Inter-language mappings and why we can't have nice theories about them

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I argue that loanword data typically discussed in the literature come from contact situations in which loanword integration relies on inter-language mappings, defined as correspondences between source-language and recipient-language structures, established in the bilingual community and productively applied to new items. I furthermore argue that every instance of regular borrowing strengthens the mapping, rendering it more salient in the contact.

I demonstrate that both phonological and phonetic theories of loanword integration systematically disprefer taking inter-language knowledge into account, as they assume monolingual knowledge to be pre-given and inter-language knowledge to require additional assumptions. This rather contingent tendency has led to the generalised assumption that each loanword is integrated without any relation to other loanwords from the same source language.

I propose a novel approach which capitalises on the bilingual speakers' knowledge of cognates and acknowledges inter-language mappings as concomitant to lasting contact and regular borrowing. I show how such an approach would lead to the repositioning and reconciliation of the traditional phonological and phonetic stances. Furthermore, I suggest that such an approach would resolve the traditional dispute on the distinction between code-switching and borrowing.