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Despite the significant growth in the recent literature on Ibero-Asian Creoles, very few attempts have been made at systematically comparing the structure and history of these contact languages. This edited book, the first one entirely dedicated to the contact between Ibero-Romance and Asian languages, offers in-depth comparative studies that cover an impressive range of existing languages including the Indian Portuguese-lexified Creoles (i.e., Korlai, Daman, Diu, Mangalore, Batticaloa, Cochin and Cannanore), the Portuguese-lexified Creoles along the Malacca-Timor axes (Tugu, Batavia, Malacca and Bidau), and, further to the East, the Portuguese-lexified Creole of Macau, and the Spanish-lexified Chabacano varieties (Zamboanga, Cavite, Ternate and Cotabato). The wide empirical coverage and the combined effort of distinguished experts produce this remarkable collection of papers on the Portuguese and Spanish-lexified Creoles of Asia, establishing new links between their linguistic properties and socio-historical circumstances and offering fresh insights into observed similarities and differences. Most of the papers originated in the conference on ‘Ibero-Asian Creoles: Comparative perspectives’, held at the University of Macau in 2010, which, as the editors point out, was also the first international conference entirely dedicated to the Portuguese- and Spanish-lexified Creoles of Asia.

The volume begins with an *INTRODUCTION* (p.1-14), organized into four sections, which provides a unifying frame of the book and touches on common threads that guide the reader along main research questions. Section 1 of the *INTRODUCTION* offers a survey of the existing literature. The editors motivate the need for a comparative approach to Ibero-Asian Creoles based on the fact that these creoles have “the potential to challenge many of the assumptions built largely on Atlantic evidence” (p.2) because of their specific socio-historical circumstances, the typology of the contributing languages, the social and demographic patterns and the prolonged coexistence of these Creoles with their ancestor languages. Section 2 of the *INTRODUCTION* offers a detailed summary of the socio-historical and sociolinguistic context in which the various Portuguese- and Spanish-based Creoles developed, from the early
Portuguese and Spanish settlements in Asia up until present time. Section 3 discusses the need to assess previous claims about the historical links between the Spanish and Portuguese-based Creoles of Asia, including claims about the influence of Malayo-Portuguese on the Chabacano varieties. The editors point out that comparison of new data reveals that the diachronic development of Ibero-Asian Creoles is far from homogeneous and “their reconstruction far from straightforward” (p.8). The last section of the INTRODUCTION highlights other research questions explored in the volume. These include, among other, the influence of the neighbouring languages on Ibero-Asian Creoles (e.g., the influence of local Philippine languages on Spanish Creoles), the difficulty in preserving the substrate/adstrate opposition for Ibero-Asian Creoles, the competition between Iberian lexifiers and local adstrate languages in the process of shaping Creole grammars and the effect of changing socio-cultural circumstances on the varying degrees of influence of the lexifier and the adstrate languages.

The INTRODUCTION is followed by eleven papers which examine specific empirical questions from different subsets of Ibero-Asian creoles, as I will show next. There are four papers mainly on Portuguese-based Creoles which address topics such as phonological segments, syllable structure and the lexicon (CLEMENTS), post-nominal genitives (BAXTER&BASTOS), comparatives (CARDOSO) and verb inflection (PINHARANDA NUNES). There are also four papers comparing Portuguese- and Spanish-based Creoles with a focus on word-order (SMITH), indefinite terms (SIPPOLA), and specific function words (VEIGA&FERNANDEZ; FERNANDEZ). Another group of papers, finally, examine Ibero-Asian Creoles within the context of other Asian contact languages and their neighbouring languages, investigating numeral classifiers (RUBINO), Pidgin Portuguese and Chinese Pidgin English (MATTHEWS&LI) and mixed lexifier creoles of Ibero-Asian origin and beyond (GRANT). In what follows, I will briefly summarise each paper in turn.

In ‘Notes on the phonology and lexicon of some Indo-Portuguese Creoles’, CLEMENTS (p. 15-46) compares the Indo-Portuguese Creoles of Diu, Daman, Korlai, Kannur and Sri Lanka. Based on the distinction between shift-related phenomena and borrowing-related phenomena (Thomason&Kaufmann 1988), CLEMENTS argues that the differences in the phonological inventory and the core lexicon result from a borrowing process, which was affected by the length of the Portuguese presence in the respective settlements. In particular, once the Portuguese left Korlai, Kannur and Sri Lanka, the speakers began to borrow from the adstrates causing changes in the phonological inventory and the core lexicon. However changes in syllable structure (i.e.
retention vs. loss of post-tonic syllables) resulted from a shift dynamic through which speakers of Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, and Sinhala incorporated into the Creole the syllable structure of their native language.

BAXTER & BASTOS (p.47-79) have ‘A closer look at the post-nominal genitive in Asian Creole Portuguese’, considering aspects of its development and spread across the Creoles of southern India and Southeast/East Asia. Indeed, one striking revelation made in this paper is the fact that the post-nominal genitive developed from a Portuguese prenominal possessive that is present in eleven Luso-Asian Creoles: Korlai, Mangalore, Mahé, Cannanore, Cochin, Nagapattinam, Sri Lanka, Malacca, Batavia/Tugu, Bidau and Macau. This shared feature suggests that the post-nominal genitive originated in an early contact language under the influence of the local languages of South Asia. The authors account for such wide-ranging retention by drawing on Clements’ (2000) Malabar Coast Pidgin hypothesis and Dalgado’s (1917) idea of easterly and reciprocal transmission. This paper also surveys the functions of post-nominal genitives, with a special focus on Korlai Indo-Portuguese and Malacca Creole Portuguese.

‘Luso-Asian comparatives in comparison’, by CARDOSO (p.81-123), investigates the expression of comparatives in the Portuguese-based Creoles of Diu, Daman, Korlai, Bombay, Batticaloa, Cannanore, Cochin, Malacca, Batavia/Tugu and Macau. After a detailed typology of comparative constructions and a definition of important key terms, this paper describes comparative constructions in Classical Portuguese and in all the relevant substrate/adstrate languages (i.e., Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Sinhala, Malay and Cantonese). The goal is to assess whether and how the various contributing languages shaped the Creoles’ comparative constructions. Based on a meticulous examination of the data, the author argues that - despite the complex alignment between Creoles and their source languages - congruence constitutes an essential factor in the selection of comparative features: creoles tend to preserve features that are common to both the lexifier and the substrate/adstrate languages, and only innovate when the lexifier and the substrate/adstrate languages are incompatible.

Another paper with a focus on Portuguese-based creoles is by PINHARANDA NUNES (p. 289-326), who examines ‘Traces of superstrate verb inflection in Makista and other Asian-Portuguese Creoles’. This paper appears at the end of the volume, together with the papers by MATTHEWS & LI and GRANT on East Asian Creoles, due to the areal organization of the volume. Empirically, however, it can also cluster with the papers on Portuguese-based Creoles and will therefore be summarized here. NUNES examines the verbal
inflections that have developed in Macau Portuguese Creole since the turn of the 20th century as a result of the increased exposure to Portuguese and to situations of increasing bilingualism. The case of Macau Portuguese Creole is compared with that of Indo-Portuguese and it is convincingly argued that Macau Portuguese Creole developed verbal inflection as a result of recent decreolization, whereas in Indo-Portuguese Creoles verbal inflection developed in the early stages of Creole formation (Clements 1996, Luís 2008).

The next group of papers draw both on evidence from both Portuguese- and Spanish-based Creoles. In ‘Measuring substrate influence: Word order features in Ibero-Asian Creoles’, SMITH (p. 125-148) investigates the extent of the influence of the contributing languages in shaping the grammar of Ibero-Asian Creoles. Crucially, all the creoles have maintained contact with their substrates, but not necessarily with their lexifier. Empirically, this paper draws its evidence from over twenty languages, including nine Ibero-Asian Creoles, ten substrate languages and two lexifier languages. Based on the word-order characteristics of all these languages, SMITH formulates the ‘tug of war’ perspective of the relation between Iberian lexifiers and Asian substrates, according to which the longer the presence of the lexifier, the greater its influence on the Creole and “the stronger the brake on substrate influence” (p.126). This view explains why the Creole of Macau is the Ibero-Asian Creole with the highest influence from its superstrate, while Sri Lanka Portuguese is the Creole with the lowest influence.

The paper by SIPPOLA (p. 149-179) examines ‘Indefinite terms in Ibero-Asian Creoles’ in two Spanish-based and five Portuguese-based Creoles, comparing them with their respective substrates and lexifiers. Like the paper by SMITH, this study offers wide empirical coverage. The aim is to understand the contribution of substrates and superstrates in the development and properties of this specific linguistic phenomenon. Particularly noteworthy is the observation that the wide variety of forms and uses in Ibero-Asian Creoles reflects the variety of these structures in the substrate languages. It is also shown that Ibero-Asian Creoles show very similar negative indefinite pronouns and realis indefinites, which clearly show that one cannot overlook the direct influence of the Iberian lexifiers. Given that indefinites in spoken creoles are closer to the substrate than in the written language, SIPPOLA also highlights the dangers of comparing different registers of creoles.

The paper ‘Maskin, maski, masque in the Spanish and Portuguese Creoles of Asia’, by VEIGA&FERNÁNDEZ (p. 181-203) examines the origin of the concessive particle maskin in the Mindanao Creole-Spanish. The paper argues strongly against the widely-held views that this particle originated from
the contact between Spanish and a Portuguese-Malay pidgin (Whinnom 1956) or from a Portuguese-based lingua franca that circulated in Asia (Lispki 1988). Instead, Spanish *masque* had a concessive meaning at the time of the settlements in Asia entirely and therefore the different uses of *maskin* in Chabacano result from the contact between the indigenous languages of the Philippines and Spanish. It is further claimed that the concessive meaning of Spanish *mas que* and its presence in Hispanic varieties “demonstrates beyond any doubt the Spanish provenance of the particle” (p.191). However, despite the evidence from Spanish, one cannot help wondering why the semantic identity between Portuguese and Spanish must necessarily lead the authors to the conclusion that the “the hypothesis of a possible Portuguese influence origin becomes superfluous and any additional consideration of its parts irrelevant” (p.189).

In ‘*Nenang, nino, nem não, ni no: Similarities and differences*, FERNÁNDEZ (p.205-237) investigates the origin of the negation particle *nenang* in Portuguese-based Creoles and of *nino* in Spanish-based Creoles of Asia. Whereas the source of *nino* from Spanish *ni no* seems uncontroversial, the author takes issue with previous claims about the origins of *nenang* arguing against the view that it derived from *ainda não* (Baxter 1988). Instead, *nenang* is assumed to have derived from the Portuguese structure *nem não* which is both phonologically similar to *nem não* and quite widespread in non-European varieties of Portuguese (i.e., Brazil and Mozambique). The phonological similarity between *nenang* and *nem não* pointed out in this paper is quite convincing. Less convincing however is the claim that a sentence such as *João nem não foi à festa* or structures like *nem não sequer* or *nem sequer não* can be “found in the language [Portuguese] (albeit infrequently)” (p. 210). FERNÁNDEZ does indeed find two documented occurrences of *nem não* in two very distinct regions of Portugal which he uses as evidence in favour of the view that *nem não* may have been a widespread feature of Portuguese. However the claim that there ever existed a systematic usage of *nem não* in older stages of Portuguese would need more robust empirical support from historical evidence.

A final group of papers examines Ibero-Asian Creoles within the context of other Asian and Pacific languages. RUBINO (p. 239-261) focuses on the substratal origin of *bilug* in Zamboangueño Chavacano, a numeral classifier that was borrowed from Hiligaynon, an Austronesian language. Numeral classifiers are a rare property of creoles and are only present in creoles with a Visayan substrate. An exhaustive comparison is offered between the uses and meanings of *bilug* in Hiligaynon and Zamboangueño
showing that it developed a more genericized use. In addition, a new numeral classifier of Spanish origin, namely pedaso, has developed with a more restricted use.

MATTHEWS and Li (p. 263-287) examine the influence of Pidgin Portuguese on the development of Chinese Pidgin English drawing on both lexical and grammatical evidence. It is shown that there are lexical items which either survived relexification (e.g., comprador) or underwent replacement by English (e.g., contalaccount). It is also shown that some function words in Chinese Pidgin English (such as the copula have and the complementizer for) have grammatical uses which cannot be attributed to the Cantonese substrate, but appear to reflect the syntax of pidgin Portuguese (in particular, ter and para). Quite remarkable is the fact pointed out by MATTHEWS and Li that these function words retained Portuguese usage but acquired English phonological forms as result of the English settlement. Thus, without implying a monogenetic view, this paper adds grammatical evidence to the already existing lexical evidence of the Portuguese influence, addressing a much neglected topic.

The last paper of the volume, by GRANT (p. 327-364), focuses on creoles that derived a significant portion of their vocabulary and grammar from sources other than their chief lexifier. One such creole is Mindanao Chabacano, which owes its vocabulary to both Spanish and the Philippine languages. Grant refers to such creoles as ‘mixed creoles’ and argues that other creoles meet this property, including Saramaccan, Angolar, Korlai Portuguese and Berbice Dutch. The goal of the paper is to determine linguistic parallels between these mixed creoles by examining their vocabulary and structural features. Building on the distinction, formulated by GRANT between ‘transfer of fabric’ (i.e., morphs with phonological shapes) and ‘transfer of patterns’ (i.e., phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic patterns or other), evidence is provided which shows that different languages contribute with different kinds of linguistic structures. The evidence examined in this paper is drawn from an impressive range of contact-languages which are not exclusively Ibero-Asian, but include African Creoles and Creoles with non-Romance lexifier.

The volume ends with three indices. A language index (p. 365-368), containing a total of 185 entries which illustrate the wide empirical scope of this volume. There is also a location index (p. 369-370) and a general index (p. 371-375).

Overall, this is a very carefully organized volume. It starts with a unifying introduction that helps bring together the main research lines
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discussed in the papers. It offers numerous tables throughout its papers which offer extremely helpful overviews of lexical inventories and cross-linguistic comparisons of the various structural phenomena examined in the papers. It also contains socio-historical overviews of the origins and development of the various creoles at the outset of each paper which are crucial to understand the relationship between linguistic properties and the socio-historical setting of the creole. It is also worth noting that many papers grew out of collaborative work between the contributors of this volume who carefully checked their wide-ranging cross-linguistic comparisons with the experts on the various Ibero-Asian Creoles.

In sum, this book makes an important contribution to the field of creole studies and typology. I strongly recommend the fine-grained discussions of the data and the invaluable overviews of the sociolinguistic circumstances within which these creoles developed. I can only hope that the papers contained in this volume will encourage deeper development and further research into the grammar of Ibero-Asian Creoles and the contact between the people and the languages that shaped these languages.

References


Whinnom, Keith 1956. *Spanish Contact Vernaculars in the Philippine Islands.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.