Socio-cultural variation in borrowability constraints:

Fixedness and conventionality in contact situations

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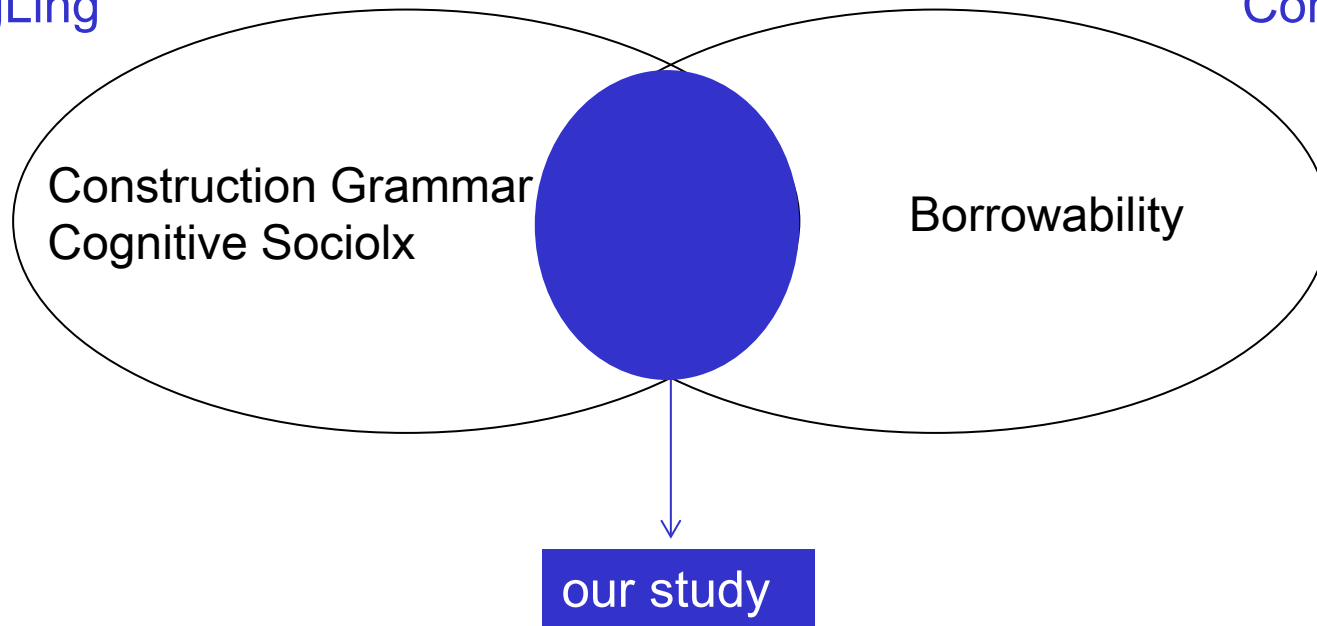
Cognitive Contact Linguistics

CogLing

Contact Ling

Construction Grammar
Cognitive Sociolx

Borrowability

our study

ICLC 2013
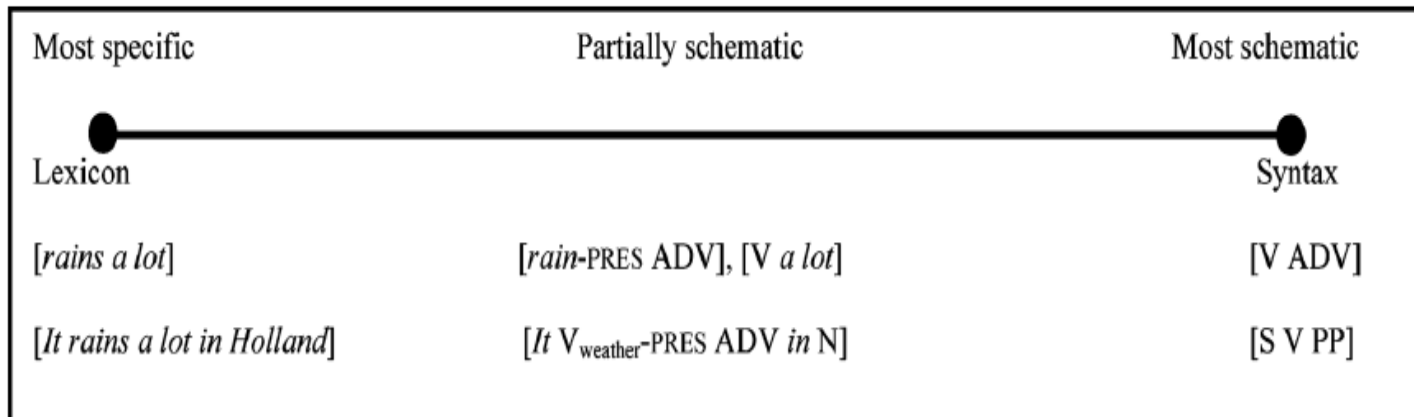
Construction Grammar

- form and meaning units; stored in memory as unit
- grammar and lexicon are interwoven
  (Goldberg, 2005; Bybee & Eddington, 2006)

Continuum of Specificity (Doğruöz & Backus, 2009)

Most specific	Partially schematic	Most schematic
Lexicon		Syntax
[*rains a lot*]	[*rain*-PRES ADV], [V *a lot*]	[V ADV]
[*It rains a lot in Holland*]	[*It* V$_{weather}$-PRES ADV *in* N]	[S V PP]

Borrowability

Borrowing: transfer of SL form-meaning units to RL

Borrowability:

- ease with which items can be borrowed
- so far focus on single words (POS-clines)

BUT how about constructions?

Variation in Borrowability of Constructions

- Which parts of the specificity continuum can be borrowed?
- Any links between the social characteristics of the contact situation and the borrowed constructions?

Case study

	case for intense contact	case for weak contact
donor language	Dutch	English
receptor language	Turkish	Dutch
type of community	bilingual immigrant community	monolingual to weakly bilingual
type of contact	direct/intense	indirect/remote
main source contact	spontaneous conversation	mass media
corpus	sociolinguistic interview	reality TV

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Dutch-Turkish contact

Contact setting
- 50 years of contact; 2% of Dutch population
- from TR for 1st generation to bilingualism in 2nd/3rd generation

Comparative spoken corpora
- informal conversations
- NL-Turkish (Turkish spoken in the NL) vs. TR-Turkish (Turkish spoken in Turkey)
- male-female, adult (18+) speakers, 2nd/3rd generation for NL-TR

What is changing in NL-Turkish?

No significant change in NL-Turkish word order due to Dutch influence (Doğruöz & Backus, 2007).

But NL-Turkish sounds different in comparison to TR-Turkish….

WHY? HOW?

Borrowed Constructions in NL-Turkish

Fixed Constructions

Dutch

[Ik-weet-het-niet]
I   know that not
"I don't know"

Turkish

[Ne   bil-e-yim]
What   know-opt-1sg
"I don't know"

NL-Turkish

[Ben ne   bil-e-yim]
What   know-opt-1sg
"I don't know"

Fixed Constructions

Dutch

[Ik-weet-het-niet]
 I   know that not
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Turkish

[Ne   bil-e-yim]
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"I don't know"

405.000 Google
search

NL-Turkish

[Ben ne   bil-e-yim]
What know-opt-1sg
"I don't know"

42.000 hits
Google Search

Partially Fixed Constructions

Dutch

[**Een paar   concert-en**]
A   couple   concert-PL
"A couple of concerts"

Turkish

[**Birkaç   konser**]
A.couple concert
"A couple of concerts"

NL-Turkish

[**Birkaç   konser-ler**]
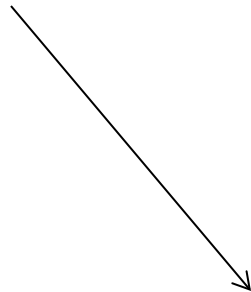Een.paar concert-PL
"A couple of concerts"

Partially Fixed Constructions

Dutch

[**Een paar**　　**N-PL**]
　A　　couple　N-PL

Turkish

[**Birkaç**　　**N**]
A.couple　N
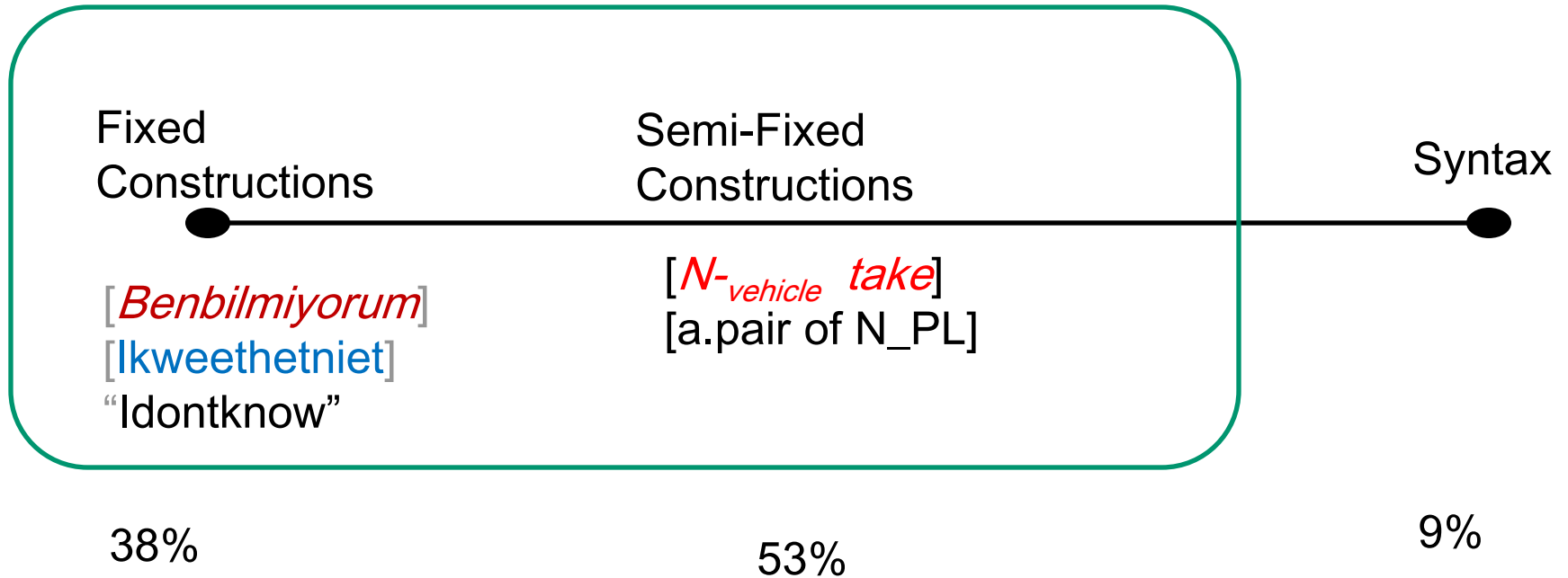"A couple of concerts"

NL-Turkish

[**Birkaç**　　**N-PL**]
Een.paar　N-PL
"A couple of concerts"

Establishment of Unconventionality

- Check NL-Turkish corpus: What sounds unconventional? (me + panel of TR-Turkish speakers)

- Establish the conventional (TR-Turkish) version

- Differences between two varieties: Morphological, lexical and structural mismatches

- Check the fixedness (Google search + flexibility of closed and open slots)

- Place the unconventional constructions on the "Continuum of Specificity"

On-going change in NL-Turkish constructions: Specificity Continuum (Doğruöz & Backus, 2009)

Fixed
Constructions

Semi-Fixed
Constructions

Syntax

[*Benbilmiyorum*]
[Ikweethetniet]
"Idontknow"

[*N-$_{vehicle}$ take*]
[a.pair of N_PL]

38%

53%

9%

Most Dutch influence: Fixed and semi-fixed constructions

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English-Dutch contact

Contact setting

- English as foreign language, but prestige
- indirect asymmetrical contact: mass media

Corpus of spontaneous language

- 3 seasons of the reality TV show "Expeditie Robinson" ("Survivor")
- 10,000 utterances for 52 participants
- 777 utterances that contain English words:
    single-word units, but also multi-word units/constructions

English Constructions in Robinson

- 260 tokens (30% of all tokens)
- 187 types

[fuck the world]

[survival of the fittest]

[out of the blue]

→ highly fixed expressions

→ borrowed phraseology rather than codeswitching?

Establishing fixedness: Method

Usage-based approach: combining types of evidence

- lexicographical treatment (.../1)
- Google frequencies (…/4)
- popularity n-gram (n-1 + POS) (…/3)

_____

aggregate score of fixedness (…/8)

Establishing fixedness: Method

Usage-based approach: combining types of evidence

inclusion in one of six sources (Y/N)

- lexicographical treatment   (.../1)

pages in English, 4 frequency bands

- Google frequencies   (…/4)
- popularity n-gram (n-1 + POS)   (…/3)

based on COCA e.g. *[slow motion]* as most popular instance of *[slow N]*

_____

aggregate score of fixedness   (…/8)

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Establishing fixedness: Example

Example: *bad vibes*

- listed in Urban Dictionary   -->   score 1/1

- 1,220,000 hits on Google   --->   score 3/4

- rank 151 of all *[bad N]*-combinations   -->   score 1/3

————————————

score 5/8

Results: Scores for the 187 phrases

25%

score	n phrases	% of data	examples
0-1	24	13%	the man with the black power, next step next hurdle, panic's gone
2-3	27	14%	strong lady, good vibrations, I bring a smile
4-5	30	16%	bad vibes, big smile, no mercy, surprise surprise
6-7	69	37%	alive and kicking, in the picture, we did it
8	37	20%	high five, home sweet home, let's go, you never know

~60%

indirect contact, primarily mediated through the media
→ **lower proficiency; no traditional codeswitching**

BUT high social status of English + subtitling on TV
→ **picking up fixed phrases/catchphrases**

Results: Scores for the 187 phrases

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how about the 51 phrases with lower scores?

Phrases with low scores for fixedness

1. still some fixed phrases!
   1. **constructions** with one open slot (n=9)
      in the spirit to win < [in the spirit to VP]
   2. **catchphrases** with a lower frequency but a well-know origin (n=5)
      we meet again, my friend (James Bond)
   3. **creative** uses of and proficiency issues with existing phrases (n=6)
      game, set, over

2. specific users of the remaining less-fixed phrases
   3 speakers account for most of the remaining phrases
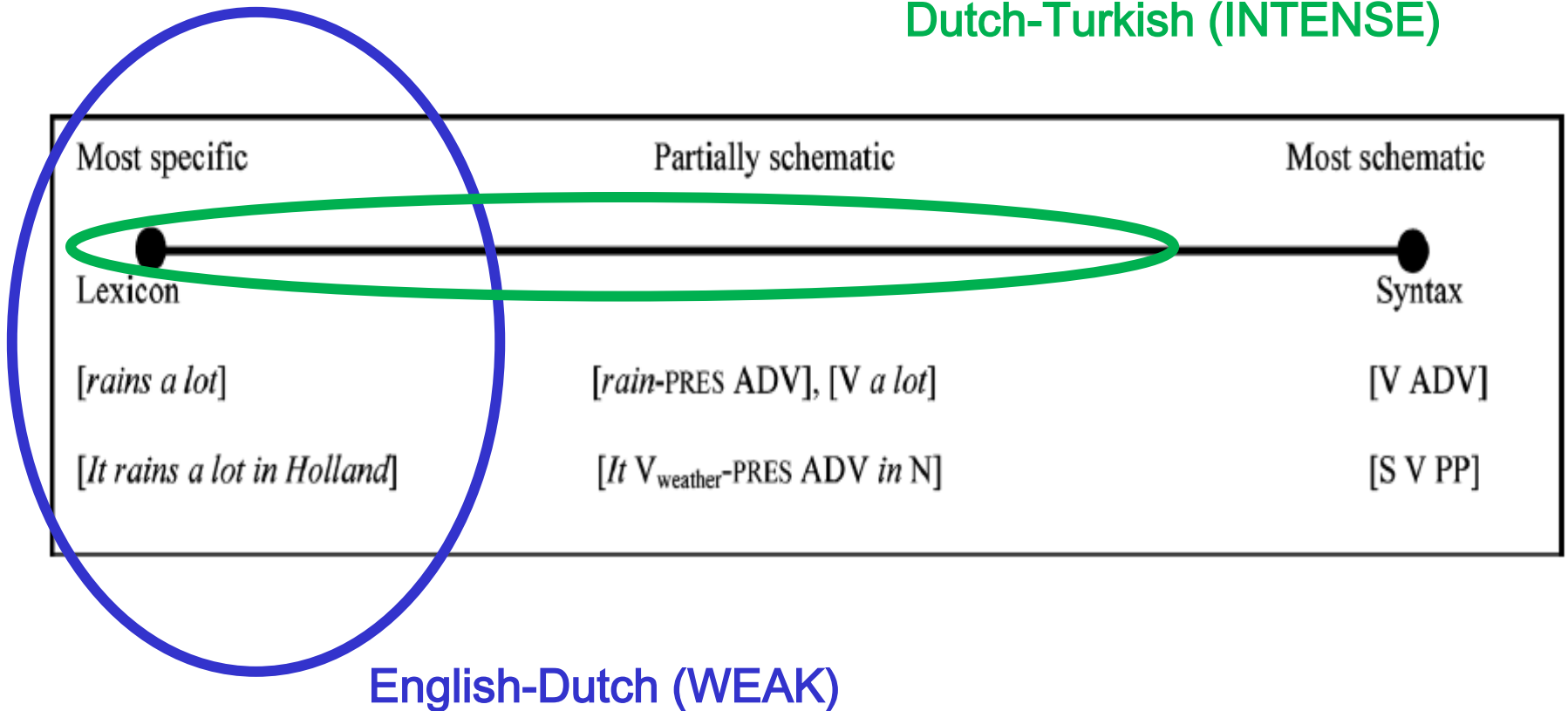   each with specific backgrounds and higher than average English proficiency

OVERALL: rather borrowed phraseology than codeswitching

Conclusion

Borrowability of Constructions

Dutch-Turkish (INTENSE)

Most specific	Partially schematic	Most schematic
Lexicon		Syntax
[*rains a lot*]	[*rain*-PRES ADV], [V *a lot*]	[V ADV]
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English-Dutch (WEAK)

Broader relevance

- **for contact linguistics and borrowability research**
  expanding on the word as the unit under scrutiny

- **for Cognitive Linguistics**
  expanding monolingual/monolectal research on constructions to studies focusing on contact settings

- **for Cognitive Sociolinguistics**:
  a new expansion labeled Cognitive Contact Linguistics

[Seza's picture]

Thanks for listening!

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