

**Reconstructing historical sociolinguistic conditions from loanwords:
The case of ERIC loans in the Balkans**

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Loanwords typically, but not always, imply a social connection between peoples, in the form of face-to-face interaction and contact that make the loans possible. They thus offer a basis for looking back to earlier language and social states and of reconstructing the conditions under which the loans could have occurred. But usual typologies for loanwords, e.g. Bloomfield's cultural versus intimate loans or Hockett's need versus prestige borrowing, often miss the full picture of the earlier social conditions. Drawing on collaborative work with Victor Friedman (see, e.g., Friedman & Joseph 2014 (*IJSL*)), I propose here a new class of loanwords, ERIC loans — an acronym for loans that are “Essentially Rooted In Conversation” — that focus on the conversational interactions that speakers had and what such loans mean for us as historical sociolinguists. I illustrate the utility of these loans by bringing to the fore data from borrowing in the Balkans among the languages of the Balkan sprachbund.

References

Friedman, Victor A. and Brian D. Joseph. 2014. Lessons from Judezmo about the Balkan Sprachbund and contact linguistics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 226: 3-23.