) grammar of A. T. Robertson. With respect to non-standard Greek in John's Gospel, in particular the phrase "full of grace"—a genitival construction that some considered awkward, if not an outright corruption of the language—Robertson observes, "The papyri have taught us to be chary about charging John with being ungrammatical in πλήρης χάριτος (John 1:14). These matters simply show that the New Testament writers used a live language and were not automata."²² In an environment where multiple languages provide the currency of daily interaction, CL has a field day. It acknowledges a socially vibrant and diachronically flexible perception of language.

Though language relationships are often structured as trees—which does help with perceiving some level of inter-connectedness—the wave conception of language diversification and relationships is more realistic. There is no such thing as a pure and distinct language (though there may be relatively isolated ones that show little obvious influence from language contact), and no single stage in a language's development is superior to any other. We may enjoy the picturesque, almost-poetic flourish afforded by William Shakespeare's astonishing vocabulary and creative impulse, but he was trading on changes that had taken place in the

ing chapters on key concepts of the field in Parts I–II, societal dimensions to contact in Part III, and scores of case studies in Part IV. Worth noting, too, is Winford, *Introduction*, which for a monograph is impressive in its expansive and clear presentation on a large range of topics relevant to the field.

21. Ong, "Language of the New Testament"; *Multilingual Jesus*; and *Sociolinguistic Analysis*; Park, *Prestige Language*; Haugen, "Analysis."

22. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1204.

immediately preceding years as Middle English was morphing into Modern, thanks in part to the innovations of Geoffrey Chaucer nearly two centuries earlier, whose use of double and triple negatives and mismatching (by modern standards) of plural subjects with singular verbs would, by many, be considered travesties of good grammar and decent culture. Both eras belong in a trajectory of history that resulted in what Daniel Defoe (in his 1701 poem, “The True-Born Englishman”) playfully labelled “your Anglo-Saxon-Danish-French English,” or what John McWhorter concisely dubbed “our magnificent bastard tongue.”²³ Thus, we can anticipate the appearance of certain speech phenomena typical of language contact amidst the multilingual environment of the late Second Temple period in Palestine.

3.1 *Code-Switching*

Best known even amongst general readership of the New Testament are instances of code-switching, many of which are often preserved in English translations. That Jesus’ final words on the cross (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” [Matt 27:46//Mark 15:34]) are transliterated into Greek from whatever allocation of Hebrew or Aramaic that Jesus spoke is surely intended to bring vivid realism into the account, as well as to strengthen the bridge with Ps 22:1. The same can be said for the Semitic of Jesus’ directions to the deceased girl in Mark 4:41, as also to the deaf man in Mark 7:34. The instance occurring in 1 Cor 16:22 provides a memorable bilingual Greek-Hebrew sound play: ἀνάθεμα Μαράνα θά (“accursed [be the unbeliever] Lord-come”). The code switches in the Sermon on the Mount, *raca* (“fool” [Matt 5:21–22]), might be handled in a way that implies the actual speech was given in Greek, or taught bilingually. The instance of his healing of a deaf man, in which Jesus says, Εἰσαφα (“Be opened”), surely implies the recollection that this conversation took place in Aramaic. The use of Κορβαῖν (“devoted [to God]”) during argumentation with the Pharisees (Matt 15:5; Mark 7:11) pivots the connection with Lev 1:2 and the locus of so much of Jesus’ disagreement with them.

23. McWhorter, *Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue*.

Code-switching is often understood as both a negotiation mechanism between competing expectations for a particular language in a specific speech situation, as well as a means of bringing in literary or humorous overtones. This may well lie behind Mary Magdalene's use of Παββουνι ("[my] teacher" [John 20:16]) when addressing a resurrected Jesus, as it vivifies the tension of a changed, post-resurrection relationship. The fact that it was retained when the account was being relayed in Greek brings vividness to the interchange and is emblematic of the multi-cultural experience of the original speaker *and* the storyteller.

The words reportedly on Jesus' lips on the cross (albeit via Greek transliteration in Matt 27:46 and Mark 15:34),²⁴ along with Mary's addressing of Jesus as Παββουνι (transliterated Aramaic, which the Fourth Gospel indicates she spoke "in Hebrew" [20:16]), are reflective of the close interrelationship of the two Semitic language in classical Jewish contexts.²⁵ Though reasons for the Aramaic hypothesis have already been thoroughly discussed, the mixing of three languages (not to mention Latinisms in Mark's Gospel) surely reflects a picture of movement between them that was familiar fare to Palestinian Jews. Code-switching was a phenomenon to be expected, and the trilingual *titulus crucis* placed above Jesus (John 19:19–20) affirmed this, regardless of how one interprets Ἑβραϊστί (or, for that matter, Ῥωμαϊστί, because the dialect of Rome itself would have differed from regional vernaculars).²⁶ Of course, one must wonder whether the Semitic words represent a recall of originally Aramaic or Hebrew speech on Jesus' part, or whether the speech was originally in Greek with Jesus intermittently using a Semitic word in order to link the topic closely to Palestinian Jewish society.

3.2 *Loanwords*

The New Testament (and the Gospels, in particular) abound in Semitic loanwords, many of which are common to both Hebrew and Aramaic: for example, ἀμῆν ("truly"); Γαββαθα ("stone pavement"); Κορβᾶν ("dedicated to God"); μαμωνᾶς ("wealth");

24. See valuable discussion in Buth, "Riddle of Jesus' Cry."

25. Buth, "Riddle of Jesus' Cry," esp. 399–402.

26. See Delgado Gómez, "Get Up! Be Opened!" 392–95.

Μεσσίας (“anointed one”); ῥακά (“fool”); ἀββᾶ (“father”); σάτον (“dry measure”); ῥαββί (“rabbi”); and ὠσαννά. Some appear to be specifically Aramaic—e.g., Παββουνι (“my rabbi” [Matt 26:49; John 20:16]) and possibly σαβαχθάνι (“you have forsaken me”). Jan Joosten notes that words like ἀμήν and πάσχα (“Passover”) are “borrowed directly” from the Semitic languages.²⁷

Admittedly, an unavoidable problem haunts any application of sociolinguistics to ancient language situations: one is looking to scrutinize fundamentally *oral* dynamics through the keyhole of *written* materials. Furthermore, Semitic language expression is necessarily represented in the Greek New Testament by *transliteration*, which is approximate only.²⁸ So, when does a code-switch become a loanword? It becomes one when it becomes regularized in the receptor language.

3.3 Name Translations

That a Semitic place name is translated or commented on in Greek reflects the multicultural nature particularly of the expected audience and thus (often) of language contact as well. This is surely behind the name explanation of Rev 9:11 (Ἀβαδδὼν for Greek Ἀπολλύων) and 16:16 (Ἀρμαγεδὼν). That the point is made in John 5:2 about the pool in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate being named Bethesda/Bethsaida (ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδα) goes the extra literary mile to make a point, specifically, exactness of location. The wording in John 19:13 is even more specific: εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Λιθόστρωτον, Ἑβραϊστὶ δὲ Γαββαθα (“to a place called Lithostratos but in Hebrew Gabbatha”) as also in John 19:17, εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου Τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστὶ Γολγοθα (“to the so-called Skull Place which is spoken in Hebrew [as] Golgotha”). Furthermore, immediately after these in John 19:20, John writes the most explicit of all qualifiers: on the τίτλος—a cognate of Latin *titulus* (“inscription”)—the charge against Jesus, encapsulated in Pilate’s sarcastic appellation of Jesus, ἣν γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί (“was written in-Hebrew, in-Roman, in-Greek”). This calls for some further comments on the language labels (see below).

27. Joosten, “Graeco-Semitic Vocabulary,” 116.

28. Buth, “Riddle of Jesus’ Cry.”

3.4 *Calques*

The presence of calqued words and phrases (i.e., though worded in Greek, their totality of meaning is Semitic) reinforces the picture of regular inter-language contact. To identify just a few, we include use of *ψυχή* to mean the totality of person (Hebrew *nephesh*) rather than just their spirit or soul; *πρός* meaning “in the presence of” (John 1:1) based on Hebrew *le*; *αἰών* (“age/eternity”) in the sense of Hebrew *olam*; and phrases such as *καλέω τὸ ὄνομα* (“to call the name” [i.e., “to name”]) from Hebrew *qarath shemo*. Jesus’ unique self-referential, *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (“son of the man”) is surely influenced by the Semitic construct formation, however one chooses to translate and interpret it. VSO (Verb, Subject, Object) word order, in and of itself, is not proof, though its prevalence is suggestive, of interference. Joosten notes that the use of *ὀφείλημα* (“debt”) in Greek to mean “sin” “no doubt reflects influence from Aramaic (or Hebrew) *chwb* ‘debt, sin,’” just as the phrase *σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα* (“flesh and blood”) “used in reference to mere mortals in comparison with God, has no real analogue in Greek literature but finds a ready parallel in Hebrew *mdw rshb*.”²⁹

3.5 *Language Labels*

Though multiple languages are known to have played roles in the communications of first-century Palestinian Jews, and dynamics of language contact were surely unavoidable, the functional distribution of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin remains a contentious topic and the types of intermixing or influence involved have received less attention. Among more recent investigations into the functional distribution of languages in Jewish Palestine, in particular, is Ong’s *Sociolinguistic Analysis* (particularly Part 2), including his use of Gustaf Dalman’s and Joachim Jeremias’s Aramaic Hypothesis for investigation into the degree of Greek being used amongst Jewish Palestinian communities.³⁰ Though it is

29. Joosten, “Graeco-Semitic Vocabulary,” 122.

30. Ong, *Sociolinguistic Analysis*. See Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, 45–60; Jeremias, “*ῥαχά*.” See also Watt, “Brief History,” on evidence for strong presence of Greek usage within Jewish communities. Additionally, see Porter, “Dialect and Register” and *Idioms* on growing evidence for the use of Greek by Jesus in particular.

not the aim of this paper to delve into the totality of the Palestinian language landscape, it can be observed that much of current scholarship conceives of first-century Palestinian Jews as making particularized use of Hebrew, vernacular use of Aramaic—and, increasingly, use of Greek for multiple purposes.³¹ The boundaries between language identifications can be fuzzy.

With respect to Paul's speaking "in the Hebrew dialect" (Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14), what was recognized by the participants as "Hebrew" may have had embedded within its expressions varying amounts of Aramaic (or even Greek) loanwords, morphosyntactic interference, phonological interference, or cross-linguistic semantic transference—and yet it would still be perceived as "Hebrew." As Steven Fraade notes, there existed a close cultural proximity of the Semitic languages for centuries and their "mutual interpenetration" was to such a degree that "Hebraisms in Aramaic and Aramaisms in Hebrew" certainly occurred.³² Fraade observes similar effects later in history that resulted in languages like Yiddish, Ladino, and Judeo-Arabic—all written in Hebrew script though different in degrees of Hebraic features because of cross-linguistic influence from other languages in contact.

So-called "different" languages are sometimes labeled along socio-political, as opposed to purely genetic, lines. Ask Belgians what Flemish is, and they will likely identify it as one of *their* national languages (along with French and German). When pressed, however, Belgians will admit it is actually a dialect of Dutch (formally, Southern Dutch or Belgian Dutch). Socio-politically, Flemish is Belgian, but genetically it is Dutch. As the well-worn quip goes, "A language is nothing more than a dialect backed by an army and navy."

4. Concise Takeaways for New Testament Studies

First, the invocation of the field of language contact (and of sociolinguistics in general) keeps biblical studies firmly positioned within the realm of natural human language, for, even under divine

31. See also Porter, "Jesus," and Wise, *Language and Literacy*.

32. Fraade, *Multilingualism*, 14. He cites Weinreich, *Languages*, who speaks of "internal Jewish bilingualism" (15).

inspiration, human authors engaged their ordinary conversational means and methods in whatever ways seemed naturally suitable.

Second, a major culprit behind contact-induced language interference is NL/L1 *competence*, which must be given its due ahead of any role played by the process of manual copying of words or idioms. Influence upon L2 production certainly occurs as a byproduct of manual copying, but mental processing via one's NL competence demonstrably influences the ways people produce an L2, as has been generously documented in modern language situations.³³

Third, it is readily apparent that NL influence (e.g. from Semitic languages) upon New Testament Greek extends to morpho-syntactic features, lexical choice, and semantics. Also, due to phonemic variation, it may well lie behind some New Testament textual variants. Contact-induced influence brings into play a network of experiences and imagery that can be expected to influence expression in the New Testament. The grammatically stressed phrase ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“who is and who was and who is coming” [Rev 1:8]), for example, surely reflects a rich collision of languages and worldview networks.

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33. See also Joosten, “Graeco-Semitic Vocabulary,” 118–19.

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