

# On Classifying Language-Contact Varieties<sup>1</sup>

J. Clancy Clements  
Indiana University

## 1. Introduction

A question of perennial debate in pidgin and creole (P&C) linguistics is whether creoles lexified by European languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, German, English, etc.) belong to their respective Romance/Germanic language family or possess their own status as a separate language family. A related question is whether such creoles are dialects of or languages separate from their respective lexifier languages. In this contribution, I will present data from a variety of Chinese Immigrant Spanish in order to argue, along with Posner (1993), that the European-language creoles belong to the respective *family*, but deviate from the linguistic *type*, of their respective lexifier languages. Moreover, following Mufwene (1999) and Croft (2000), I will argue that the linguistic criteria for determining what varieties of a given language family are dialects or languages are vague. I will advance arguments supporting Croft's (2000) position that it makes most sense to base the definition of what is a dialect or a separate language on the *perception* its speakers have of their own language variety.

## 2. Theoretical Preliminaries

Posner (1993) points out that although the historical linguist Antoine Meillet viewed creole languages as constituting a separate family in the genealogical classification of the world's languages, he also admitted that there must have been a moment in the history of the development of the French language in which its speakers became conscious of the fact that they no longer spoke Latin. After centuries of speaking what their parents and grandparents had spoken, not perceiving a break in the development of the language, its speakers increasingly realized that the language they spoke was different. This scenario, albeit somewhat simplified and abstract, does make the point that the emergence of French took place more in the realm of psychology than in that of linguistics. Thus, it is reasonable to ask the speakers of creoles whether their respective varieties constitute a separate language, indeed a separate language family, or are continuations of their respective lexifier languages.

It is noted by Posner that if the criterion of continuity is used to differentiate a creole from a dialect (a dialect exhibits continuity, a creole lacks it), then some of the Portuguese creoles in Asia might be considered dialects of Portuguese given that their speakers are culturally, as well as linguistically, loyal to Portugal. A case in point, not specifically mentioned by Posner, is the Christian community in Daman, a town on the west coast of India, about 200 kms. north of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). This community is Catholic, some of its inhabitants speak Continental Portuguese, all of its inhabitants speak one or more varieties of Daman Portuguese Creole, Continental Portuguese is still taught (as a foreign language) in the parochial schools, and some inhabitants are Portuguese citizens and still have connections in Portugal.<sup>2</sup>

The distinction Posner (1993:258) makes between language family and language type is based on a lexico-phonetic criterion: 'a large proportion of the base vocabulary, with a phonological form derivable according to precise rules, is identical among the members of an intimate family (such as the

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is dedicated to the memory of Professor Eugenio Coseriu (1921-2002), who I had the privilege of studying under and working for during my six years at the Universität Tübingen, Germany. Thanks to the participants of the conference for their valuable feedback and to Professor Lotfi Sayahi for organizing the conference. All errors and infelicities are mine, of course.

<sup>2</sup> More detailed information regarding Daman, Daman Portuguese Creole, and Portuguese in Daman can be found in Clements and Koontz-Garboden (2002).

Romance family)' (my translation). Posner adopts the notion of a Romance language type from Coseriu (1988), which, he argues, is best represented by Italian and to which French no longer belongs. Nevertheless, Posner notes that French still retains the six traits given in (1), which are typical of every Romance language. In the discussion of Chinese Immigrant Spanish to follow, this list of traits will become useful.

- (1)
- a. verbs are morphologically distinguished from nouns;
  - b. finite verb forms are clearly distinguished from non-finite verb forms, morphologically as well as functionally;
  - c. there are two grammatical genders;
  - d. in the verbal system, there are still inflections, if only to distinguish the past (the imperfect) from the present;
  - e. there is a series of determiners, most notably the definite article;
  - f. clitic pronouns are distinguished from disjunctive pronouns.

Regarding the status of creole varieties as dialects of or separate languages from their respective lexifier languages, Mufwene (1999:176) notes that: '[w]e have no reason for insisting that creoles are separate languages, especially since we have no yardstick for measuring when two language varieties are two separate languages and not dialects of one another.' He also observes that the linguistic status of creoles has very often been determined, not by the speakers of the creoles themselves, but by outsiders, in many cases native speakers of colonial, lexifier languages.<sup>3</sup>

Croft (2000) and Mufwene (2001) offer a way to resolve, among other things, the question of the status of creole languages. They propose looking at a language as a biological species. For example, Croft notes that there are two ways of viewing a biological species: the essentialist view and the population-theoretical view. 'In the ESSENTIALIST view of a species, each species has immutable essential structure properties that identify it. . . . That is, the essentialist view is that a species instantiates an abstract type (2000:13).' One major problem with this view, he states, is that there are reproductively isolated populations (known as sibling species) that cannot be distinguished structurally according to the essentialist definition, as well as populations (known as polytypic species) that are structurally very different from one another as per the essentialist definition, yet reproduce among themselves. In the population theory of species, '[a] species consists of a population of interbreeding individuals who are REPRODUCTIVELY ISOLATED from other populations' (2000:13). On this view, there is no abstract species type, but rather an essential *property* that the individuals of a given population share, namely, that they are reproductively isolated.

Assuming a population-theoretical definition of languages, language varieties can be seen as belonging to the same species if the communities who speak the varieties form a population of intercommunicating individuals who are communicatively isolated from other populations. In contrast, two language varieties would be considered two distinct species if one of them were communicatively isolated from the other. As an example of the latter, Croft cites the example of Hindi and Urdu: although these two varieties are phylogenetically related to the point that many consider them dialects of the same language, they are perceived by their speakers –at least one major group of speakers– to be distinct. In population theoretical terms, this is true: for all intents and purposes, the Hindi-speaking population is communicatively isolated from the Urdu-speaking population. The case of Hindi and Urdu is one of two sibling languages, analogous to two sibling species. As an instance of a polytypic language, Crofts cites Chinese, whose dialects, though often mutually unintelligible, share the same writing system and political unity, factors which suggest identification as a single language.

<sup>3</sup> This seems to be another instantiation of an orientalist attitude, explored in Said (1978). Said points out that the vision of the East (e.g. the Mideast, India, etc.) constructed by western scholars is not one which people from the East were allowed to participate in. That is, western scholars of colonial or former colonial powers have determined and continue to determine the manner in which aspects of non-European culture are to be interpreted. This orientalist attitude is also visible, I submit, in who defines and interprets creole language and culture.

Of note in the foregoing is the *perception* of unity (Chinese) or distinctness (Hindi-Urdu) by the speakers of the languages, similar to the perception of distinctness on the part of Meillet's French speakers, who realized they no longer spoke Latin. Following the population-theoretical definition of a species, Croft (citing Chambers and Trudgill 1980) suggests a social definition of a language. The population-theoretical definition of a language would imply that 'every speaker perceived every other speaker as someone he or she should be able to communicate with by using what they perceive as the same language' (2000:18). An important part of this definition is the interaction between the community of speakers. Croft notes that '[c]ommunicative interaction depends not only on the degree of structural similarity of the varieties spoken, but also on the social behavior of the speakers. Serbian and Croatian are mutually intelligible to a high degree, but many speakers do not communicate with the opposite community due to the recent political changes in former Yugoslavia' (2000:19). The analog of reproductive isolation would, in the case of language, be COMMUNICATIVE ISOLATION, and interbreeding among a biological population would equate to CONVERSATIONAL INTERCOURSE in a speech community.

Having discussed some of the notions relevant for the analysis below, let us turn to the characterization of Chinese Immigrant Spanish, as spoken by one of its speakers.

### 3. Jenny's variety of Spanish<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1. *The Chinese community in Spain*

The Chinese ethnic community in Spain is heterogeneous, breaking down along dialectal and extended familial lines. What they share, as Beltrán and García (2000) point out, is being Chinese in a foreign country.

Spain has a history with the Chinese that spreads over several centuries. The Spanish encountered Chinese in their colonization of the Philippines in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Spain had Chinese working in the mines and plantations of their territories in Peru and Cuba. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese peddlers sold small items on the streets of Spain's major cities in the 1920s-1930s. Madrid had resident Chinese circuses in the 1950s, and in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a substantial increase of the Chinese presence in Spain's service industry. As the Chinese restaurant industry has grown, services dependent on this industry have emerged: import companies, shops, travel agencies, Chinese vegetable farming, transport companies, skilled and unskilled construction labor for restaurant renovation, etc. As their work involves predominately restaurants and restaurant-dependent services, the largest concentrations of Chinese are in urban areas, with Madrid and Barcelona having the two largest communities, respectively. Ninety eight percent of this community works in the service industry. As of 2000, there were unofficially around 60,000 Chinese in Spain, though the official number is 10,816. The families settled in Spain are interrelated to one another through multiple connections of kinship, economics, and place of origin.

Beltrán and García (2000) note that Chinese immigrant communities, particularly those from the People's Republic, come from a society in which the superiority of their own values is accepted. This, along with other factors, has a significant impact on the degree of their assimilation into the host culture. The Chinese in Spain emigrate because they seek an economically and socially more prestigious life. Were they able to attain these goals in their own country, they would not emigrate to Spain or other countries. As the Chinese language is the pillar of education, and education is highly prized in Chinese culture, the learning and maintenance of Chinese within the immigrant communities is extremely important. Given that they set up their communities to isolate and to protect themselves from the culture in which they live, the Chinese in Spain tend not to learn Spanish. The figures in Table 1, from 1991, reflect this tendency. Note that of 264 immigrants, only 27% could read and write Spanish. Indeed, Beltrán and García (2000:291) observe that '[w]herever the Chinese immigrate, they build their own communities in isolation from mainstream society, with their own culture, values, and language.' One result of this is that they do not take advantage of the assistance the government offers immigrants, preferring to be self-sufficient and unattached to the host country. Integration, then, is neither a need nor a desire.

<sup>4</sup> The information on the Spanish variety Jenny speaks is taken from Clements (to appear).

CAN READ AND WRITE	Raw Nos.	Percentages
Own mother tongue	172	65%
Spanish	7	3%
Own mother tongue and Spanish	47	18%
Other languages	5	2%
Own mother tongue and other languages	15	5%
Spanish and other languages	2	1%
Own mother tongue, Spanish, and other languages	16	5%
TOTAL	264	100%

Table 1. Reading and writing capacities of Chinese immigrants who applied for legalization of their residence situation, 1991.

One of many strategies the Chinese use to preserve their culture is to have their children study in China and then return as adolescents. As a consequence, these children learn little Spanish because they do not study in the Spanish primary or secondary education system.

### 3.2. *The informant*

Of the Chinese immigrants currently residing legally in Spain, 86% have arrived since 1986. The informant of this study, Jenny, arrived in Madrid, Spain in 1985, in her late twenties. Jenny was born in Nanking, and lived in Shanghai before emigrating to Spain. She knew she wanted to emigrate, and thus learned Chinese massage and acupuncture before leaving her homeland. Upon arriving in Madrid, she knew no Spanish, and had studied no more than one year of any other foreign language (she took a year of Russian and English in secondary school). During her first nine years in the Spanish capital, she worked in the Chinese restaurant industry, and for part of that time she owned her own restaurant. In the restaurant business, she worked long hours (7 days a week with little vacation) and had limited contact with Spanish speakers. Learning Spanish was only a goal to the extent that it permitted her to become financially stable.

After her restaurant closed, she found work doing Chinese acupuncture and massage. Currently, she works with Spaniards as a professional masseuse and acupuncturist. At present, she maintains little contact with Chinese community in Madrid, preferring to spend her time with Spaniards instead, although she has a few close Chinese friends, as well as a sister in Madrid.

Due to her work and her goals after arriving in Spain, Jenny developed a variety of Spanish that by most criteria would be called fossilized interlanguage Spanish. And although she is conscious of the fact that her Spanish is non-standard, she perceives what she speaks to be Spanish and converses freely and relatively fluently in her variety. Jenny's restructured Spanish reveals a lack of Spanish noun and verb morphology, but she has developed what seems to be an aspectual marker. With no person, number, or tense morphology, and with only unbound elements used to mark aspectual distinctions, Jenny's linguistic system shares various features with both Chinese and some stable pidgins. It is important to note that Chinese resembles many creoles and pidgins in its grammatical structure (Muysken and Smith 1994:5). Jenny's Spanish is an individual solution to her communicative needs in Spain. Although she has drawn heavily from her L1 to structure her Spanish, it is also apparent that she must have received a type of learner-oriented input from her native Spanish interlocutors. As such, her Spanish represents a case of natural L2 acquisition with restricted input. The present study, based on data taken from a 90 minute recorded interview, focuses on some of the key features that characterize Jenny's variety of Spanish.

### 3.3. *Salient features of Jenny's variety of Spanish*

In Jenny's speech, we find reanalyzed chunks, shown in (2), as well as a total lack of plural marking, which is not attributable to syllable structure constraints that might be operating in Jenny's speech since she produces words such as *dos* [dos] 'two' with a word-final sibilant, although [dos] alternates with variants such as [dó-sə], creating a CV structure. Moreover, Jenny's speech exhibits no tense marking, illustrated by the excerpt in (4).

(2)

- a. *conóselo* (< Spanish *conoce lo (que)* ‘s/he {knows/is acquainted with} that which’) ‘be acquainted with’
- b. *sacabó* (< Spanish *se acabó* [lit. DETRANSITIVIZER finish-PRETERIT] ‘finished’) ‘finished (PAST)’
- (3) *trese año* (< Spanish *trece años* ‘thirteen years’) ‘thirteen years’
- (4) Porque yo **tengo** (1SG, PRES INDIC) una tío, **vive** (3SG, PRES INDIC) Hangkang, el **sale** (3SG, PRES INDIC) mi novesiento setenta y ... setenta y cuatro o no sé (1SG, PRES INDIC), fue la China. Fue la China, **vive** (3SG, PRES INDIC) de Hangkang, y luego **volvé** (INF) China año mil novesiento ochenta, ochenta **volvé** (INF) Sanghay, **mila** (3SG, PRES INDIC) familia, y conmigo **hablando** (GERUND), “tú **puede** (3SG, PRES INDIC) **salido** (PAST PART) fuera China”. Yo **dise** (3SG, PRES INDIC) “¿por qué?”
- ‘Because I have an uncle, he lived in Hongkong. He left China in 1974 or I don’t know, something like that. Out of China. He lived in Hongkong, and then returned to China in 1980 to see the family. He told me, “you can leave China.” I said, “why?”’

However, her speech does reveal a sensitivity to lexical aspectual distinctions. From the perspective of the semantics of the predicate, atelic predicates (stative and activity predicates) are most often mapped onto imperfective forms, and telic predicates (accomplishments and achievements) are often mapped onto perfective forms. Specifically, in the data base of 632 verb tokens, 81% (207/258) of stative predicates appear in the 3SG, PRES INDIC, an imperfective form; 73% (83/114) of the activities are either gerunds (39% [44/114]) or 3SG, PRES INDIC forms (34% [39/114]), both imperfective forms; 59% (59/99) of the accomplishments are either in infinitives (51% [50/99], an aspectually neutral form), 3SG, PRES (7% [7/99]), or PAST PART (2% [2/99]) forms; finally 46% (59/131) of the achievements are either in infinitives (19% [24/131], aspectually neutral), 3SG, PRES (9% [12/131]), PAST PART (17% [23/131]) forms.<sup>5</sup>

Viewed from the standpoint of the forms themselves, it is revealing that all gerund forms correspond exclusively to activity predicates (e.g. *hablando* ‘speaking’, *trabajando* ‘working’, *buscando* ‘looking for’, *mirando* ‘looking’, etc.). Moreover, all but two instances of PAST PART forms correspond to telic predicates (e.g. *casado* ‘married’, *marchado* ‘left’, *llegado* ‘arrived’, *salido* ‘left’, *cerrado* ‘closed’, *venido* ‘come’).<sup>6</sup> Although this sensitivity to lexical aspectual distinctions is influenced by Jenny’s native language (Mandarin Chinese), the mapping is also affected by more universal factors, predicted by the Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis and the the Distributional Bias Hypothesis (cf. Andersen 1993, Andersen and Shirai 1996, and Clements, to appear).

Jenny has a stable pronominal system, shown in (5), clearly not based on the Mandarin pronominal system, given in (6).

(5)

**Subject Pronouns**

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
yo	nosotros
tú	-----
él/ella	ellos

**Object Pronouns**

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
mío <sup>7</sup>	nosotros
tuyo	-----
él/ella	ellos

<sup>5</sup> The sum total of the stative predicates, activities, accomplishments, and achievements is 602 (258+114+99+131). The remaining 30 items are tokens that can be nouns or verbs (23 tokens, such as *trabajo* ‘work’, as well as ‘I work’) and aspectual verbs (7 tokens, such as *acabá* ‘finish’ and *sigue* ‘continue’).

<sup>6</sup> One of the two other tokens clearly marks anteriority, as the example illustrates.

(i) Yo **pensá** muchísima, antes nunca no **pensado**;  
I think a lot before never NEG thought-PAST PART

‘I think a lot now; before I never thought [about this].’

<sup>7</sup> Spanish possessives (singular and 3pl) have proclitic forms (*mi(s)* ‘my’, *tu(s)* ‘your’, *su(s)* ‘his, her, their’), as well as stressed, postplaced forms (*mío(s)*, *mía(s)* ‘my’, *tuyo(s)*, *tuya(s)* ‘your’, *suyo(s)*, *suya(s)* ‘his, her, their’) (cf. Picallo and Rigau 1999). Jenny interprets the former as possessives and has reanalyzed the latter as object pronouns.

(6) **Subject and Object Pronouns**

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
wǒ	wǒmen
nǐ	nǐmen
tā	tāmen

Jenny seems to have developed a perfective marker, consisting of a reanalysis of Spanish *ya* ‘already’, an example of which is shown in (7).

(7)

- a. **Ya** conmigo dise, “tú no pasa Australia.”  
 already with-me say 2SG NEG go Australia  
 ‘She told me, “you’re not going to Australia”.’
- b. Papá **ya** búscalo ella para casar  
 Dad already seek-out she in-order-to marry  
 ‘Dad sought her out to marry her.’

In (7a), we also see an example of how Jenny marks grammatical relations. Although she does not mark subjects or direct objects with any overt particle, she sometimes uses *conmigo* ‘with me’ to mark 1SG indirect object (see [4], [7], and [11]). More generally, however, she employs *para* ‘for’ to mark indirect objects, as in (8).

(8)

- a. Un gente presenta una presona **para mi**.  
 a people introduce a person for me  
 ‘Someone introduced a person to me.’
- b. Yo siempre sale levista, pasa allí, coge . . .  
 I always comes-out magazine go there picks  
 milando, luego baho, volvé **para ella**.  
 looking-at then I-go-down return for her  
 ‘I always, when the magazines hit the stand, go there, pick them up . . . look at them, then take them down and return them to her.’

As in Mandarin, Jenny’s Spanish motion verbs are not accompanied by a preposition (e.g. *llegá Madrid* ‘arrived in Madrid’ in [9]). However, locative verbs also appear without a preposition, as illustrated by the other examples in bold in (9) and (10). The lack of prepositions with locative predicates is not a feature of Mandarin (cf. Li and Thompson 1981).

- (9) yo **llegá** Ø **Madrid**, . . . **vive** Ø **Madrid** casi cuanto año?  
 I arrive Madrid live Madrid almost how-many year  
 ‘I arrived in Madrid, I lived in Madrid almost how many years?’
- (10) **Pero** Ø **España**, español nada nada, no sabe.  
 but Spain Spanish nothing nothing NEG know  
 ‘But in Spain, I knew nothing, nothing of Spanish.’

Jenny’s speech displays fairly consistent SVO word order, but certain adjuncts appear preverbally, as they also do in Mandarin (cf. [11]-[12]).

- (11) yo dise tío **conmigo hablando**, puede fuela China.  
 I say uncle with-me talking can leave China.  
 ‘I said, “uncle was telling me I could leave China”.’
- (12) Casa puede **junto vive**  
 house can together live  
 ‘[You] can live [with us] at home.’

Finally, Jenny deletes object pronouns when they are recoverable from the context. An example of this is (7b) above, in which the verb *casar* ‘marry’ appears without an object pronoun. This is common in Mandarin, but ill-formed according to Spanish grammar.

Summarizing, in the use of aspectual marking as well as in the mapping between form and function, Jenny’s speech is reminiscent of initial to intermediate stages of L2 interlanguage (Clements, to appear). It also displays notable influence from her native Mandarin and is relatively stable. More specifically, her variety of Spanish can be roughly characterized as in (13).

(13)

- a. the lexicon is entirely Spanish, although there are numerous cases of reanalysis of lexical items;
- b. tense, person, number, and gender are not marked;
- c. a minimum of morphology is retained, found on verbs, not on nouns;
- d. grammatical aspect, if at all, is marked with bound, stressed morphemes (PERF *-do* for telic/perfective, GERUND *-ndo* for atelic/imperfective), or with what seems to be a reanalyzed particle (*ya* ‘already’ > PERF);
- e. certain non-standard word orders are common (e.g. Adjunct-verb order), some of which are considered marginal to ungrammatical by native Spanish speakers;
- f. grammatical relation marking is achieved by reanalyzed particles (*conmigo* ‘with me’ > ‘to me’, *para ella* ‘for her’ > ‘to her’);
- g. object pronouns are deleted if recoverable from context.

Thus, from a structural standpoint, Jenny’s variety of Spanish is substantially different from modern colloquial Spanish as spoken in Madrid, in many respects as distinct from Spanish as some Spanish- or Portuguese-based creoles are from their respective lexifier languages. In the next section, we consider what significance this has for the initial questions regarding language family and language type raised at the outset of the paper.

#### 4. Discussion and final remarks

When I presented my research on Jenny’s variety of Spanish at the conference, I played an audio recording of an excerpt of Jenny’s speech for the conference participants (see Appendix A), then asked them whether or not what they heard was Spanish. There was a strong consensus among these native and near-native Spanish speakers that what Jenny was speaking was Spanish. At the point they were asked, they knew that Jenny was an immigrant and that she was talking about her family. In classifying Jenny’s variety as Spanish, I believe the participants’ judgment was based on whether or not they understood what Jenny was narrating. That is, the fact that Jenny’s variety of Spanish was entirely restructured was a non-issue.

If we compare the salient traits of Jenny’s speech to those of a Spanish- or Portuguese-based creole, the similarities are striking. For present purposes, I will compare Jenny’s speech with two Indo-Portuguese creoles, those of Daman and Korlai, because the situation in which they emerged involved a two-language contact situation (Portuguese/Gujarati and Portuguese/Marathi, respectively), just as the contact situation in Jenny’s case involves two languages (Spanish/Mandarin Chinese). In (14), a comparison is given of the traits of the three Iberian varieties, based on those listed in (13).

(14)	<i>Jenny’s Spanish</i>	<i>Daman Creole Port. (DCP)</i>	<i>Korlai Creole Port (KCP)</i>
a. <b>LEXICON</b>	100% Spanish	100% Portuguese	88% Portuguese
b. <b>MARKING</b>	no TNS, PER, NUM, GEN	no PER, NUM, GEN	no PER, NUM, GEN <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Both DCP and KCP have a few morphological distinctions for natural gender, e.g. *sog* ‘father-in-law’ vs. *sog* ‘mother-in-law’, but there is no trace of grammatical gender marking, morphological or otherwise.

c.	<b>NOUN</b>			
	<b>MORPHOLOGY</b>	none	none	none
d.	<b>VERB</b>			
	<b>MORPHOLOGY</b>	IMPERF <i>-ndo</i> PERF <i>-do, ya</i>	IMPERF <i>-n</i> PERF <i>-do</i> PAST <i>-o, -w,</i> ( <i>ja</i> < ‘already’)	IMPERF <i>-n</i> PERF <i>-do</i> PAST <i>-o, -w,</i> ( <i>ja</i> < ‘already’)
e.	<b>GRAM. REL. MARKING</b>	IOs are marked with <i>para</i>	animate DOs and IOs are marked with <i>pə</i> (< <i>para</i> ‘for’)	animate DO and IO pronouns are marked <i>pV</i> (< <i>para</i> ‘for’) <sup>9</sup>
f.	<b>DISCOURSE-DEPENDENT OBJECT PRO. DELETION</b>	yes	yes	yes

Of the seven traits listed in (13), only one (13e) does not have a direct counterpart. Otherwise, the structures of the three varieties are very similar. The differences are the following: whereas the use of the verbal markers are strong tendencies in Jenny’s speech, they have not been generalized across the whole verbal system as is the case in DCP and KCP; *ya* in Jenny’s speech often seems to mark perfectivity, whereas in the creoles the analogous *ja* used to be a past tense marker (cf. Clements 1990). One identical trait in all varieties, (14f), is perhaps best accounted for by appealing to the grammars of Gujarati, Marathi, and Chinese: in all three languages, object pronouns are freely deletable if recoverable by context. What is striking about the similarities is that in all three cases exactly the same morphological features were dropped (14a, b) and the item selected from Spanish and Portuguese for object marking is the same one (i.e. *para* ‘for’).

Now, if we compare these traits to those exhibited by French (see [1] above), we find that the three varieties in question share some key features with French, listed in (15). Those not shared are given in (16).

(15)

- a. verbs are distinguished from nouns in that they take inflectional material, whereas nouns do not;
- b. there are clear distinctions between finite and non-finite verb forms in DCP and KCP, but not in Jenny’s speech;
- c. there are still inflections in all varieties either to distinguish verb classes and aspect (Jenny’s speech), or tense and aspect distinctions (DCP and KCP).

(16)

- a. there is no grammatical gender marking;
- b. there are no definite articles, though there are other determiners (possessive, deictic, etc.)
- c. there are no clitic pronouns.

In terms of typical Romance-type features, then, there seems to be a continuum. At one end of the continuum, we find what Coseriu (1988) considers to be the Romance prototype and similar languages (Italian, Spanish, Continental Portuguese, Catalan). Further along on the continuum, we have the less typical Romance languages (French, Popular Brazilian Portuguese), which have lost some of the prototypical traits in their nominal and verbal morphology, and then come the varieties such as Jenny’s speech, DCP, and KCP, which are yet further away from the Romance prototype. Thus, based on the notion of a Romance-type language, the so-called contact varieties, although on the other end of the continuum, still share some key features of the Romance languages.

<sup>9</sup> The *V* stands for ‘vowel’, which changes according to the pronoun (*pari* ‘me’, but *pə rə* ‘you-OBJ’, *pə nə* ‘us’, and *pel* ‘him, her’, *pelo* ‘them’). See Clements and Koontz-Garboden (2002) for details.

This observation, though possibly interesting, is not the most compelling. More important for the classification of creole languages such as DCP and KCP is the population-theoretical definition of what is a language. Croft (2000:19) states that '[c]ommunicative interaction depends not only on the degree of structural similarity of the varieties spoken, but also on the social behavior of the speakers.' We have seen that Jenny's speech is considered by herself and by those who heard it at the conference to be a variety of Spanish. If, for example, DCP has essentially the same structural features as Jenny's speech, and, as mentioned above, the community in their social behavior still considers themselves to form part of Portuguese culture, should DCP, then, not be classified as a type of 'lect' of Portuguese, as suggested by Posner (1993), and by extension part of the Romance family? Rodolfo Sebastião Dalgado, a priest and native of Goa, India, who wrote extensively on the Indo-Portuguese creoles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, considered them dialects of Portuguese (cf. Dalgado 1903, 1906).

The case of KCP as a Portuguese dialect is weaker because it only share 88% of its core lexicon with its lexifier language. Nevertheless, from a structural point of view, it shares with Portuguese as many features as Jenny's speech shares with Spanish. The key in this case may be that there has been relatively little contact between Portugal and Korlai for a century or more. The Portuguese officially pulled out of the Korlai area in 1740. Thereafter, the presence of the Portuguese has been maintained only by the presence of the Catholic, Portuguese-speaking priests, who starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were increasingly native Indians from Goa, such as Dalgado. Since 1963, the official language of the church in Korlai has been the regional vernacular, Marathi. The Korlai inhabitants do not actively maintain Portuguese culture, nor do they have contacts with Portugal. They consider their speech variety to be related to Portuguese, some Korlai villagers consider it to be poorly spoken Portuguese, some have identified what they consider to be Portuguese traits and consciously use them, but no KCP speakers considers their variety not related to Portuguese. Using Croft's social definition of a language and Posner's notions of a language family (lexico-semantically based) and type (based on grammatical structure), KCP would best be classified as a separate language, not a robust member of the Romance language type (along with French and Popular Brazilian Portuguese), but a member of the Romance language family nonetheless.

The foregoing discussion raises the following question: should creolists abandon the sticky task of isolating a creole prototype, as McWhorter (1998, 2002) has argued for? My tentative answer to this question would be that such a line of research is independently important, and would complement and, indeed, extend the observations that (1) Jenny's Spanish variety and the Indo-Portuguese creoles discussed here can be viewed as forming part of a Romance language structure continuum, (2) Jenny's Spanish variety and the Indo-Portuguese creoles in question are part of the Romance language family (following Posner's (1993) criteria for determining family membership), and (3) Jenny's speech and DCP constitute 'lects' of Spanish and Portuguese, respectively.

## Appendix A: Excerpt of Jenny's speech

sí, yo . . . mi tío conmigo dice, "tú mejó fue a China para puede gána dinero, puede tú ya trabajo rápido y así tú puede fuera China." Yo pregunta mi mamá-papá. Papá dice "tú no, una sola mujer, porque fuera muy lejo. Esta China, pobre, no pasa nada. Casa puede junto vive. Tu solo esta allí mucho problema. Quien ayuda tuyo?" Mamá poquito piensa. Cabeza más ave. Dise "tú joven, puede fuela para trabajo gána dinero." Papá comunista, por qué? Mi papá-mamá, familia diferente. Papá muy pequeño e(s)ta de ... para militá, y luego China de general también .. muy alto, alto. Y luego, mamá familia muy rico, muy rico rico. Esta Sanghay todo sabe de este familia. Y señorita .... e(s)ta ella. Papá ya búscó ella para casar, diferente familia, todo diferente. Papá nació de campo, mamá nació de ciudad, diferente. Y por ejemplo, y mamá dise, "tú sí, tú puede fuera." Papá no. Luego yo dise, "Papá yo quiere. Yo sabe cómo viví, cómo gána dinero, como. . . " y luego papá escúcha mio, y dise, "vale, tú quiere fuera, ya fuera." Y luego yo solisidá pasaporte. Antes, solisidá pasaporte, fuera China , muy difísil, yo casi solisidá cuatro año. empésá solisidá año ochenta y uno último, ochenta, casi ochenta y dos, y fuera China ochenta y sinco, día 2 de octubre. Uhh, coge pasaporte ochenta y cuatro año, mil novesiento ochenta cuatro, de junio o julio, ya coge pasaporte. Antes China muy difísil...

‘Yes, I . . . my uncle told me, “you’re better off leaving China in order to be able to earn money, you can (find) work fast.” So, you can leave China. I asked my parents. Dad said, “not you, a woman alone, because leaving means going far. In this China, if you’re poor, there’s no problem. You can live at home. If you’re alone there, there are many problems. Who would help you?” Mom thought a little. She’s got an astute (= *ave < hábil*) mind. She said, “you’re young, you can leave to work and make money.” Dad is a communist, why? My Mom and Dad come from very different families. Dad’s family was small in the military, and afterwards he was a Chinese general too, very, very high. And then, Mom’s family was very rich, very, very rich. In Shanghai everyone knew this family. And she was a proper young woman. Dad sought her out to marry her. The families were different, different in all respects. Dad was born in the country, Mom was born in the city, that was different. And for example, Mom said, “you yes, you can leave.” Dad didn’t. Then I said, “Dad I want to go. I know how to live, how to make money, how . . . “. Then Dad listened to me, and said, “ok, you want to leave, go ahead and leave.” And then I applied for a passport. It used to be that applying for a passport to leave China was very difficult. I applied for almost four years (i.e. it took four years to get the visa). I began the application process at the end of 1981, it was almost 1982, and I left China in 1985, October 2. Uhhh, I got the passport in 1984, in June or July, I got the passport. In China it used to be really difficult [to get a passport].’

## References

- Andersen, Roger W. 1993. Four operating principles and input distributions as explanation for underdeveloped and mature morphological systems. In K. Hyltenstam and A. Viborg (Eds.), *Progression and regression in language* (309-339). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Andersen, Roger W., & Yasuhiro Shirai. (1996). The primacy of aspect in first and second language acquisition: The pidgin-creole connection. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (527-570). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Beltrán, J., & García, C. 2000. The Chinese community. In M. T. Turell (Ed.), *Multilingualism in Spain* (282-300). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Chambers, J. K. and Peter Trudgill, 1980. *Dialectology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Clements, J. Clancy. To appear. The tense-aspect system in pidgins and naturalistically learned L2. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*.
- Clements, J. Clancy. 1990. Deletion as an Indicator of SVO ==> SOV Change. *Language Variation and Change* 2:103-133.
- Clements, J. Clancy, and Andrew J. Koontz-Garboden. 2002. Two Indo-Portuguese Creoles in Contrast. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 17(2):191-236.
- Croft, William. 2001. *Explaining language change: An evolutionary approach*. London: Longman.
- Dalgado, Sebastião Rodolfo. 1903. Dialecto indo-português de Damão. *Ta-ssi-yang-kuo* 3, 35-67, 4: 515-22. (Printed also in an offprint of 36 pages).
- Dalgado, Sebastião Rodolfo. 1906. Dialecto indo-português do Norte. *Revista Lusitana* 9, 142-66; 193-228.
- McWhorter, John. 2002. Restoring pidginization to creole genesis theory. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 17:1-48.
- McWhorter, John. 1998. Identifying a creole prototype: Vindicating a typological class. *Language* 74:788-818.
- Mufwene, Salikoko. 2001. *The ecology of language evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mufwene, Salikoko. 1999. Accountability in descriptions of creoles. In John R. Rickford and Suzanne Romaine (Eds.), *Creole genesis, attitudes and discourse* (157-185). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Picallo M. Carne and Gemma Rigau. 1999. El posesivo y las relaciones posesivas. In Ignacio Bosque and Violeta Demonte (Eds.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española* (Vol. 1, 973-1023). Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- Posner, Rebecca. 1993. La romanité des créoles à base lexical romane. In G. Hilty (Ed.), *Actes du XX<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Linguistique et Philologie Romanes* (251-263). Tübingen, Germany: Francke.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

# Selected Proceedings of the First Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics

edited by Lotfi Sayahi

Cascadilla Proceedings Project Somerville, MA 2003

## Copyright information

Selected Proceedings of the First Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics  
© 2003 Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville, MA. All rights reserved

ISBN 1-57473-400-8 library binding

A copyright notice for each paper is located at the bottom of the first page of the paper.  
Reprints for course packs can be authorized by Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

## Ordering information

Orders for the library binding edition are handled by Cascadilla Press. To place an order, go to [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com) or contact:

Cascadilla Press  
P.O. Box 440355  
Somerville, MA 02144, USA

phone: 1-617-776-2370  
fax: 1-617-776-2271  
e-mail: [sales@cascadilla.com](mailto:sales@cascadilla.com)

## Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com). Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

Clements, J. Clancy. 2003. On Classifying Language-Contact Varieties. In *Selected Proceedings of the First Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, ed. Lotfi Sayahi, 1-10. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

or:

Clements, J. Clancy. 2003. On Classifying Language-Contact Varieties. In *Selected Proceedings of the First Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, ed. Lotfi Sayahi, 1-10. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com), document #1002.