Book Reviews


This book was first published as the major part of a thematic issue of the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole languages* (2010: 1), and is here presented as it was published, with its original preface but now with an index of subjects and names. It comprises five papers and a brief editorial introduction. (Other material, including an obituary, guest columns, and reviews from the original issue are of course omitted.)

The first chapter, dealing with Chinese Pidgin Russian as long used in the town of Kyakhta or Maymachin, which grew up in a largely Tungusic and Mongolic linguistic environment in which Classical Mongolian had been the medium of written communication between Russian and Chinese authorities, is the longest, at 58 pages, which amounts to more than a third of the pages devoted to the papers, and is by Roman Shapiro (1-58). This very rich chapter combines information from extremely inaccessible nineteenth-century sources with more recent data (some, such as the material collected by E. A. Oglezneva, gathered in the 21st century) which has been gleaned from fieldwork by Russian investigators. The chapter is plentifully provided with illustrations and with lexical and sentential data and provides an account of the pidgin’s phonology, morphology and semantics. Twelve pages cover 203 glossed and analysed sentences in the pidgin, and there is a typological comparison of several features of the pidgin and of Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Mongolic and Tungusic languages.

In the next chapter (59-90) Umberto Ansaldo, Stephen Matthews and Geoff Smith discuss ‘Chinese Pidgin English: Texts and Contexts’. This chapter neatly parallels Shapiro’s chapter. The authors cover the known external history and features of the linguistic structure of Chinese Pidgin English (or CPE), and present materials (often furnished with photographic reproductions) from four centuries of CPE documentation. Emphasis is duly given to Chinese-medium resources, especially to *Hûng mùnh tông yuhng faan wă*, published in the 1830s and referred to by the authors as the *Redhaided Glossary*, and to Tong King-Sing’s *Chinese and English Instructor* of around 1862, a six-volume work which is full of illustrations of CP, though they also draw heavily upon the corpus of CPE collected over the past decades by Philip Baker. At every point the authors discuss the ways in which CPE has been thoroughly shaped by structural features of Cantonese, the dominant Chinese language in the area. They also mention Bolton (2003) that some of the entries in the *Redhaided Glossary* can be well explained by reference to forms from Swedish.

In his demographically-oriented paper “The African slave population of Portuguese India: demographics and impact of Indo-Portuguese” (91-114) Hugo C. Cardoso discusses the history of the African slave populations in the various parts of Portuguese India. These Africans mostly originated in what is now Mozambique, and therefore were speakers of Bantu languages, though there were others in India (the so-called *Habshi*) from (for instance) what is now Ethiopia.

Cardoso discusses their part in the development of Lusoasian Creoles, especially those of India and Sri Lanka (where, I am reliably informed, speakers of a particular ethnolect of Sri Lanka Creole Portuguese could still be found recently). The impact of Africans on local dances in western India and on the song lyrics of Lusoasian groups in India seems clear, the influence of African languages on Indo-Portuguese is less definite, as the numerous Africans, who were principally slaves and who were imported into India until the early 19th century, were scattered throughout a very large area in communities in small numbers. Cardoso lists a handful of words of Bantu origin borrowed into Asian Portuguese on p. 95. (Note, though, that the form cited on p. 97 as Swahili muzunzu ‘white man’ should actually be mzungu). He also discusses the position of the Siddhis, Muslim Africans present in India before the Portuguese incursions in the early sixteenth century, who wound up in Gujarat and who have long constituted a recognised part of the population there. The possibility that some inhabitants of Goa acquired Portuguese from Mozambican slaves is discussed and rejected; ships’ crews rather than slaves are the likely source of any transmission of Portuguese from Africa to India which may have occurred.

Alan N. Baxter treats (115-149) the subject of the vestiges of overt gender-marking in Kristang (Malacca Creole Portuguese), which derives most of its lexicon from Portuguese but which has not continued in full the feminine/masculine gender distinction which is found in Portuguese; all Portuguese nouns must be masculine or feminine, regardless of the real-world gender (if any) of their referents. The nouns here relate to feminine versus masculine types of people, such as brigadéra ‘female fighter’ as against brigador ‘male fighter’. Baxter has conducted sociolinguistic studies of the use of such forms, and discusses the role of second language acquisition and of the incorporation of what we may call gender-marked forms in instances of Noun + Adjective topicalisation. He speculates – rightly, on the basis of evidence from other lusophone creole areas (see Clements 1996 for a similar case in India) – that Kristang may once have exhibited a wider lectal range than it does now, and that some lects would have possessed overt gender-marking on certain sets of animate nouns, of which echoes remain in modern Kristang.

Finally in ‘Bazaar Malay topics’, Bao Zhiming and Khin Khin Aye (151-167) discuss issues in processes of topicalisation in the Bazaar Malay still found in Malaysia among Malaysians of predominantly Chinese extraction. Malay and Chinese are topic-prominent languages, and this feature has passed thence to Bazaar Malay and also to Singaporean English (Singlish). The paper shows that topicalisation involving resumptive pronouns, those using disjunction and those ‘bare’ conditionals (without a form such as Bazaar Malay kalau ‘if’ introducing the protasis) are all available in Bazaar Malay and that the two latter kinds follow the structural models provided by Chinese, a substratum language for these forms of Bazaar Malay; to paraphrase Grant (2003), they transfer Chinese patterns but not the fabric provided by Chinese conditionals.

The collection is wide-ranging and full of intellectual delights, though a paper on Tay Boi of Vietnam and something on one or another variety of Chabacano (Philippine Creole Spanish) would have enhanced the original set, and the quality of proof-reading is very good. Shapiro’s illustrations from the sparse older published sources on Chinese Pidgin Russian, some of them occupying a whole page, are especially striking, as are those in Ansaldo, Matthews and Smith’s chapter. By turns descriptive, philological and demographic in approach, this book brings to light a great deal of work which is either confined to almost inaccessible sources which were however once in the public gaze, or which has never before been published. As the editors claim,