

Isabelle Buchstaller, Anders Holmberg & Mohammad Almoaily (eds). (2014) *Pidgins and creoles beyond Africa-Europe encounters* [Creole Language Library 47,]. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 178 pp., USD 143.00, EUR 95.00.

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If we assume that our theoretical understanding of pidgins and creoles is almost entirely founded on varieties lexified by European languages, it becomes obvious that there is an imperative need to include non-European language-based contact varieties into the longstanding debates about the genesis and the typological classification of pidgin and creole languages. In this respect, the book under review is particularly welcome since it represents a groundbreaking effort ‘to give a platform to research on the history, genesis and typology of a number of Non-European language-based contact varieties’ (Introduction p. 3).

The book consists of a collection of six papers born from the ‘Workshop on Non-European Pidgin and Creole Languages’ which took place at the University of Newcastle, UK in June 2010. The first two papers are devoted to the reconstruction of early written attestations of non-European language-based contact varieties. In point of fact, most non-European based pidgins are nowadays extinct, and their linguistic evidence lies upon scanty documentary data that are likely to have been prejudiced by the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their Western annotators. In ‘Ethnohistory of speaking. Maritime Polynesian Pidgin in a trilogy of historical-sociolinguistic attestations’ (pp. 7–40), Emanuel J. Drechsel discusses Maritime Polynesian Pidgin (hereafter MPP), a Polynesian-based variety originated from contacts between Society Islanders and European explorers. This pidgin continued to be used on board of European ships with Polynesian crews up to the late 19th century. In line with his recent work, the author adopts philology and ethnohistory as complementary means of textual investigation of three texts dating back to the late 18th century and early years of the 19th. Such multidisciplinary methodology is intended to elude the epistemological limitations of the conventional colonial history and, at the same time, to enlighten specific aspects of the socio-historical context in which the data were produced. In linguistic terms, these early attestations reveal that MPP is somewhat similar to Pidgin Hawaiian and Pidgin Māori. In more detail, MPP phonology and vocabulary are unmistakably Eastern Polynesian, albeit MPP has very little morphological inflection when

compared to Polynesian languages. On the basis of these observations, Drechsel argues not only that an indigenous Polynesian pidgin protracted over a long period in the eastern Pacific, but also that this 'broken Polynesian' provided an important contribution to development of the South Seas jargon, which is often thought to be a predominately English-based pidgin.

In the second paper, 'The "language of Tobi" as presented in Horace Holden's Narrative. Evidence for restructuring and lexical mixture in a Nuclear Micronesian-based pidgin' (pp. 41–55), Anthony P. Grant examines a documentary account of an apparently Micronesian-based pidgin written by Horace Holden, an American sailor who was captivated in the Caroline island of Tobi in 1832. After a historical introduction to Holden's attestation, Grant investigates the salient features of the 'language of the Tobi' trying to adduce morphosyntactic and lexical evidence for a possible pidginization of Tobian, a western Chuukic language. According to Grant, Holden's data offer evidence of a contact variety characterized by a largely Micronesian lexicon with some admixture from Malay, Palauan and Spanish. Besides, the few complete sentences reported by Holden display some instances of morphological reanalysis of complex predicates in the source language. In spite of this, there remains some legitimate doubt as to whether the documentary data are representative of a truly established contact variety or just of a contextually restricted language practice.

The third paper is 'Language variation in Gulf Pidgin Arabic' (pp. 57–83) by Mohammad Almoaily. The cover-label 'Gulf Pidgin Arabic' (hereafter GPA) refers to various Arabic-based contact varieties emerged within the context of foreign labour migration to the Gulf countries. Used as means of communication between Asian migrants and native Arabic-speakers, GPA is generally seen as an incipient pidgin affected by a high degree of individual variation. Almoaily's study thus aims at investigating the sociolinguistic factors inducing variation in six morphosyntactic traits of the GPA variety spoken in the Saudi Najdi Province. The analysis is founded on a series of hypotheses intended to enlighten both the possible role played by speakers' L1 (i.e. Bengali, Punjabi, Malayalam) in the development of GPA and the potential shift towards the superstrate language. Surprisingly, most of the hypotheses are rejected. Almoaily thus claims that there is no significant correlation between speakers' L1 and the choice of the available morphosyntactic variants in GPA. Furthermore, he points out that long-term Asian residents in Saudi Arabia tend to shift towards Arabic only in the case of conjunctions and bound personal pronouns. Accordingly, he ultimately suggests that GPA is in the process of stabilizing its morphosyntactic norms. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Bizri (2014) recently argued for the same tendency towards stabilization in GPA. This also supports the idea that this Arabic-based pidgin is becoming the main target variety for Asian newcomers in the Gulf countries.

In the paper 'How non-Indo-European is Fanakalo pidgin? Selected understudied structures in a Bantu-lexified pidgin with Germanic substrates' (pp. 84–100), Rajend Mesthrie investigates Fanakalo, a southern African pidgin that arose during the first half of the nineteenth century in the colony of Natal and that was subsequently adopted as means of communication in large-scale labour situations all across the southern African mining regions. Of particular interest is the fact that Fanakalo developed in an unusual contact setting with Zulu and other Nguni varieties as superstrate languages, and Germanic languages (i.e. English and Afrikaans) as substrates. By comparing some Fanakalo morphosyntactic features with those of Atlantic creoles, Mesthrie intends to demonstrate that the inversion of the canonical substrate-superstrate relations results in a typological reversal too. Fanakalo indeed possesses a series of typologically relevant features ascribable to its Nguni superstrate, as in the case with its complex verbal morphology. Furthermore, there are a number of innovative developments reflecting common grammaticalization processes, such as the use of the demonstrative *lo* for marking definitiveness. English substrate influence, on its part, seems to be limited to the syntax of Zulu-derived tense and aspect markers. All in all, Fanakalo brings together the morphological complexity of an agglutinating non-European language with the innovative building of a pidgin grammar. This makes Fanakalo a particularly interesting language for those who are involved in the quest for the definition of pidgins and creoles as typologically distinct languages.

Kofi Yakpo and Pieter Muysken's paper 'Language change in a multiple contact setting. The case of Sarnami (Suriname)' (pp. 101–140) constitutes a detailed case study of multiple language contact in one of the most linguistically heterogeneous regions of South America. The study focuses on Sarnami, a language spoken by the Indian-descendent population of Suriname that resulted from the koineization of several languages of northern India. After a theoretical introduction, the authors draw a thorough outline to the sociolinguistic situation of Suriname to then analyze different outputs of language contact in Sarnami. In the first instance, they show the effects of koineization between different Indic languages by revealing the multiple morphological sources of the Sarnami verbal and pronominal paradigms. Afterwards, the study analyses the effects of codeswitching towards Sranan Tongo and Dutch and shows how bi- or multilingual utterances become a default form speech form in Sarnami. Finally, Yakpo and Muysken investigate structural borrowing in terms of contact-induced word order change. The study has important theoretical implications as it is argued that the influence of Sranan Tongo and Dutch leads to similar outcomes as 'creolization' and therefore that the traditional labels applied to European-based contact are not adequate to depict the case of Sarnami.

In the last contribution, ‘*Pidgin verbs. Infinitives or imperatives?*’ (pp. 141–169), Kees Versteegh deals with the question of which verbal form acts as the model for verb formation in pidgins lexicalized by languages that lack infinitives. Starting from the assumption that verbs in European-based pidgins usually derive from an infinitive, Versteegh adduces data from Arabic-based pidgins and creoles in which verbs are instead derived from imperatives. By comparing the role of the lexifier language on verb acquisition in both pidginization and in the early stages child speech, the author further suggests that non-native speakers are in the same situation as children in the sense that both are exposed to orders from their interlocutors. Given that in a number of languages, such as Arabic, orders are expressed by means of an imperative form, while in other languages, for instance in Dutch, infinitives may be used to give orders, Versteegh concludes that imperatives and infinitives act as main source of verb formation mainly by virtue of their directive function (see also Versteegh 2014).

In conclusion, the book achieves coherence in revealing the importance of the history and of the typological features of non-European language-based contact varieties. The editors should be commended for how the book successfully conveys different approaches (i.e. ethnohistory, variationist sociolinguistics, comparative and historical linguistics) to contact varieties lexified by several Non-European languages. The collection takes stock of present work on these so far disregarded contact varieties, but it also opens up new perspectives for comparative creolistics. One minor criticism is that the book could have included a more theoretically oriented introductory chapter for discussing problems and challenges of comparison between European and non-European language-based pidgins and creoles. Nonetheless, the volume remains successful in terms of its scopes, and it will surely enrich the debate concerning the definition of pidgin and creole languages as a whole.

## References

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