This paper explores the relationship between bilingualism and contact-induced language change, focusing on the question of which contributions might be expected from children and which from adults. The issue is reflected in debates among historical linguists as to whether internally-motivated language change is initiated by children during first-language acquisition or by adults—or by both. In language contact studies, it is possible to identify changes, usually temporary ones, that are initiated by children, and it is also possible to identify changes that are initiated by adults. The conclusion, therefore, is that both adults and children are responsible for contact-induced changes, although perhaps not for the same kinds of changes: shift-induced interference, which is due to imperfect learning of a target language by members of a speech community, is likely to be exclusively an adult phenomenon, or at least not primarily initiated by young children during first-language acquisition. I will not address in detail the question of the role of adults vs. the role of children in the initiation and spread of linguistic changes more generally, but some implications of the results from contact-induced change will be discussed in the concluding section.

After laying some preliminary groundwork (§1), I will outline briefly the debate about agents of change in historical linguistics and then consider innovations introduced by children and adults in contact situations in which both child learners and adults have full effective access to the source language(s) (§2). Section 3 is devoted to innovations in contact situations that involve imperfect learning by a group, typically because of lack of full access to a target
language, and to an argument that children are unlikely to be major contributors to these changes. The paper ends with a brief conclusion (§4).

1. A FEW PRELIMINARIES. I’ll begin with two definitions, a methodological assumption, and an important sociolinguistic distinction, to set the stage for the discussion and to make my premises clear (see Thomason 2001 for further discussion and examples of the issues addressed in this section). First, defining bilingualism is not as easy as one might expect, because the term is interpreted in different ways by different scholars. I will use it to refer to the condition in which a person speaks more than one language fluently. I will not attempt to define ‘fluent’ precisely; I’ll use this term to refer to a state that is at least close to native command of a language. We also won’t be concerned here with the issue of dominance: I am not convinced by the common claim (or assumption) that for all bilinguals one of their languages is dominant, but this issue won’t arise in the following discussions. I will use ‘bilingualism’ throughout to refer to fluency in two or more languages—that is, to avoid the clumsy label ‘bilingualism/multilingualism’, I’ll interpret ‘bilingual’ more broadly than fluency in just two languages.

Second, my definition of contact-induced change is somewhat idiosyncratic. Here it is: contact is a source of linguistic change if it is less likely that a given change would have occurred outside a specific contact situation. Crucially, this definition does not entail that contact is the ONLY source of a given change; multiple causation is always a real possibility, as it is in strictly internally-motivated linguistic changes. The definition of course includes the most obvious category, linguistic interference—the transfer of linguistic features (with or without actual morpheme transfer) from one language to another. The definition includes at least three other phenomena as well. Some changes in some dying languages do not make the language more similar to the dominant language to which its speakers are shifting;
such changes do not involve interference features, but by my definition they are nevertheless contact-induced changes, because they would be less likely to occur if intense contact of a particular kind weren’t leading to language death. My definition also includes changes that occur in a late stage of a chain-reaction process that was triggered in the first instance by a borrowing. A rather common example is the borrowing of a subordinate conjunction into a language in which native subordination constructions are non-finite; but the borrowing of a conjunction often leads eventually to the development of finite subordinate clauses. The finite subordinate clauses are not themselves borrowed. Still, the borrowing of the conjunction set off a series of changes that resulted in a significant change in the morphosyntactic expression of subordination, so even the late-stage changes are ultimately contact-induced. Finally, my definition of contact-induced change includes deliberate changes introduced by a speech community in order to make their speech more different from the speech of their neighbors, who speak dialects of the same language or a very closely-related language (see §4 for further discussion).

A crucial methodological assumption in the following discussion is that the question of whether a linguistic change is POSSIBLE is settled as soon as an innovation appears anywhere, just once, in a single person’s speech, regardless of whether the innovator is an adult or a child. The subsequent fate of that innovation is a matter of linguistic and especially social PROBABILITIES. One implication of this assumption is that relevant examples include not only completed contact-induced linguistic changes but also ephemera such as speech errors and the joking introduction of foreign elements into one’s speech. Moreover, because calculating the social and linguistic probabilities is so difficult—indeed impossible, now and for the foreseeable future—we can reasonably talk only about NECESSARY conditions for change, not about SUFFICIENT conditions for change. In other words, we can’t predict when or whether change will occur. This is as true of contact-induced change as it is of internally-
motivated change: even the most intense contact situations don’t always lead to significant contact-induced changes. This methodological assumption justifies the use of examples in the following sections that are not demonstrably permanent changes in the grammar of any language.

Finally, a robust sociolinguistic predictor (see Thomason & Kaufman 1988) is relevant to the analyses in this paper. The vast majority of well-established contact-induced changes fall into one of two categories. Changes under conditions of full bilingualism—that is, changes in which imperfect learning plays no role—begin with non-basic vocabulary, and only later (if at all) include structural features and perhaps also basic lexical items. Thomason & Kaufman (1988) used the term BORROWING in a narrow sense to refer to this type of interference; typically, though by no means always, the agents of borrowing in this sense introduce features from a second language into their first language. In sharp contrast, where imperfect learning does play a role in the process, the predominant interference features are phonological and syntactic, although lexicon and morphology transfer may also occur. (The relatively few known instances of superstrate shift, most notably the Norman rulers’ shift to English in England, comprise a partial exception to this generalization, as they often include a great many loanwords.) This is SHIFT-INDUCED INTERFERENCE, so called because it mainly occurs when a speech (sub-)community shifts entirely to another group’s language. The process is complex. First, the shifting speakers fail to learn certain features of the target language (TL)—often features that are universally marked and therefore relatively difficult to learn—that are lacking in their original language; and second, they may also carry over features from their first language (L1) into their version of the TL. These two kinds of interference features combine to form the shifting group’s version of the TL, the $TL_2$. In addition, however, if the shifting group is integrated into the TL speech community, original TL speakers may borrow a subset of the interference features in $TL_2$, to form $TL_3$, a melded version of the
2. **Who changes language, children or adults?** The answer to this question depends in part on what counts as language change. For the past forty years, generativists have placed the locus of language change in children’s acquisition of their L1 (e.g. Halle 1962, Lightfoot 1979, 2002). The argument is that the child constructs her grammar on the basis of input from adults and older children, and that innovations (by comparison to the adult grammar) are included in the internalized grammar and thus constitute language change. An opposing view, held for instance by sociohistorical linguistics like Lesley Milroy and James Milroy (p.c. 2003), is that language change is not the innovation itself, but rather the spread of the innovation through the speech community. Proponents of the latter view, and some other non-generativists as well, argue that young children are never the primary agents of change, in part because children are not the main participants in the kinds of social networks that are responsible for the propagation of a change in a community.

Both of these positions are too extreme, in my opinion. A complete account of a linguistic change must surely include both the original innovation and its spread through the community: excluding either the one or the other from the domain of language change seems quite arbitrary. However, I will focus here on the first step, which is the innovation and its initial spread to enough people that it is a viable candidate for spread throughout the community. As far as I know, it is uncontroversial that very young children are not the main agents of the spread of a change within a speech community, so the disputed locus of change would have to be the innovation itself. Moreover, even if adults are the primary innovators, an innovation will not become a change in a community’s main language unless it is eventually acquired by children during first-language acquisition, where adults’ innovations form part of the input for first-language acquisition. Theory-driven arguments for the sole agency of either children
2.1. Borrowing: child-initiated changes. There is certainly evidence that both children and adults produce linguistic innovations, and contact-induced change provides some of the clearest examples. For children’s innovations, numerous syntactic examples can be found in the literature on bilingual L1 acquisition. De Houwer & Meisel (1996) report, for instance, that a group of children who were learning both German and French as L1s displayed increased frequency of word-order patterns that are more restricted in their occurrence in one or both of the adult languages. And Müller & Hulk (2001) found evidence of systematic syntactic innovations in the speech of children with three different L1 pairs, German/French, Dutch/French, and German/Italian. Specifically, the bilingual children had a much higher level of object omission in their French and Italian than monolingual French- or Italian-speaking children. Overall, the object omission patterns were closer to colloquial Dutch and German, as in (1):

(1) Question: Kommst Du mit zur Titanic?
Answer: 0 hab ich schon gesehen.

Phonological examples are rarer in the literature, but Queen (2001) discusses a phonological innovation in the intonation of bilingual Turkish/German children. Her focus is on two different but isofunctional phrase-final intonation patterns in monolingual Turkish and monolingual German. A group of bilingual school-age children turned out to have both patterns in both their L1s, and they had introduced a functional distinction between the two intonation contours. Strikingly, neither the children’s German-speaking teachers nor their Turkish-speaking parents noticed that the children’s intonational system differed from those of monolingual adults.
These phonological and syntactic examples share a noteworthy feature: they are all relatively subtle changes that might be unnoticed by adult L1 speakers. The innovative word-order and object-omission patterns in bilingual Germanic/Romance-speaking children differed from the adult system in frequency and scope, but they did not introduce anything wholly new into either L1; and although the children Queen studied had a novel intonation pattern in each of their L1s—a pattern that did not exist previously in German or Turkish—both the new contour and the new distinction apparently slipped ‘under the radar’ of the adults’ perception, so that the children were perceived as perfectly ordinary L1 speakers of German and Turkish. This suggests that perhaps bilingual children’s innovations are unlikely to be dramatic major changes. That is, perhaps child-initiated changes always target more abstract and (in the context) less salient structural features. One might expect exceptions in cases with very extensive typological overlap, as in mutual or one-way interference in dialects of the same language. But these hypotheses would be very difficult to test, given the still small amount and variety of data currently available.

Before we turn to innovations introduced by bilingual adults into one or both of their languages, one other point should be emphasized here. As Queen points out, the change she studied does not fall neatly into either the ‘borrowing’ or the ‘shift-induced interference’ category of interference. At first glance it looks like borrowing, because the children are growing up with two L1s and are thus becoming fully fluent in both Turkish and German; but the change could also be viewed as the result of imperfect learning, because the children ended up with an intonational system that was not identical to that of either L1. But the latter interpretation would require a very different process from ordinary shift-induced interference, which closely resembles second-language acquisition both as a process and in its results. The same argument can be applied to the syntactic examples as well: they are neither obviously borrowing nor obviously shift-induced interference. It might therefore
be best to treat bilingual children’s innovations as instances of a different process entirely, separate from these two categories.

2.2. Borrowing: adult-initiated changes. The borrowing domain in which adult agency is clearest is the lexicon. Adults are certainly responsible for “learnèd” borrowings and all borrowings from written sources (including email), since L1 acquirers are preliterate. Adults are also the agents in cases like the one described by Ad Backus (p.c. 1999), in which bilingual young adult Dutch speakers insert English words into Dutch morphosyntax in conversation because it’s considered trendy.

In structural borrowing, it is harder to be certain whether adults or children are the innovators. But here too there are occasional “learnèd” structural borrowings, for instance the introduction of aspirated stops into spoken Tamil under the influence of Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism, or the ban on split infinitives in English, which was decreed by 18th-century grammarians and is said to have been motivated by the fact that Latin infinitives (being single words) can’t be split. Innovations of these types were definitely introduced by adults, not children.

One set of cases in which dramatic linguistic innovations can be confidently attributed to adults rather than children comprises bilingual mixed languages. In these most extreme cases of borrowing, new languages are created abruptly by groups of bilinguals who are socially distinct from the speech communities of both component languages. The number of well-documented stable bilingual mixed languages is very small, and it may be that most bilingual mixtures are ephemeral. But in principle any such mixtures (including the fashionable mixture of English lexicon and Dutch structure reported by Backus) could become fixed as the first language of a speech community.

Three especially striking cases are Michif in south central Canada, Mednyj (or Copper
Island) Aleut on one of the Commander islands off the east coast of Russia, and Media Lengua in central Ecuador. In each case the creators must have been fully fluent bilinguals, because there is no significant distortion in either component of the mixed language; and the mixtures resemble nothing reported from bilingual child acquisition, because they are infinitely more drastic as changes. Michif was created by bilingual French/Cree offspring of mixed marriages between Canadian French (and some Scots) traders and Cree-speaking women. The mixed-blood offspring of these marriages were legally distinct from both Whites and Indians, and some of them coalesced into a distinct social group as well, as buffalo hunters on both sides of the Canada/US border. The language they created, which served as a symbol of in-group identity, consists of French noun phrases in a Cree matrix. The verb and sentential syntax display fully elaborated Cree structure, with all the expected Algonquian complexity in the verb morphology; the noun phrase, however, is French, phonologically, morphologically, and syntactically. There is a bit of leakage from the Cree portions of the grammar into the French portions, but not vice versa. The language looks like a conventionalized (or fossilized) and greatly expanded type of code-switching, because a common code-switching pattern involves inserting noun phrases from one language into sentences that otherwise come from the other language. Although young children are very unlikely to have been the initiators of the mixture, Michif became a first language, and probably the main language, of at least some of the mixed-blood communities. It is still spoken on the Turtle Mountain Reservation of North Dakota, and few of its modern speakers know either French or Cree. There is no question, therefore, of the language’s independence from its source language, and it is also evident that children have learned it as a first language. (See Thomason & Kaufman 1988:228-233 and Bakker & Papen 1997 for further information on Michif.)

Mednyj Aleut is also the language of a mixed-blood population, in this case the offspring of Russian fathers and Aleut mothers. The population arose in the 19th century during the
period of the Russian fur seal trade in the Bering Sea and its vicinity, and like the speakers
of Michif, the mixed-bloods were socially separate from both source speech communities.
On Mednyj Island they were economically powerful middlemen between the Russian traders
and the Aleut fishermen, but they were socially stigmatized because their parents were not
married to each other. Linguistically, the mixture in Mednyj Aleut differs sharply from
the mixture in Michif. The lexicon as a whole is primarily native Aleut (though there
are borrowings from Russian throughout the language). Noun inflection is entirely Aleut,
as is non-finite verb inflection; but the entire finite verb inflectional system is Russian,
including both the categories and the grammatical morphemes themselves. Here too it
appears that the mixed language was created to underscore the new group’s ethnic identity.
Like Michif, Mednyj Aleut was later learned as a first language by the community’s children.
(See Thomason 1997 and references there for discussion.)

Media Lengua, finally, was created by bilingual Spanish/Quechua speakers who had
traveled to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, for work; they learned Spanish there and then
returned to their Quechua-speaking villages, where their mixed language marked them as
partly Quechua and partly Spanish in culture (see Muysken 1997 for details). That is, here
too the function of the new language is to symbolize the culturally mixed identity of the new
ethnic (sub-)group. The linguistic composition of Media Lengua splits the lexicon from the
structure and thus differs from those of Michif and Mednyj Aleut: Media Lengua consists of
Spanish vocabulary and Quechua grammar.

There are two compelling reasons for rejecting the participation of young children as a
major contributor to the emergence of these and other bilingual mixed languages. First,
as noted above, the creators of the new languages have to have been fluent bilinguals, and
the nature of the mixtures sharply distinguishes them linguistically from all data currently
available on bilingual L1 acquisition. Second, all known bilingual mixtures are ‘in-group’
phenomena. These new languages are not needed for intergroup communication; the members of each group already have two languages in their repertoire, and either would be quite sufficient for communication within the group. Instead, the new languages serve as symbols of new populations, separated by blood and/or culture from both source populations. Young children engaging in L1 acquisition do not yet possess the social development that would motivate the creation of such a symbol.

3. **Shift-induced interference: adult-initiated, not child-initiated**

This type of interference is closely connected with second-language acquisition (SLA). The main difference is that the rich SLA literature focuses primarily on processes of second-language learning in individuals, while the focus of study in shift-induced interference is the effects of a whole group’s SLA on the target language. There are other differences too, perhaps most notably the fact that in SLA there is a well-grounded assumption that the learners’ goal is the acquisition of (typically) a well-established standard language, whereas shift-induced interference can affect a nonstandardized TL, and the shifting group may not even wish to speak the TL the way original L1 speakers speak it. Still, the similarities between the learners’ errors reported in the SLA literature and the results of shift-induced interference are striking—which is hardly surprising, since in both cases the main effect is failure to achieve native-like command of a TL (native-like, that is, from the viewpoint of original TL speakers). Because of this close connection, it is also unsurprising that young children do not appear to play a major role in initiating the changes that typically characterize shift-induced interference. The social factors that promote language shift may certainly affect children’s acquisition, but they will arguably apply most strongly to adults in the shifting community. If children’s access to the TL is sufficiently limited in their early years, they may in fact eventually acquire the TL as a second language, not as a first language.
A question remains open here, though: what if children have enough exposure to the larger community’s dominant language, the original TL (or $TL_1$) to acquire some of it in early childhood, but not enough exposure to acquire it as a child growing up primarily in that community would? Would we, in such a case, expect the child’s version of the TL to be like their parents’ L2 version (the $TL_2$), especially if they hear the parents’ version more often than the original version? Or would we expect the children’s superior language-learning skills to move them beyond their parents’ version and closer to the $TL_1$, given the same amount of exposure to the $TL_1$? As far as I know, this question has not been addressed empirically; but it’s a bit hard to imagine very young children being attuned to the kinds of social factors that would prompt them to prefer $TL_1$ to $TL_2$ features, so it’s not clear what would motivate them to acquire the larger community’s $TL_1$ instead of their home community’s $TL_2$. In spite of this indeterminacy, however, attributing the primary role in shift-induced interference to adults seems justified by what we know of the progress of language shift: adults innovate to form the $TL_2$, and what their children learn is the $TL_2$, not the $TL_1$.

Let’s look at a few typical examples of shift-induced interference. A phonological example was reported by Pavle Ivić (1964). A northern dialect of Serbo-Croatian that is spoken in the former Yugoslavia near the Hungarian border differs sharply from other Serbo-Croatian dialects in having fixed penultimate stress. Elsewhere in Serbo-Croatian (in what is now called Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian), stress is free and therefore phonemic. But Hungarian stress is predictable, fixed on the initial syllable of the word. According to Ivić, Hungarian speakers on the Yugoslav side of the national border shifted in sizable numbers to the local Serbo-Croatian dialect; assuming that stress was fixed (because it was in their L1), but perceiving that it wasn’t fixed on the first syllable of the word, they settled on a kind of ‘average’ stress placement, on the penultimate syllable. This feature of their $TL_2$ was
adopted by original TL speakers, so that the whole dialect now has fixed penultimate stress. What makes this example typical of shift-induced interference is not only the deviation from the original TL stress system, but also the fact that the resulting pattern matches neither the shifting group’s heritage language nor the original TL. Instead, it is a learners’ perceptual compromise between the two incompatible systems.

In the morphosyntax, a typical example is the innovative causative formation in some Ethiopic Semitic languages, a change that was initiated by Cushitic speakers who were shifting to Semitic (see Leslau 1945, 1952, and Thomason 2001:111-113 for a more detailed discussion of the Ethiopian Highlands Sprachbund). In Semitic languages outside Ethiopia, the causative is formed by means of a prefix; in Cushitic languages the causative is formed by means of a double suffix. In Ethiopic Semitic, the causative formation is a double prefix—keeping the original Semitic placement of the causative affix, but doubling it according to the Cushitic pattern. Like the Hungarian-influenced stress pattern described above, this change in Ethiopic Semitic is a compromise between the two causative formations, but not identical to either.

This general pattern of change, in which a TL structural feature is partially reinterpreted according to a functionally congruent heritage-language pattern, is of course not the only type of change produced by interference through shift. Sometimes a new category is introduced into the TL, often but not always using morphemes native to the TL. An example is the so-called second genitive case in Russian, an innovative case category with a partitive function. The contrast between the inherited genitive (GEN) and the new partitive (PART) formation is illustrated in (2):
Ex. 2a shows the inherited genitive, where the phrase *price of tea* does not focus on a particular part, or portion, of tea; 2b, by contrast, specifies a portion of tea, and it has the partitive case. Both suffixes, -a and -u, are native Slavic and indeed Indo-European suffixes. Originally they belonged to different noun classes and expressed the same function, the single inherited genitive (which included both partitive and general genitive constructions). But the noun class to which -u belonged merged with the noun class to which -a belongs, and in the process most original suffixes in the vanishing noun class were replaced by suffixes from the surviving class—except in this one structure point, where shifting Finnic speakers kept both genitive suffixes and used them to express the partitive/non-partitive distinction that is native to Finnic languages. This is an instance of shifting speakers’ carryover of structural features from the L1(s) to the TL. The other common result of shift-induced interference, loss of TL features that the heritage language of the shifting group lacks, is illustrated by such changes as the loss, in Ethiopic Semitic, of the inherited dual number category (Cushitic languages have no dual).

A caveat (partly repeating a point made at the beginning of this section) is in order here. It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to prove that adults are the initiators of these and other instances of shift-induced interference. But, for the reasons given above, it is at least very unlikely that young children are the sole initiators of these changes, and for social
reasons it also seems unlikely that they play a major role in the process.

Just as bilingual mixed languages provide evidence for adults as agents of contact-induced change in situations where imperfect learning is not a factor, other mixed languages—specifically pidgins—provide evidence for adults as the primary agents of change in contact situations in which imperfect learning is a significant factor. A pidgin, by definition, is no one’s first language: that is, there is no speech community whose children learn a pidgin as (one of) their first language(s). Of course this doesn’t mean that a pidgin cannot become a native language; but if it does, it ceases to be a pidgin and becomes a creole. There is considerable controversy about processes of pidgin genesis and creole genesis, but most specialists at least agree that a new pidgin language is created by adults and used for purposes of inter-group communication, not as the primary language of any speech community. Like shift-induced interference, pidgin genesis therefore has much in common with second-language acquisition. Two main motives for pidgin genesis have emerge from studies of these languages. First, and most prominently in the literature, pidgins arise in new contact situations in which three or more groups who do not share a common language need to communicate and for whatever reason do not learn and use any one of the languages involved. Second, pidgins sometimes arise in part through native speakers’ deliberate simplification and distortion of their native language in a new contact situation, in order to prevent outsiders from learning their ‘real’ language (see Thomason 2001, ch. 7, for discussion of both of these routes to pidgin genesis). These two motives are not mutually exclusive, of course.

In sharp contrast to borrowing situations, then, there are no clear instances of either shift-induced interference or pidgin genesis in which children can be shown to play a major role in the process, and there is both linguistic evidence (in the linguistic similarities to what happens in SLA but not in bilingual L1 acquisition) and social evidence (in the social motives and contacts) to indicate that adults are the major agents in these processes.
4. **Conclusion.** The discussions in §2 and §3 of borrowing (in the narrow sense of Thomason & Kaufman 1988) and shift-induced interference, respectively, motivate two general claims about the relative likelihood of adult and child agency in contact-induced change. First, while both children and adults can be shown to be responsible for changes in borrowing situations, where imperfect learning plays no role in the process, only adults are clearly responsible for shift-induced interference. And second, only adults are likely to be the initiators in drastic changes of the kinds that are sometimes found in both ordinary contact situations but are especially common in extreme cases like the creation of bilingual mixed languages and pidgins. This conclusion is strengthened by the growing body of evidence that adults can and do introduce deliberate changes into their language (Thomason 1999, 2001:149-152), with results ranging from extensive lexical distortions to morphological innovations.

What are the implications of these conclusions for the more general question of the roles of children and adults in initiating internally- as well as externally-motivated linguistic changes? One conclusion, at least, is clear: if adults can introduce substantial contact-induced innovations into their languages—and obviously they can and do this—then it becomes very difficult to argue that they cannot do so with internally-motivated changes as well. In fact, some of the deliberate changes that are turning up in the literature show that adults do this quite easily, given a strong enough social motivation (Thomason 1999). One set of examples comes from language planning, which often includes structural as well as lexical prescriptions. Some of the rules invented by grammarians actually become part of the standard language for which they were invented—in English, thanks to the busy 18th-century grammarians, and in other languages as well, e.g. Estonian (Saagpakk 1982). Another set of examples arises from various groups’ desire (sometimes expressed explicitly) to differentiate themselves linguistically from their neighbors, who speak dialects of the same language. In an effort to emphasize their cultural differentness, and/or to construct a secret language (à la
Pig Latin and other such language games), a group with this goal will distort their lexicon and/or their grammar. Examples are reported from Papua New Guinea (Laycock 1982) and Peru (David Weber, p.c. 1999, citing Dwight Shaver’s research).

Moreover, such deliberately disguised languages can become the primary language of a speech community. A particularly telling quotation, about a secret language formed by lexical distortions of various kinds, comes from Denys de S. Bray (1913:139-140):

‘Mõkki, the cant of the Lõriš,...is an artificial jargon, which the Lõriš have mechanically invented on the basis of the language of the people among whom they live, and which they more especially employ when they want to keep their meaning to themselves...And yet so universally and successfully is the jargon used, that it seems doubtful whether its artificiality suffices to debar it from being classed as a language...it is at any rate acquired naturally and as a matter of course by Lõri children; it is no longer, it would seem, simply a secret patter; it is becoming a language for the home-circle.’

Given these results, neither extreme sole-agency position adopted by some historical linguists can be correct—not for contact-induced change, and therefore not for internally-motivated change either. There is another reason for this conclusion about internally-motivated change in addition to the ones already discussed. Regardless of whether a given innovation has an internal source within the language’s structure or an external source in another language or dialect, the progression of a successful innovation as it becomes fixed within each speaker’s grammar and is adopted by other speakers will be determined by the same kinds of social and linguistic factors. To give a simple example, the replacement of English deer in the generic meaning ‘animal’ by the French loanword animal and the re-
placement of English *slay* in the generic meaning ‘strike’ by the native word *strike* must have followed the same route—innovation, competition between new and old forms, eventual triumph of the new form in the generic meaning, and narrowing of meaning in the old form. Children are not the only initiators of linguistic change; adults are also not the only initiators of linguistic change.

**References**


