

Boček, Vít: *Praslovanština a jazykový kontakt*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2014.

Abstract

In the present book, the existing contributions on the role of language contact in the development of Proto-Slavic language have been gathered and consistently discussed with the help of modern language contact models. The task was, first, to supplement the knowledge about Proto-Slavic with an aspect of its contact with other language groups, and, second, to enrich contact linguistics with the research in the field of reconstructed linguistic systems.

The first, empirical aspect of the topic concerns the discussion of individual external influences on Proto-Slavic (Iranian, Thracian, Celtic, Germanic, Altaic, Romance, Uralic, and Baltic influences) in the light of recent language contact studies. Different degrees of intensity and probability of individual external influences on Proto-Slavic have been identified, and on the basis of a thorough description of the sociolinguistic situations of the presumed contacts of Proto-Slavic with the above-mentioned language groups, the external influences have been classified into types and subtypes postulated in the theory of language contact. The respect to the external functioning of the examined language has also lead us to the discussion of a particular type of contact that could manifest itself in the development of Proto-Slavic, that is, a mutual contact of its own dialects: possible Proto-Slavic koineization processes have been considered.

In the second, theoretical aspect of the topic, attention has been paid to searching for methods appropriate for the description of prehistoric language contact. Two language contact models – the leading and eminent theory developed by Sarah G. Thomason and the rather less used theory founded by Frans van Coetsem – have been compared in order to establish their explicative power in general and some advantages and disadvantages of their specific principles; with the help of Slavic data, limits of the language contact studies in dealing with prehistoric language contact have been shown. The relationship between language contact studies and traditional historical linguistics has also been discussed (the question of whether and how the methods of both disciplines could be integrated into a unified framework of the development of language).