Interest in the socio-history of Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and other Latin-American linguistic varieties has been increasing in the past 30 years, as a consequence of the effort to uncover the complex set of variables, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, that shaped these languages. Linguists and historians alike have dug into the past and analyzed the present in search for evidence that will lead to a clearer scenario of the development of both BP and Latin-American Spanish vernaculars. Exemplifying this endeavor, this book results from a symposium held in 2011 at the State University of Campinas, Brazil, under the title *Dinâmicas afro-latinas: língua(s) e história(s)* [Afro-Latin dynamics: language(s) and history(ies)]. In the spirit of the symposium, this book publishes historical and linguistic findings that contribute to a necessary dialogue between these two fields of expertise, vital to progress in the research on the origins of the New World vernaculars. The volume is organized in three parts: *Da história para a língua, Língua(s) e história(s) em Contato,* and *Língua(s) na história: a escrita como fonte* [From history to language, languages and histories in contact, and Languages in history: writing as Source].

The first part comprises four chapters dedicated to the social history of Africans in both Brazil and the Rio del Prata region. The first chapter, *Ladinos ou boçais? A política da linguagem no cotidiano da escravização ilegal (Brasil, décadas de 1830 a 1850)*, by Chaloub (p. 13-29), addresses the role played by the perceived level of Portuguese proficiency of captured Africans, during the period in Brazil following the official prohibition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1850. Those Africans perceived as *boçais* (unacculturated African slaves; recently arrived African slaves who did not speak Portuguese) were evidence of illegal human trafficking, whereas those who attempted to pass as non-speakers of Portuguese but were found to be bluffing were identified as *ladinos* (accultured African slaves; African slaves with a knowledge of Portuguese). Through the author’s discussion, the importance of marks of linguistic identity is highlighted, indicating that this was a key factor in the African slavery abolition issue in the late imperial period.
Lima (p. 31-41), in the second chapter, *Diz que é forro – práticas de comunicação escrava em anúncios de jornal*, unveils different categories whereby enslaved Africans were portrayed in newspaper advertisements concerning run-away slaves, based on their linguistic prowess in Portuguese. The degree of description found in these advertisements is much more detailed than that reported in the previous chapter. Thus, for example, there are mentions of one slave being *ladino* but stuttering, and of another having a low pitched voice, among other features, including psychological ones. Lima’s chapter reinforces the need for solid historical research, taking into account linguistic data.

In chapter 3, *Quem eram os minas? Notas sobre a “nação” mina no sul do Brasil e no Prata no século XIX*, Álvarez López (p. 43-69) investigates the use of the term *Mina* as it referred to enslaved Africans both in southern Brazil and Uruguay in the 19th century. The author resorts to several complementary sources of information, combining linguistic, ethnographic and historic data that indicate the large semantic area covered by the term. Álvarez López concludes by identifying different linguistic groups that were subsumed under the term *Mina* (which excluded Bantu languages) during several centuries of African human trafficking.

Callou (p. 71-89), with *Sobre a história do português no e do Brasil: levantando questões*, closes off the first part of the book by taking issue with the bipartite division between natural drift and irregular linguistic transmission/contact that according to her has polarized the debate concerning the characterization of the origins of BP. The author argues for a broader approach to the problem, taking into account the diversity of sociocultural environments and circumstances inherent in the linguistic and demographic constitution of Brazil. Callou refers to previously published historical demographic data and closes with a call for more complex questioning to be made in what regards the forces that interacted in the shaping of BP.

The second part of the book is concerned mainly with linguistic matters, and begins with a chapter by Lipski (p. 93-125), *La reconstrucción de los primeros contactos lingüísticos afrohispanicos: la importancia de las comunidades de habla contemporáneas*, reporting on peculiar linguistic features found in Afro-Hispanic communities in a number of Latin-American countries. He makes a strong case for their association with the history of African slave trading in the Americas. Among the prominent features discussed, Lipski indicates the following: lack of grammatical gender, genderless 3rd person pronouns, lack of subject-verb agreement, invariable plurals, single left periphery plural marking in NPs, lack of definite articles,
presence of paragogic vowels, invariable copula and aspectual particle *ta* followed by infinitive. The chapter finds that such features emerged in contact situations involving restricted access to linguistic models, and it closes by drawing a parallel between Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Brazilian varieties.

Avelar, in *Sobre a emergência das construções de tópico-sujeito no português brasileiro: mudança desencadeada por contato?* (p. 127-147), discusses topic-subject constructions in BP, as in examples such as *As crianças tão nascendo o dentinho da frente* ‘As for the children, their front teeth are cutting’. Noting that such constructions are not found in European Portuguese nor in any other Indo-European language, the author proposes the hypothesis that this feature may have entered BP through contact with Bantu languages, which were prominent during a good part of the slave-trade to Brazil. Avelar compares the topic-subject construction in BP and in Bantu languages. He concludes the chapter by underlining the necessity of researching Afro-Portuguese varieties spoken in contexts where Bantu languages play a major role as first language.

The chapter by Oliveira et al, *O conceito de português afro-indígena e a comunidade de Jurussaca* (p. 149-177), explores the Afro-Indigenous variety of BP spoken in Jurussaca, in the Northern state of Pará. The authors classify this variety as belonging within the [+ marked] end of the continuum of BP vernaculars in the classification proposed by Campos (2014), highlighting the added element of indigenous input in the development of Northern BP dialects. The linguistic discussion focusses on the pronominal and relativization systems showing similarities and differences with general BP. The chapter closes stressing the need to consider the contact of both indigenous and African languages with Portuguese in order to reach a fuller understanding of the processes involved in the historical development of BP.

The final chapter in Part II of this volume, *A vitalidade de um léxico de origem Africana em Minas Gerais*, by Petter (p. 179-190), discusses the African-based lexicon found in ex-maroon communities and their adjacent areas in the state of Minas Gerais. The author begins by sketching a socio-historical perspective of the district of Milho Verde in the Jequitinhonha River Valley, and within this framework she discusses aspects of the Vissungo and Catopé lexicons. The second community considered is that of Tabatinga in the municipality of Bom Despacho. Petter presents a more in-depth

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1 Vissungo is a chant and response tradition attributed to African slaves in mining areas and Catopé is one of the local folk groups that are guardian to Congado, a dance and chant tradition that emulates the coronation of the kings of Congo.
description of this variety as it still maintains some vitality according to the author. In addition to lexical and morpho-phonological features, word formation processes are explored. Closing the chapter, Petter mentions the difficulties involved in the identification of African languages that had an impact on the Afro-BP varieties. Additionally, she points out the relevance of the use of Afro-BP varieties as a mean of identity preservation and bonding in the communities studied.

In the third and final part of the book, the authors explore written sources for the study of the history of vernacular varieties. The first chapter in this section, Evidências do contato com as línguas africanas na formação do português brasileiro: propostas para a constituição de um corpus, by Galves (p. 193-210), stresses the need for continuous research based on diachronic data, as a key to advancing our knowledge of the origins and constitution of BP. Galves begins by reviewing previous studies which deal with BP and Portuguese spoken in Africa data and then discusses a set of documents written in Brazil by Africans who spoke Portuguese as a second language. She shows that certain features in these manuscripts point to restructuring, such as: CV syllable normalization through epenthesis, variable subject-verb agreement, variable gender and number agreement in the NP, lack of preposition introducing indirect objects, presence of double object constructions, and lack of articles. Galves proposes the compilation of a corpus built with a design aimed at representing the so called Afro-Brazilian Continuum proposed by Petter (2009).

In a second chapter, Um panorama do português popular brasileiro do século XIX: o teatro de Artur Azevedo como guia para seu estudo, Alkmim (p. 211-223) explores the works of playwright Artur de Azevedo as a source of both descriptive evidence of social relations, as well as linguistic features, in 19th century Brazilian society. In these materials, Alkmim identifies several of the features previously mentioned as characteristic of BP. Of particular interest is her study of the identities of characters in the plays, where she associates linguistic features, social roles and ethnic identities.

The third chapter in Part III of the book, “¡Ni bagres mandingas quedaron!”: presencia lingüística africana en la narrativa de José Monegal, by Coll (p. 225-241), is a survey of short stories by the writer José Menegal, that refer to the Brazilian-Uruguayan rural border area. Coll identifies the voices of African descendants speaking Spanish and considers phonetic/phonological features and lexical evidence that might point to their ethnicity. A set of phenomena is reported such as apocope (pa < para), apheresis (tapa < estaba) besides several vocalic and consonantal deviations.
from Spanish (disgracia < desgracia, riales < reales, casao < casado, jué < fue), as well as several words of African origin, such as mulambo, marimba, yimbo. In addition, Bantu words such as batuque, cafondó, borrowed from BP are indicated. A strong point is made for the use of literary sources in the understanding of linguistic development.

Reginaldo (p. 243-265), in “Como filho obediente nestas interiores terras de África, vou por esta à sua presença”: textos e contextos dos relatos missionários sobre o Reino do Kongo, no século XVIII, the last chapter in the book, presents a description of the journey of Portuguese missionaries to the Kingdom of Kongo as documented by Friar Rafael Castello de Vide, one of the 22 missionaries Queen D. Maria I sent to Angola in 1779. The author narrates the challenges found in the crossing to Africa, as well as the social circumstances found by the missionaries upon their arrival in Congo. Reginaldo focuses on the potential missionary reports from the 18th century provide to both historians and linguists due to the richness and detail of information they have.

The discussions raised in this book are of great importance to current research into the origins of BP and its diachronic development, but are equally relevant to the study of language contact scenarios in general. Many of the issues pertaining to the interplay between social, historical, ethnic and linguistic variables addressed in the book were pointed out decades ago, under very different contingencies, by Silva Neto (1950). This same interplay of factors was further advanced in works such as Holm (2001-2002), Holm (2004), Lucchesi et al. (2009), Mello (1996), Mello et al. (2012), among others who have studied language contact in Brazil.

The research paths indicated in the reviewed book witness the efforts that are currently underway to reveal the diverse circumstances that play a role in the specific developments in a given language and the complexity of intralinguistic variation. Valuable innovative research is derived from socio-historical documentation, linguistic data collection and analysis, as well as the examination of written sources, as pointed out by the authors in the volume. Particularly poignant is the recommendation of compilation of digital corpora which afford rich search extraction possibilities in large sets of data. A notable absence among the chapters of the book is that of pragmatics, based on spoken records. Much of what has been recently uncovered in the syntactic and informational make up of languages is due to methodologies that are able to analyze speech in the context of sound-to-transcription alignment which opens new possibilities for the accountability of reference units in spoken language (Raso and Mello, 2012).
Overall, this book contributes both linguistic and socio-historical analyses to the study of the origins of BP but perhaps its strongest aspect is the clear point made by the necessary joining of forces between linguists and historians as an intellectual endeavor in the search for the genesis and development of vernacular varieties.

References


