DACO- AND IBERO-ROMANCE IN CONTACT: ON THE ORIGIN OF STRUCTURAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RELATED LANGUAGES

KIM SCHULTE[1]

Abstract. To date, few attempts have been made to systematically examine which kinds of changes are likely to arise due to contact between related languages, though one might suspect that their structural similarities make them particularly susceptible to contact-induced change. The main challenge is to establish, retrospectively, whether features shared by neighbouring, related varieties are the result of prolonged contact, rather than jointly inherited. By identifying changes triggered by a recently established contact situation, we can gain insights into what can or is likely to be borrowed between related languages

Based on fieldwork undertaken in Castellón de la Plana, a Spanish town with a large Romanian migrant population, the present study shows that transfer between the two locally spoken Ibero-Romance varieties and Romanian is rampant at virtually all levels of linguistic description, a fact that should encourage us to be keep an open mind regarding the origin of structural similarities among related languages.

Key words: Language contact, related languages, structural transfer, Romanian, Spanish, Valencian (Catalan)

1. THEORETICAL MOTIVATION

In recent years, an increasing body of data has been providing evidence that linguistic contact is a major factor in the structural development of the world's languages. For instance, the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (Haspelmath *et al.*, 2005) shows that similar structural (morphological and syntactic) features tend to cluster together, even across language family boundaries.

If unrelated, often typologically very different languages influence each other and are subject to transfer of linguistic structures, then it stands to reason that their is even more morphosyntactic influence or transfer between sister languages that share a comparatively similar structure.

The importance of contact between closely related languages for historical linguistics was recognised, at least implicitly, as early as the 19th century, forming the basis for Schmidt's (1872) *Wellentheorie* (Wave Theory), which explains the

[1] Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Kim.Schulte@uab.cat.

RRL, **LVII**, *4*, p. 331–354, Bucureşti, 2012

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

evolution of the Indo-European languages as a progressive differentiation from a centre; the languages closest to the centre are most similar, and the greatest differences are found between the languages that are spoken in areas which are geographically most distant from one another.

Nevertheless, it is only very recently that historical linguists have become interested in structural change caused by contact between genetically related languages; at a symposium on the topic at the University of Texas in April 2012 it was presented as an innovative and underinvestigated area of research. What is more, to date no serious attempt has been made to establish a systematic typology of structural language changes that are likely to arise as the result of (closely) related languages.

One of the reasons for this is the fact that it is, retrospectively, often virtually impossible to establish whether particular similarities between neighbouring languages or varieties are jointly inherited, i.e. due to their shared genetic history, or whether they are indeed the product of prolonged linguistic contact between populations speaking closely related languages. The default assumption tends to be the former, despite a lack of scientific evidence. An alternative way of identifying and classifying structural changes triggered by linguistic contact among related languages or varieties must therefore be found.

In order to overcome the difficulties involved in distinguishing jointly inherited features from those that are due to contact, it is necessary to establish which kinds of features are commonly transferred between related languages as the result of contact. Such a typology of contact-induced changes between related languages can then inform us as to which of the features found in a pair of related languages that have been in contact are likely to be the result of this contact situation.

The safest way to identify contact-induced structural changes beyond any doubt is by analysing language change and its outcomes in recently established contact situations involving related languages. This allows us to observe changes as they develop, to compare the new, post-contact varieties with the respective pre-contact varieties, and to identify new structures that have clearly been triggered by language contact.

The data drawn from such studies, providing clear information about which types of structures are susceptible or resistant to transfer between related languages, can then contribute to the compilation of a cross-linguistic classification of changes that are more or less likely to occur as the result of contact between related languages. Ultimately, this will allow us to reassess to what extent the traditional principles of historical linguistics and the family tree model, in which any structural similarities between sister languages tend to be attributed to joint inheritance, may have to be modified in order to incorporate the important role of contact between related languages.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

2. THE CHOICE OF LANGUAGES

As explained in the previous section, the ideal setting for a study aiming to unambiguously identify structural similarities that have arisen due to contact, and to distinguish them from jointly inherited ones, is a sociolinguistic environment in which intense contact is currently taking place. Furthermore, in order to obtain conclusive results, it is necessary for the respective related languages not to have been in contact during a considerable time prior to the emergence of the current contact situation, as such previous contact would reduce the degree of certainty with which we can distinguish jointly inherited from contact-induced features.

A recently established contact situation that satisfies these criteria is one that brings together Romanian and Spanish, both of which emerged as regional varieties of a single language, *Popular Latin*, within the Roman Empire. On the one hand, their common origin implies that we are dealing with sister languages; on the other hand, there has been virtually no previous contact between them for a very long time. This is due to the fact that the province of *Dacia* (roughly equivalent to the area in which Romanian is spoken today) was only under the full influence of the Roman Empire for a relatively short time, as the Romans withdrew from the area in 217 A.D., only 170 years after its conquest; this led to political and cultural isolation from the rest of the Romance-speaking world and to almost two millennia of independent linguistic development. This separation of Romanian from the other Romance language is reflected in a number of internal structural developments that are unique to Romanian, as well as in the adoption of numerous linguistic structures from the other, non-Romance languages spoken in the Balkans and adjoining areas[2].

The geographical distance and long-lasting separation between the Balkans and the Iberian Peninsula imply that the likelihood of contact between the respective Romance languages is particularly low. Whilst both Ibero- and Daco-Romance have been influenced by (largely indirect) contact with French, and to a lesser extent with Italian, at certain points in their history[3], the only instance of direct historical contact between Ibero-Romance and Romanian speakers took place in the late 15th and early 16th century, when there was an influx of Judeo-Spanish speakers into the Balkans; however, there is no evidence of any structural change in Romanian caused by contact with Judeo-Spanish. We can, therefore, confidently assume that any non-coincidental structural similarities between Romanian and the Ibero-Romance languages must either be directly inherited from

[2] The fact that Romanian shares a considerable number of features with other Balkan languages is due to large-scale linguistic convergence within the *Balkan Sprachbund* (Trubetzkoy 1930: 17–18), which has made Romanian typologically less similar to the other Romance languages.

[3] Indeed, both Spanish and Romanian have a considerable number of loanwords from French and/or Italian (Schulte 2009: 237–239, Dworkin 2012: 118–156), many of which appear in both languages.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

Popular Latin, or, alternatively, that we are dealing with the result of *genetic drift*, i.e. parallel developments facilitated by the structural predisposition of Popular Latin favouring similar developments in its daughter languages.

By contrast, the Iberian Peninsula did not lose contact with other Romanised areas; in the Popular Latin of *Hispania*, various dialects arose and gradually established themselves as separate varieties or languages, among them Castilian Spanish (Spanish hereafter) and Catalan with its Valencian dialect.[4] Due to their geographical proximity, Spanish and Valencian have been in close contact since their very emergence, and there is widespread bilingualism, interference, borrowing and structural transfer between them, which has been studied in much detail (cf. e.g. Blas Arroyo, 1999; Sinner & Wesch, 2008). It is, therefore, in many cases impossible to determine whether features found in both Spanish and Valencian are the result of joint inheritance, of parallel development due to shared structural predisposition, or of prolonged and intense contact. It can, indeed, be argued that many speakers do not perceive them as separate languages, but that they form part of a single linguistic system[5] in which Valencian and Spanish offer lexical and morphosyntactic alternatives which can be picked and mixed with relative freedom, providing its speakers with a powerful sociolinguistic and pragmatic tool. As shall be seen in the following sections, the availability of two contact varieties from which structures can be borrowed adds a degree of complexity to the process, but it also serves to casts light on the mechanisms, choices and restrictions involved in the adoption of linguistic structures from contact languages.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTACT SITUATION

In Castellón de la Plana, a provincial capital on the Mediterranean coast in the Spanish region of Valencia, we encounter a recently established contact situation between a proportionally large Romanian migrant community and the local population, largely bilingual in Spanish and Valencian.

The exact number or proportion of inhabitants of Romanian origin in Castellón is not easy to determine, due in part to the freedom of movement within the European Union and the reluctance of parts of the migrant population to register with the authorities, in particular those who are not integrated in the official labour market or education system. According to the Spanish National

[4] I shall not, here, participate in the largely politically motivated discussion about the linguistic status of Valencian. The term *Valencian* will, in this article, be used to refer to the regional variety spoken in Castellón de la Plana.

[5] Due to normative pressure exerted by politics and the education system, speakers are, on reflection, well aware that they are dealing with two separate languages; nevertheless, the distinction becomes increasingly blurred at a more informal level.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

Statistics Institute, in 2009 24,218 or 13.5% of the 180,000 inhabitants registered in Castellón were of Romanian origin, though the actual proportion is probably closer to 20%. The fact that a Romanian consulate has been operational in this comparatively small town since 2008 is further evidence of the importance and size of the Romanian community in Castellón.

As contact-induced change depends on a high degree of bilingualism, and bilingualism within a migrant population, in turn, tends to develop as the result of social integration, the degree to which Romanians in Castellón are integrated is of crucial importance (cf. Viruela 2002, 2006 on this topic). Whilst integration cannot be measured mathematically, the following summary of some crucial aspects of the Romanian immigrant population in Castellón enables us to assess to what extent integration has been successful.

(a) There has been a continuous influx of Romanian immigrants to Castellón since the 1990s, intensifying in the first decade of the 21st century, fuelled primarily by the need for a larger work force in the construction sector and the ceramics industry. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of the immigrant population, especially women, have found employment in the service sector.

(b) A large proportion of Romanian immigrants intend to stay, having acquired property with a long-term mortgage. The wide-spread intention not to return in Romania in the near future is confirmed by a tendency to reunite families, with spouses and retired parents also moving to Castellón, according to information provided by informants and the *Asociación Rumana de Castellón, Valencia y Alicante*.

(c) According to the information provided by the informants of this study and by the staff of schools in which data collection for the study took place, the children of Romanian immigrants are highly integrated in the educational system.

Whilst these facts show a high degree of integration into local society, it is also evident that there is a desire to maintain Romanian cultural identity. In addition to numerous businesses such as Romanian supermarkets, bakeries and travel agencies, bars, restaurants and even a Romanian discotheque that plays only Romanian music, there are orthodox and protestant Romanian churches and even a branch of the Romanian Post Office.

This combination of integration and regular contact with the local population on the one hand, and maintenance of cultural identity and tight-knit social networks, ensuring the retention of Romanian culture and language on the other, provides ideal conditions for the emergence of bilingualism with linguistic interference and transfer.

Having presented the basic facts about some of the relevant social and linguistic aspects that characterise the contact situation, the following section will proceed to describe the methodology used in the empirical study that focuses on the description and analysis of the linguistic production, both in Romanian and Castilian, of the members of the Romanian community in Castellón de la Plana.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Grouping of informants

As described in the previous section, we are dealing with a recently established contact situation in which the degree of social integration, and by extension the degree of linguistic contact between members of the migrant community and the local population, will be subject to considerable variation; for "first generation" migrants, we should expect there to be a clear relation between the duration of residence in Spain, their degree of social integration, and their proficiency in Spanish. Therefore, informants for this study were subdivided into three distinct groups, based on non-linguistic parameters such as the duration of their residence and their degree of social integration outside the Romanian community:

GROUP 1 (recent arrivals):
Informants who have moved from Romania to Castellón (or to Spain in general) within the past three years, approximately.

(a) Informants assigned to this group generally have a somewhat limited proficiency level in Spanish, with the typical interference errors associated with second language acquisition.
(b) Their Romanian is, generally, not or only slightly affected beyond the occasional incorporation of Spanish lexical items.

GROUP 2 (established migrants):
Informants who have been living in Castellón for more than three years and are socially and economically integrated. These informants typically interact with members of the local population in the workplace and/or in their spare time, have permanent employment and/or children in the Spanish education system.

(a) They have good or very good competence and fluency in Spanish, with occasional calquing and structural transfer from Romanian.
(b) Their Romanian contains some lexical and structural elements transferred from Spanish and Valencian.

GROUP 3 (second generation):
Informants born in Castellón to Romanian parents. As the recent nature of the contact situation means that there are very few second generation speakers of an interviewable age, children who moved to Castellón before the age of six and have been in primary education for at least two years are also included in this group.

(a) Informants in this group are capable of speaking Spanish and Valencian with little or no Romanian influence when required to do so in formal settings, but when speaking Spanish within their peer group of speakers with a Romanian family background, there is a higher incidence of lexical borrowing, calquing and structural transfer.
(b) Depending on a range of factors, most notably gender, the Romanian spoken by these informants contains a varying number of features transferred from Castilian and Valencian.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

The instances of transfer/interference in (1a) and (2a) occur as part of the process of second language acquisition and can be considered 'errors'. Nevertheless, they are the source of the features that distinguish the newly emerged variety of Spanish spoken by the Romanians of Castellón (3a), where they must *not* be considered errors, as they are part of the structure of one of the native languages of the second generation Romanians. If such features occur regularly in the speech of various members of the speech community, we are dealing with genuine cases of language change in a variety of Spanish.

The Castilian and Valencian structures incorporated into Romanian in (2b) and (3b) cannot be considered to be acquisition errors, either, as it is the speakers' native language that is affected. Once again, if such features occur regularly in the speech of various members of the speech community, we are dealing with genuine cases of language change in a variety of Romanian.

4.2. Data collection[6]

In order to assign informants to one of the abovementioned groups, and to obtain results representative of the Romanian community as a whole, informants were chosen according to a range of variables, including age, gender, duration of residence in Spain/Castellón, age at arrival in Spain/Castellón, region of origin in Romania, level of education/social class, economic and social aspirations, social environment in Castellón (proportion of Romanian and Spanish friends and colleagues), and their intention to return to Romania or remain in Spain. As it is particularly in the speech of "second generation" migrants who grow up as bilinguals that we would expect to observe genuine structural transfer and innovation due to language contact, a comparatively large proportion of informants belonging to Group 3 were chosen.[7]

Data was gathered in a total of 41 digitally recorded sessions involving between one and four informants, each with a duration of between 25 and 45 minutes. The sessions involved three different kinds of activity.

1. Guided and semi-guided interviews of approximately 20 minutes, one half conducted in Romanian and one half in Spanish. After providing some basic information, such as their name, age, and other sociolinguistically relevant variables as listed above, informants were encouraged to speak in Romanian about topics related to their life in Spain, and subsequently in Spanish about topics related to Romania (holidays, family, political situation, etc.). In interviews involving more than one informant, interaction between informants was encouraged,

[6] I wold like to express my gratitude to the Leverhulme Trust for awarding me a Research Fellowship to carry out this project.

[7] Special thanks go to the pupils, parents and teachers of the *Enric Soler i Godes* Primary School in Castellón de la Plana for their help.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

primarily to create a more natural, less formal setting in which the informants would speak more naturally.

2. Elicitation tasks, with the aim of triggering the use of certain structures that had previously been identified as susceptible to structural transfer. In particular, elicitation tasks were regularly employed to verify informants' use of the genitive case and the infinitive in Romanian.
3. In order to minimise the effects of the *observer's paradox* (Labov 1972: 209), pairs of informants were asked to discuss current affairs topics, ignoring the interviewer as far as possible. To facilitate the development of a genuine discussion, the informants were supplied with index cards containing some basic arguments and facts on the respective topic. Informants were encouraged to discuss topics related to Romania in Spanish and vice versa.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Sociolinguistic observations

Despite the structural compatibility between the languages involved in this contact situation, and despite the fact that informants spoke both Romanian and Spanish in the same session, hardly any instances of code switching were observed during the interviews. However, informants report that code switching does commonly take place among family members, most notably in arguments between parents and their children.

Due to the lexical and morphosyntactic similarities between Romanian and Spanish, most Romanian speakers acquire a high level of proficiency in Spanish in a comparatively short time, especially when compared to migrants from other linguistic backgrounds. Young female adults in full-time employment are usually fluent and confident Spanish speakers within two to three years of arriving in Castellón, whilst male informants tend to be somewhat less proficient after a comparable time. In addition to the fact that the jobs typically available to, and taken up by, women involve a greater amount of communication, an unexpected but relevant factor is a difference in the previous exposure to Spanish between the genders; the majority of adult female informants claim to have had some knowledge of Spanish before arriving in Castellón, primarily due to long-term passive exposure to Latin American soap operas in Romania, an advantage that most male informants lack.

At primary school, the majority of children whose mother tongue is Romanian reach approximately the same level of proficiency as their non-migrant classmates within a year of being enrolled at the school, in both Spanish and Valencian if enrolled at a bilingual school. Among this group, a clear gender

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

difference can be observed regarding fluency in Romanian: whilst many boys at this age tend to be Spanish-dominant bilinguals, preferring to speak Spanish even to their parents and manifesting a considerable amount of interference when speaking Romanian, most girls at this age are best described as balanced bilinguals who make a conscious effort to avoid interference, including self-correction. This gender difference is, it appears, due to cultural factors, as many girls state that they spend more time at home speaking Romanian to their mothers and other relatives than the boys, who tend to spend a far greater proportion of their spare time mixing with non-Romanian speakers in the streets.

Among adult informants there is a general resistance to learning Valencian, a language perceived by them to be less useful than Spanish. Similarly, even children who are taught mainly in Valencian at school opt for Spanish in the breaks and outside the school premises. This is of particular interest because many Romanians are acutely aware that Romanian is, in some respects, linguistically closer to Valencian than to Spanish. An oft-quoted example is the sentence in (1), which is pronounced exactly the same in Romanian and Valencian, but not in Spanish:

(1)

Rom.	*A*	*fugit*	*un*	*bou.*
Val.	*Ha*	*fugit*	*un*	*bou.*
Span.	*Ha*	*huido*	*un*	*toro.*
	has	fled	a	bull

'A bull has run away.'

As shall be seen in the following section, the presence of both Spanish and Valencian, in many cases not clearly distinguished, leads to the transfer of features from both languages into Romanian, depending on a complex combination of factors.

5.2. Classification and description of linguistic features

In this section, a selection of the most striking and relevant contact-induced features will be presented, sorted by level of linguistic description.

5.2.1. *Phonetics and phonology*

The most significant transfer from a phonological point of view is the neutralization of the opposition between the palato-alveolar affricate /ʧ/ and the alveolar affricate /ts/ in the Romanian of some young female informants in Groups 2 and 3 (cf. Section 4.1.), especially those with very high proficiency and fluency levels in Spanish. Whilst standard Romanian distinguishes these two phonemes, as shown by the minimal pair *cine* (/ʧ/) 'who' *vs. ţine* (/ts/) 'to hold', these speakers pronounce both phonemes as [ts]. The loss of this phonological opposition is due to

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

a phonetic change that is currently taking place in Spanish, especially among young female speakers, which is leading to an increasingly alveolar pronunciation [ts] of the phoneme /ʧ/. As the two sounds are allophones in Spanish, this is a purely phonetic change; however, when transferred to Romanian, the substitution of /ʧ/ by /ts/ affects the phonological system, effectively eliminating one phoneme[8].

The influence of Romanian phonology on Spanish is largely limited to informants in Group 1 and therefore best analysed as interference in the process of second language acquisition. Some examples are:

1. Neutralization of the opposition between /r/ and /ɾ/, due to the absence of the opposition in Romanian. Free variation between the two sounds can be observed both intervocalically, as in [almasora], [toɾe] instead of standard Spanish [almasoɾa], [tore], as well as in word-initial and final position, as in [ɾadio], [por] instead of standard Spanish [radio], [poɾ].
2. Neutralization of the opposition between the dental fricative /θ/ and the alveolar fricative /s/ in favour of [s], due to the absence of the dental fricative in the Romanian phonological system.
3. At the suprasegmental level, a shift of word stress sometimes occurs when the cognate lexical item in Romanian has a different stress pattern. For instance, a pronunciation such as [re′ximen komunista] instead of standard Spanish [′reximen komunista] can be explained by the influence of Romanian [re′ʤim komunist], and the stress shift in [difi′θil] instead of standard Spanish [di′fiθil] is due to the influence of Romanian [difi′ʧil].

5.2.2. *Lexicon, expressions and collocations*

5.2.2.1. Spanish/Valencian features in the Romanian of Castellón

Generally speaking, the lexical inventory tends to be the most easily permeable part of a language, and the presence of numerous lexical loans, both systematic and spontaneous (nonce borrowings) is usually the most visible result of language contact. In this section, no attempt will be made to present an inventory of loanwords found in the contact varieties; instead, the focus will be on what motivates lexical loans, which of the contact languages they are borrowed from, and how they are integrated morphologically.

Two of the most common motivations for borrowing a Spanish word (or, indeed, a Valencian one, as we shall see below) into the Romanian variety spoken in Castellón are (a) linguistic economy, or (b) clarity, i.e. the reduction of potential ambiguity to avoid misunderstandings. The contribution of both of those factors is

[8] The same phoneme merger, caused by the free variation between the affricate allophones in Spanish, has been observed in Basque in the speech of the equivalent age group (J. I. Hualde, personal communication).

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

visible in the case of the verb '*a plancha*' 'to iron', borrowed from Spanish '*planchar*' into the Romanian variety spoken in Castellón. In standard Romanian, the corresponding notion is usually expressed by the verb '*a călca*', which literally means 'to step on'; as a result of this polysemy, there is a potential for ambiguity, for instance in a sentence such as 'I've ironed/stepped on the table cloth', at least in the absence of any further contextual information. Romanian offers a way to resolve any such ambiguity by using the more precise expression '*a călca cu fierul*' (lit. 'to step on something with the iron'). Nevertheless, the loanverb '*a plancha*' (or '*a plancea*', with Romanian orthography), is less ambiguous than '*a călca*', and at the same time more economical than '*a călca cu fierul*', which is why this loan from Spanish has become an established lexical element for many Romanians in Castellón.

Another reason why Spanish lexical items or collocations become established elements of the Romanian variety of Castellón is the absence of exact semantic or pragmatic correspondence between the respective word or expression and its Romanian counterpart. A frequent example is the use of '*de/en/a los chinos*' (lit. 'from/at/to the Chinese') to refer to a type of shop selling a wide range of cheap items, frequently owned by someone of Chinese origin, which are extremely common in Castellón and other Spanish towns but far less so in Romania. The literal translation into standard Romanian, '*de la chinezi*' has a rather different meaning, as it does not refer to a particular kind of shop, but to people of Chinese nationality.

(2a)	Colloquial Spanish	*lo*	*he*	*comprado*	*en*	*los*	*chinos*
		it	have-1SG	bought	in	the	Chinese-PL
(2b)	Castellón Romanian	*l-am*	*cumpărat*		*en*	*los*	*chinos.*
		it-have-1SG	bought		in	the	Chinese-PL
		'I have bought it from the Chinese five-and-dime store.'					
(2c)	Standard Romanian	*l-am*	*cumpărat*		*de*	*la*	*chinezi*.
		it-have-1SG	bought		from	at	Chinese-PL
		'I have bought it from the Chinese.'					

It should further be noted that it is not merely the entire prepositional phrase that has been borrowed into Romanian in this case, but rather the construction [[PREP] los chinos], where the [PREP] slot can be filled by the prepositions '*de*', '*en*' or '*a*'. Though the sentence in (2b) appears to be half Romanian and half Spanish, it would, nevertheless, be inappropriate to speak of code switching in this case, as we are dealing with a lexically established, regularly occurring loan construction with its own, distinct meaning that has become part of the Romanian variety of Castellón.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

Lexical loans from Spanish are usually fully integrated into the phonological system of Romanian. For instance, the Castellón Romanian loanword '*sită*'[9] from Spanish '*cita*' ('appointment, date'), as in '*Am o sită.*' ('I have a date.'), used by Romanian speakers in Castellón instead of the standard expressions '*Am o întâlnire.*' or '*Am un rendez-vous.*', exemplifies the adaptation of the initial dental fricative /θ-/ of the Spanish word 'cita', changing it to an alveolar fricative /s-/, the most similar phoneme in Romanian. Furthermore, a morpho-phonological adaptation of the final vowel can be observed, changing it from /-a/ to central /-ə/, the typical final vowel of Romanian feminine nouns without the enclitic definite article. If the final /-a/ from Spanish were retained, the noun would automatically be analyzed as definite, causing an irresolvable conflict with the indefinite article '*o*' that precedes the noun in the above example.

(3) Spanish *tengo* *una* */θita/.*
have-1SG a date
Castellón Romanian *am* *o* */sitə/* (*/sita/ would be definite)
have-1SG a date-INDF
Standard Romanian *am* *o* *întâlnire* **or**
have-1SG a date-INDF
am *un* *rendez-vous*
have-1SG a date-INDF
'I have an appointment/a date.'

The verbs borrowed from Spanish are also fully integrated into the morphosyntactic system of Romanian ('direct insertion', cf. Wohlgemuth 2009), as shown in the following examples involving the loanverb '*a regala*' ('to make a gift') from Spanish '*regalar*', often used instead of the synonymous standard Romanian verb '*a dărui*' ('regalar') in the Romanian variety of Castellon.

(4) *pentru* ***a*** *regal**a*** */* *poți* *regal**a*** */*
in.order INF make.a.gift can-2SG make.a.gift PERF.1SG
am *regal**at-o***
make.a.gift-PP-it
'in order to make a gift' 'you can make a gift' 'I have given it as a gift'

The Spanish/Valencian bilingual situation in Castellón implies that both languages are potentially available as a source for loanwords. Though most informants claim to prefer the use of Spanish in every-day situations, some verbs borrowed from Valencian can nevertheless be identified, possibly due to a certain degree of morphological overlap in the inflectional paradigms of Romanian and Valencian. As shown in the examples in (5), the morphology of the past participle

[9] The existence of the noun '*sită*' meaning 'sieve' in standard Romanian does not appear to hinder the acceptance of this loanword.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

and the first person plural form of the present tense are exactly the same for a number of Romanian and Valencian verbs, while the corresponding Spanish morphology is slightly different.

(5a) Past participles in -t:

Romanian	Valencian	Spanish	
a lăsa > lăsat	*deixar > deixat*	*dejar > dejado*	'to leave' > 'left'
a fugi > fugit	*fugir > fugit*	*huir > huido*	'to flee' > 'fled'
a copia > copiat	*copiar > copiat*	*copiar > copiado*	'to copy' > 'copied'
a oferi > oferit	*oferir > oferit*	*[ofrecer > ofrecido]*	'to offer' > 'offered'
a veni > venit	*venir > venit*	*venir > venido*	'to come' > 'come-PP'

(5b) Present tense 1PL in -m:

Romanian	Valencian	Spanish	
a putea > putem	*poder > podem*	*poder > podemos*	'to be able' > 'we can'
a copia > copiem	*copiar > copiem*	*copiar > copiamos*	'to copy' > 'we copy'
a oferi > oferim	*oferir > oferim*	*[ofrecer > ofrecemos]*	'to offer' > 'we offer'
a veni > venim	*venir > venim*	*venir > venimos*	'to come' > 'we come'

Due to this morphological similarity, a number of Valencian verbs can be borrowed into Romanian with particular ease, and they often occur in free variation with the corresponding standard Romanian verbs. For instance, the Valencian verbs '*parlar*' ('to speak') and '*recollir*' ('to pick up') occur in the Romanian variety of Castellón as '*a parla*'[10] and '*a recolli*', whilst there is no evidence of the corresponding Spanish verbs being borrowed into Romanian.

(6)	Spanish	Valencian		Romanian of Castellón	
(a)	*hablamos*	*parlem*	→	*parlăm*[11]	'we talk'
	he hablado	*he parlat*	→	*am parlat*	'I have talked'
(b)	*recogemos*	*recollim*	→	*recollim*	'we pick up'
	he recogido	*he recollit*	→	*am recollit*	'I have picked up'

In the case of '*a parla*' the choice of the Valencian verb over the Spanish one is favoured by the fact that, as shown in (6), frequently used forms such as the past participle can be copied into Romanian wholesale, without any need for

[10] The exact status of such loanwords that enter the language as alternatively available synonyms, in this case of standard Romanian '*a vorbi*', is difficult to determine; the fact that the non-native verb is used quite regularly must discourage us from considering it a nonce borrowing.

[11] The 'e' in Valencian '*parlem*' is an open /ɛ/, which is, in articulatory and perceptual terms, very similar to the Romanian 'ă' in 'parlăm'

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

morphological adaptation. In the case of '*a recolli*' ('to pick up'), on the other hand, the choice of the Valencian verb rather than its Spanish cognate can furthermore be attributed to the fact that, despite a considerable degree of similarity between Romanian and Spanish verbal morphology in some areas, this is not true for the entire inflectional system. The conjugation of verb stems ending in -e, in particular, differs significantly between the two languages. In Romanian, e-conjugation verbs have the stress on the root vowel in the infinitive and all present tense forms, and their participles are frequently formed with an *-s* that replaces the stem-final consonants, or alternatively by means of the desinence *-ut*[12]. Due to these differences, exemplified in (7), the morphological integration of Spanish e-conjugation verbs such as *recoger* into Romanian would imply a more complex process of adaptation than the simpler alternative, which is to borrow the cognate Valencian verb *recollir* with its far more similar morphology instead.

(7)

	Romanian	Spanish
infinitive	*a 'merge*, *a 'cere*	*co'mer*, *que'rer*
1PL present tense	*'mergem*, *'cerem*	*co'memos*, *que'remos*
past participle	*mers*, *cerut*	*comido*, *querido*
	'to go', 'to demand'	'to eat', 'to want'

5.2.2.2. Romanian/Valencian Features in the Spanish of Romanians in Castellón

When analysing the features of the variety of Spanish spoken by the Romanians of Castellón, it has to be kept in mind that, as mentioned in Section 2, in the vernacular variety of Spanish spoken in this region, there is often no clear distinction between Spanish and Valencian; it is therefore the norm rather than the exception to come across a mixture of Spanish and Valencian features, both at the lexical and the morphosyntactic level (cf. Blas Arroyo, 1999; Sinner & Wesch, 2008). Whilst an analysis of the effects of contact between Spanish and Valencian is beyond the scope of this study, we must bear in mind that members of the Romanian community, both first generation migrants and their children, are exposed to this mixed input during the acquisition of Spanish. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Spanish spoken by members of the Romanian community frequently incorporates features that can be traced back to Valencian. What will be analysed in this section are some cases in which similarities between Romanian and Valencian conspire to trigger the use of the respective non-standard element or structure in Spanish.

At the lexical level, the there is a tendency to use verbs that have exactly the same stem in Valencian and Romanian, such as '*oferir*'/'*a oferi*' ('to offer') and '*fugir*'/'*a fugi*' ('to run away'), in place of the less similar Spanish cognates '*ofrecer*' and *'huir*'.

[12] Whilst participle formation in -ut is not found in Spanish, it *does* occur in a significant number of verbs in Valencian.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

A slightly different case, in which not the lexical material but a different range of meaning is transferred into Spanish is the case of the preposition '*a*', which has an exclusively allative meaning in standard Spanish, but is used locatively as well as allatively in Valencian, as exemplified in (8), and often also in the colloquial variety of Spanish spoken in Castellón.

(8) allative: '*me'n vaig a casa*' ('I'm going home')
locative: '*estic a casa*' ('I'm at home')

In Romanian, which does not generally distinguish allative and locative prepositions either, '*a*' as a preposition survives only in a limited number of contexts, but appears frequently as part of the lexicalized expression '*acasă*' ('home, at home') with both allative and locative meaning. Due to this similarity between Romanian, Valencian, and the regional variety of Spanish, members of the Romanian community also frequently use '*a casa*', both in locative and allative contexts, when speaking Spanish, e.g. '*Normalmente comemos acasa.*'

Similarly, Romanian '*a face parte din*' ('to be part of') coincides with the equivalent Valencian expression '*fer part de*'; the literal translation in both cases is 'to make part of'; in standard Spanish, the corresponding expression is '*formar parte de*', lit. 'to form part of'.

(9) Romanian: *Munca* ***face*** *parte din viața mea.*
work-DEF **makes** part of.in life-DEF POS.1SG
Valencian: *El treball* ***fa*** *part de la meua vida.*
DEF work **makes** part of DEF POSS.1SG life'
↓
Spanish calque: *El trabajo* ***hace*** *parte de mi vida.*
DEF work **makes** part of POSS.1SG life
Standard Spanish: *El trabajo* ***forma*** *parte de mi vida.*
DEF work **forms** part of POSS.1SG life
'Work is part of my life.'

Joint influence of Romanian and Valencian can also be identified as the motivation for the use of the plural form of 'money':

(10) Romanian: *Am găsit mul**ți** ban**i**.*
I.have found much-**PL** money-**PL**
Valencian: *He trobat molt**s** diner**s**.*
I.have found much-**PL** money-**PL**
↓
Spanish calque: *He encontrado muchos dinero**s**.*
I.have found much-**PL** money-**PL**

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

Standard Spanish:	*He*	*encontrado*	*mucho*	*dinero.*
	I.have	found	much-**SG**	money-**SG**

'I've found a lot of money.'

In addition to calques with a combined Romanian/Valencian source, there are other cases in which the Romanian model alone is sufficient, as in example (11), in which a definite article is inserted into the Spanish expression '*darse cuenta de que*' ('to notice') due to the existence of a very similar expression in Romanian that contains the definite article, and in example (12), showing how the adverbial expression of anteriority is calqued on the Romanian construction.

(11a) Romanian:	*Mi-am*	*dat*	*seam**a***	*că...*		
	REFL.1SG-I.have	given	notice.**DEF**	that		
(11b) Spanish calque:	*Me*	*he*	*dado*	***la***	*cuenta*	*que...*
	REFL.1SG	I.have	given	**DEF**	account	that
(11c) Standard Spanish:	*Me*	*he*	*dado*	*cuenta*	*de*	*que…*
	REFL.1SG	I.have	given	account	of	that

'I have noticed that...'

(12a) Romanian:	*Soțul*	*a*	*venit*	***cu***	*doi*	*ani*	*înainte.*
	husband-DEF	has	come	**with**	two	years	before
(12b) Spanish calque:	*Mi*	*marido*	*ha*	*venido*	***con***	*dos*	*años*	*antes.*
	my	husband	has	come	**with**	two	years	before
(12c) Standard Spanish:	*Mi*	*marido*		*vino*		*dos*	*años*	*antes.*
	my	husband		came				

'My husband came two years before.' two years before

It should be noted that such calques from Romanian, without support from a similar structure in Valencian, occur primarily in the speech of the informants in Groups 1 and 2, as instances of linguistic interference in the process of second language acquisition. However, second generation speakers can occasionally be heard to use such calques when speaking amongst each other in their peer group; whether or not these expressions will eventually become an established part of the slang or insider language of young Romanians in Castellón remains to be seen.

5.2.3. *Morphosyntax*

5.2.3.1. Ibero-Romance influence on Romanian

It has convincingly been demonstrated that language contact can affect the morphology and syntax of the native language of immigrants within their community, for instance by Doğruöz & Backus (2007, 2009) for Turkish spoken in the Netherlands. This section identifies possible cases of changes to the structure of Romanian as the result of the contact situation in Castellón.

One such change is a marked increase in the use of prepositional constructions instead of the morphological genitive and dative. To assess this phenomenon correctly, it must be borne in mind that the prepositional construction

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

also exists in standard Romanian as an alternative, and that this construction is, indeed, obligatory when it is impossible to inflect the respective nominal element for case, as in the standard Romanian examples (13) and (14), where the impossibility of attaching case morphology to the numeral '*doi*' ('two') triggers the use of the corresponding prepositional dative (13b) and genitive (14b) constructions.

(13a) *Am dat o şpagă **unui** poliţist.*
I.have given a bribe **one.DAT** policeman
'I've bribed a policemen'

(13b) *Am dat o şpagă **la doi** poliţişti.*
I.have given a bribe **to two** policemen
'I've bribed two policemen'

(14a) *Am văzut casa **unui** bogat.*
I.have seen house.DEF **one.GEN** rich
'I've seen the house of a rich person.'

(14b) *Am văzut casa **de doi** bogaţi.*
I.have seen house.DEF **of two** rich.PL
'I've seen the house of two rich people.'

The use of the inflected genitive/dative is, however, the default option in standard Romanian. In the Romanian of Castellón, on the other hand, the influence of Spanish and Valencian, neither of which have the option of inflecting nominals for case, has caused a considerable increase in the use of the prepositional construction, especially in the speech of informants in Groups 2 and 3. The results of the respective elicitation tasks shows that, even in set expressions that always appear with the genitive case in standard Romanian, slightly more than half of all informants opt for the prepositional construction instead, as shown in example (15).

(15a) Standard Romanian: *Ministerul Învăţământului*
ministry.DEF educación.DEF.GEN
'Ministry of Education'

(15b) Castellón Romanian: *Ministerul de Învăţământ*
Ministry.DEF of educación
'Ministry of Education'

A similar change can be observed regarding the use of the infinitive, replacing finite subordinate clauses. As a general rule, subordinate clauses in standard Romanian are formed with finite verb forms, even when they share the same subject, as in (16).

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

(16) *Mănâncă* *înainte* *să* *se* *culce.*
Eat.3SG before that 3SG.REFL lie.down-3SG.SBJV
'He eats before he lies down.'

In the comparative Romance literature, it is often suggested that the Romanian infinitive is very rarely used (e.g., Posner, 1996: 164); however, as demonstrated in Schulte (2007: 303-28), it is, in fact, a common alternative to finite subordination in adverbial clauses, albeit less frequent than in most other Romance languages, and never obligatory. Example (17), for instance, is a perfectly acceptable alternative to (16).

(17) *Mănâncă* *înainte* *de* *a* *se* *culca.*
eat-3SG before of INF-MRKR 3SG.REFL lie.down-INF
'He eats before lying down.'

In the Romanian of Castellón, a strong increase in the frequency of coreferential (i.e. same-subject) adverbial infinitives can be observed, due to the influence of the contact languages. In the respective elicitation task, approximately 95% of informants opted for the infinitival construction, as in (17).

5.2.3.2. Romanian influence on Spanish

Influence of Romanian morphosyntax on the Spanish spoken by the Romanians of Castellón must, again, be divided into transitory features that arise as the result of interference and imperfect language competence during the process of second language acquisition on the one hand, and features retained by competent speakers and transmitted to second generation migrants on the other.

Example (18) illustrates a clear case of the former type, i.e. interference during acquisition, observed only in the speech of informants in Group 1.

(18a) Standard Romanian: *Valencia* *aparține* *Spaniei.*
Valencia belongs Spain.DAT
(18b) Colloquial Romanian: *Valencia* *aparține* *a* *Spaniei.*
Valencia belongs POSS Spain.GEN
(18c) Spanish w. interference: *Valencia* *pertenece* *de* *España.*[13]
Valencia belongs of Spain
(18d) Standard Spanish: *Valencia* *pertenece* *a* *España.*
Valencia belongs to Spain
'Valencia belongs to Spain.'

[13] This statement was made by one of the informants in Group 1 and is quoted here as clear illustration of the phenomenon described; no political controversy is intended.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

The reason for the non-standard use of the preposition '*de*' with the verb *'pertenecer*' ('to belong') in Spanish is the fact that the inflectional morpheme for the genitive and dative case in Romanian is the same; this leads to variation between the standard dative construction (18a) and a non-standard genitive construction (18b). The Spanish construction with '*de*' in (18c) corresponds to the Romanian genitive construction in (18b), whilst the standard Spanish construction with '*a*' in (18d) corresponds to the standard Romanian dative construction in (18a). It is not entirely clear whether (18c) simply copies non-standard (18b) into Spanish, or whether the use of the preposition '*de*' where standard Romanian uses the dative can be attributed to the fact that the inflectional genitive and dative morphemes are formally identical and therefore not necessarily distinguished as entirely separate by the speaker.

A feature that can frequently be observed in the speech of informants in Group 2, and occasionally in Group 3, is the non-standard, increased use of the present perfect in Spanish, copying the more extended use of the formally equivalent tense in Romanian, as in (19).

(19a) Romanian:	*Ieri*	*mi-au*	*spus*	*că...*	
	yesterday	to.me.have-3PL	told	that	
		↓			
(19b) Transfer to Spanish:	*Ayer*	*me*	*han*	*dicho*	*que...*
	yesterday	to.me	have.3PL	said	that
(19c) Standard Spanish:	*Ayer*	*me*	*dijeron*		*que…*
	yesterday	to.me say.3PL.PST			that
	'Yesterday they told me that…'				

To a certain extent, the process observed here resembles those presented in examples (15) and (17) in Section 5.2.3.1.: the usage of a structure that exists in both languages, but is more frequent in one than in the other, is expanded in the 'recipient language'. There is, however, a crucial difference: whilst the increased usage frequencies of prepositional possessives (15) and of infinitival adverbial clauses (17) undoubtedly constitute cases of morphosyntactic change, as they turn previously rare constructions into the default choice, they do not contravene the rules of grammaticality in the standard language. The expansion of the present perfect tense as exemplified in (19), on the other hand, is a genuine innovation that is considered ungrammatical by speakers of the standard language.

5.2.4. *Pragmatics*

In the final section of the descriptive part of this study, two syntactic features related to discourse pragmatics are presented.

Object fronting in polar questions exists as a discourse pragmatic device in both Romanian and Spanish, but its function is not quite the same in the two languages. In Romanian polar questions, OV word order (with the main prosodic

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

stress and rising intonation on the verb) is commonly used when a new topic is introduced; in polite polar questions this word order does not necessarily imply contrastive focus or emphasis on the fronted object, whereas in Spanish it generally does. The process shown in (20) is, thus, one in which the pragmatic meaning or function of a discourse device in Romanian is transferred to the formally equivalent structure Spanish, replacing its original meaning of function in Spanish.

(20a) Romanian:	*Poftiți;*	*două tonice. Gheață vreți?*
	there.you.are	two tonics ice want-2PL
	↓	
(20b) Transfer to Spanish:	*Aquí tenéis;*	*dos tónicas. ¿Hielo queréis?*
	here have-2PL	two tonics ice want-2PL
(20c) Standard Spanish:	*Aquí tenéis;*	*dos tónicas. ¿Queréis hielo?*
	here have-2PL	two tonics want-2PL ice
	‘There you are,	two tonics. Do you want ice?’

The use of polar questions of the type illustrated in (20b), in which the object is fronted though the context excludes the possibility of contrastive emphasis due to the absence of potential alternatives, can also be observed in the speech of some members of the local non-migrant population of Castellón. Further research is required to establish whether this is, in fact, a case of transfer that has spread beyond the Romanian community and may therefore eventually become part of the local or regional variety of Spanish as a whole. If confirmed, this would be significant because it runs counter to the generally accepted observation that ‘discourse-regulating grammatical elements’ are usually borrowed from the dominant language in a contact situation, i.e. the language used for communication with those outside a linguistic minority group (Matras 1998: 326).

Another Spanish discourse marker that has undergone a functional change in the Spanish of some members of the Romanian community of Castellón is the ‘excusative’ marker ‘*Es que…*’. Whilst its function in standard Spanish is, most frequently, one of offering an excuse together with a subsequent explanation, it is overused by some speakers of Romanian origin, turning it into an almost obligatory marker of declarative sentences for those speakers; whether this is a straight-forward case of reanalysis or a process of pragmatic bleaching and, arguably, simultaneous grammaticalization is difficult to determine. It must be pointed out that a similar, albeit less extreme, inflationary use of ‘*Es que…*’ can also be observed in the colloquial speech of some native Spanish speakers, who employ it as gap filler before declarative clauses, to mask hesitation and insecurity; its use by Romanian speakers may thus merely be a further extension of this colloquial Spanish pattern.

On the other hand, the phenomenon can, plausibly, be linked to Romanian sentence-initial ‘*Faptul este că…*’ (lit. ‘The fact is that…’), which is currently undergoing a similar process of bleaching and inflationary use in colloquial Romanian as ‘*Es que…*’ in colloquial Spanish.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

6. CONCLUSIONS

The data presented in the previous sections show that interference and transfer take place at all levels of linguistic description; some of the transferred features have become, or are becoming, established elements of the language(s) of the Romanian community in Castellón and must therefore be considered genuine cases of contact-induced language change.

Whilst the traditional view that structural similarity between donor and recipient language is a necessary precondition for syntactic borrowing (Weinreich, 1953: 25; Sørensen, 1957: 133; Moravcsik, 1978) has been shown to be erroneous (e.g. Comrie *et al.*, 2011), the data presented here do strongly suggest that the structural similarities between the three languages involved in this contact situation facilitate the transfer of a wide range of features, which lends support to the weaker claim that there is a certain correlation between structural similarity and the amount of contact-induced change (Haig, 2001: 218-222). The pre-existing bilingual environment in Castellón provides particularly valuable insights into the relevance of structural similarity for the process of linguistic transfer: as exemplified with regards to verbal morphology in (6), if there is a choice between two options, of which one matches the structure of the recipient language more closely than the other, it is the one whose structural integration requires less effort that is transferred.

Studies of linguistic contact and transfer typically focus on the lexical and structural features that are taken from, or modelled on, one language and inserted into the other. The majority of features listed and illustrated above do, indeed, fall into this class, but a different kind of contact-induced change is perhaps no less relevant: the effects of contact on the usage frequency of features already present in the recipient language. As shown in Section 5.2.3.1., this process can convert an existing but relatively rare or even marginal structure into speakers' default choice, which has a number of important implications. On the one hand, the morphosyntactic structures affected by these changes in usage frequency are representative of the Balkan *Sprachbund*; the reduced preference for these features in the Romanian of Castellón implies a move away from the Balkan language type. On the other hand, an increase in the token frequency of a construction can be important as a contributing factor in the extension of the range of types the construction admits. For instance, an increase in token frequency of infinitival adverbials, as exemplified in (17), has been shown, historically, to trigger an increase in the types of adverbial notions that can be expressed by means of the infinitival construction in the Romance languages (Schulte, 2007); it is therefore not unlikely that the contact-induced increase in infinitival adverbials in the Romanian of Castellón might trigger a similar expansion in this variety.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, two varieties of 'Castellón Romanian' can be distinguished; the degree of 'bilingualism' between these two varieties depends on a number of social parameters (the individual speaker's social environment,

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

gender, the language spoken at home, etc.). The two varieties can be characterized as follows:

(1) A variety with a small number of features that can be attributed to the contact languages, but which does not differ drastically from standard spoken Romanian. The existence of this variety confirms that language contact can, indeed, cause structural changes in the native language of first generation immigrants as well as second generation speakers, as argued by Doğruöz & Backus (2007, 2009).

(2) A more strongly affected variety, sometimes referred to as '*Rumañol*', spoken and understood only within the Romanian community of Castellón, that is commonly used amongst second generation speakers.[14] Whether *Rumañol* is, at this stage, a clearly definable variety is debatable; while a number of the features identified in this study are frequently used by this group of speakers, there is, as yet, no clear set of rules that would allow us to predict the linguistic choices made by its speakers. It is therefore perhaps most appropriate to refer to *Rumañol* as an emerging or nascent Romance variety, or even as two: an Ibero-Romance variety with a large number of lexical and structural features borrowed from Romanian, and a variety of Romanian with a large number of lexical and structural features borrowed from Spanish and Valencian.

With regards to the effect of contact on Spanish, we must distinguish the Spanish spoken by members of the immigrant community on the one hand, and that of the local population on the other. The data in Section 5.2. show that most of the errors caused by interference during second language acquisition are eventually eliminated from the speech of Romanians in Castellón, though some features appear to persist, even into the speech of the second generation, in certain registers.

Any contact-induced change to the language of the local population, beyond the lexical level, would be surprising, as it is unusual for the socially dominant language to be structurally affected by contact (cf. Matras 1998: 326). However, Deppermann (2007) shows that, under certain social and cultural conditions, speakers of the dominant language can adopt changes that originally emerged in the contact variety spoken amongst members of an immigrant community. In this study, the feature exemplified in (20) is a possible candidate for an incipient contact-induced change in the language of the wider local community.

Returning to the initial objective of assessing how likely it is that features shared by related languages are the result of contact rather than inheritance, and despite the obvious impossibility of basing such a judgement on the analysis of a single ongoing contact situation, the data presented here do appear to suggest that structural similarities make closely related languages particularly susceptible to transfer at all levels of linguistic description; the more similar the structures of the languages involved, the easier it is to borrow features without the need for complex integration strategies.

[14] As pointed out in Section 5.1., second generation speakers are generally also fluent in standard Castilian and Valencian, whilst their fluency level in standard Romanian is more variable.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

The cases of linguistic transfer observed in this study have taken place in a comparatively short period of contact and despite the modern-day normative pressure to avoid mixing languages. Given that closely related languages tend to be spoken in geographically adjacent territories over far longer periods, it is highly likely that the amount of linguistic transfer between them, over the centuries, is far greater still. Therefore, many of the features traditionally classified as jointly inherited are just as likely to be innovations that took place in one of the languages after it had split from the other and were subsequently borrowed into the sister language. Care should thus be taken when establishing the exact relations between the languages within a genealogical subgroup; more studies of what can and cannot be borrowed between closely related languages are needed before we can decide, with any degree of confidence, that a particular structure present in two or more sister languages is unlikely to be the result of contact between them.

REFERENCES

Blas Arroyo, J. L., 1999, *Lenguas en Contacto. Consecuencias lingüísticas del bilinguismo social en las comunidades de habla del este peninsular,* Madrid/Frankfurt (Main), Iberoamericana/Vervuert.

Comrie, B., M. Dryer, D. Gil, David, M. Haspelmath, 2011, "Introduction", in: M. Dryer, M. Haspelmath (eds.), The World Atlas of Language Structures. Munich, Max Planck Digital Library, Supplement 1, http://wals.info/supplement/1, consulted on 27 April 2012.

Deppermann, A., 2007, "Stilisiertes Türkendeutsch in Gesprächen deutscher Jugendlicher", *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 37, 148, 43–62.

Doğruöz, A. S., A. Backus, 2007, "Postverbal elements in immigrant Turkish: Evidence of change?" *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 11 (2), 185–220.

Doğruöz, A. S., A. Backus, 2009, "Innovative constructions in Dutch Turkish: An assessment of ongoing contact-induced change", *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12, 1, 41–63.

Dworkin, S. N., 2012, *A History of the Spanish Lexicon. A Linguistic Perspective*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Haig, J., 2001, "Linguistic diffusion in present-pay East Anatolia: From top to bottom", in: A. Y. Aikhenvald, R. M. W. Dixon (eds.), *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance: Problems in Comparative Linguistics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 195–224.

Haspelmath, M., M. S. Dryer, D. Gil, B. Comrie, 2005, *World Atlas of Language Structures*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2009, *Revisión del Padrón municipal 2009. Datos por municipios. Castellón/Castelló,* www.ine.es, consulted on 20 march 2011.

Labov, W., 1972, *Sociolinguistic patterns*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Matras, Y., 1998, "Utterance modifiers and universals of grammatical borrowing", *Linguistics* 36, 281–331.

Moravcsik, E. A., 1978, "Language contact" in: J. H. Greenberg, C. A. Ferguson, E. A. Moravcsik (eds), *Universals of Human Languages*, Vol. 1, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 93–123.

Posner, R., 1996, *The Romance Languages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, J., 1872, *Die Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse der indogermanischen Sprache*, Weimar, Böhlau.

Schulte, K., 2007, *Prepositional infinitives in Romance. A usage-based approach to syntacic change*, Berne/Oxford, Peter Lang.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)

Schulte, K., 2009, "Loanwords in Romanian", in: M. Haspelmath, U. Tadmor (eds.), *Learwords in the World's Languages: A Comparative Handbook*, Berlin, Dr Gruyter Mouton, 230–259.
Sinner, C., A. Wesch Andreas Wesch (eds.), 2008, *El castellano en las tierras de habla catalana*, Madrid/Frankfurt (Main), Iberoamericana/Vervuert.
Sørensen, K., 1957, "Latin influence on English syntax. A survey with a bibliography", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague*, 11, 131–155.
Trubetzkoy, N. S., 1930, "Proposition 16. Über den Sprachbund.", in: *Actes du premier congrès international de linguistes à la Haye, du 10–15 avril 1928*, A.W.Sijthoff, Leiden, 17–18.
Viruela, R., 2002, "La nueva corriente inmigratoria de Europa del Este", *Cuadernos de Geografía*, 72, 231–258.
Viruela, R., 2006, "Inmigrantes rumanos en España: Aspectos territoriales y procesos de sustitución laboral", *Scripta Nova,* 10, 222.
Weinreich, U., 1953, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (Publications of the Linguistic Circle of New York, Vol. 1), New York, Linguistic Circle of New York.
Wohlgemuth, J., 2009, *A Typology of Verbal Borrowings*, Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter.

BDD-A378 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 05:52:21 UTC)