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## BOOK REVIEWS

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ROBIN SABINO, *Language contact in the Danish West Indies: Giving Jack his jacket*.  
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The origin of creole languages has been center stage for more than thirty years. In the absence of early spoken language data, written documents are crucial for reconstructing their emergence. Apart from their scarcity, however, it is often not easy to determine their relationship to the early spoken varieties because the people who crafted them were often not fluent in the creole, had little sustained contact with its main users, and pursued goals that were not fully compatible with language documentation. Sabino's investigation makes a strong case against the common practice "of treating corpora from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century as a chronologically continuous ... data set" (202). Drawing on data from various disciplines, Sabino convincingly argues in favor of distinguishing the language of the written records from Africans' speech. She demonstrates that the latter—Negerhollands (N)—emerged among Afro-Caribbeans in the late seventeenth century and is much influenced by (New) Kwa languages. By contrast, the language of the missionary documents is a special variety that derives from Hoch Kreol (HK), which emerged among the Euro-Caribbean community in the eighteenth century. It is documented in some descriptions and differs from N in that it is characterized by a higher preponderance of Germanic (Danish, Dutch, and English) features.

The book consists of nine chapters, an introduction, a conclusion, a preface by Velma Pollard, three appendices, and an author and a subject index. The introduction briefly introduces the reader to the linguistic diversity of the Danish West Indies—three Dutch-lexified varieties and a structurally related English-lexified variety—clarifies naming issues, and presents the approach, sources, and structure of the study. Ch. 1 examines the colonial mindset. Exploring European language ideologies, European, including academic, views about non-Europeans, their languages and contact languages, it demonstrates how an ideology of superiority constructed Africans as Europeans' alter ego. This legitimated "centuries of exploitation and influenced inquiry into the origin and nature of Caribbean communities and the

44 languages they created” (30). Africans’ response to Europeans’ disdain is explored  
45 in Ch. 2, where Sabino compares linguistic, social, economic, and religious differ-  
46 ences between Africans and Europeans. She argues that Europeans systematically  
47 misinterpreted Africans’ actions. Their oppressive measures towards Africans cemen-  
48 ted the gulf between Africans and Europeans, leading to the formation of  
49 two distinct communities with their own identities and language practices. Over  
50 time, this produced two distinct varieties of creole, one associated with the Afro-  
51 Caribbean and another with the Euro-Caribbean community. Ch. 3 discusses the  
52 development of the Danish West Indies. The island of St. Thomas was first  
53 settled in 1672, and in 1673 Africans were brought in to alleviate labor shortages.  
54 Africans probably immediately started to learn Germanic forms; however, N only  
55 emerged after 1691 when the African population grew rapidly and “Afro-Caribbean  
56 networks became increasingly dense” (64). It emerged due to newcomers’ efforts to  
57 negotiate communication with other Africans. Sabino argues that HK emerged  
58 slightly later, between 1700 and 1715, when the European community enjoyed  
59 greater prosperity and developed a Euro-Caribbean identity. N was transported to  
60 St. John in 1718 and to St. Croix in 1733. English and Virgin Island English  
61 Creole (VIEC) started to become more prominent in the middle of the eighteenth  
62 century on St. Thomas and St. Croix, replacing N and HK as the main means of  
63 communication as early as the end of the eighteenth century.

64 Ch. 4 presents the linguistic documents for Virgin Island Dutch Creole (VIDC),  
65 arguing that they do not constitute a continuous diachronic corpus. Monrovia mis-  
66 sionary texts (1755) and those from the Danish Lutheran mission were character-  
67 ized by heavy influence from Dutch and German. The grammatical descriptions  
68 and texts written by the Monrovia observer Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp  
69 and the locally raised Joachim Melchoir Magens both document the existence of  
70 two varieties, HK and N, besides the stylized religious texts, but focus on HK  
71 and align with notions of traditional grammar. Eric Pontoppidan, a Danish phys-  
72 ician who worked on St. Thomas between 1876–1881, documented a germanicized  
73 variety that had been gaining currency since the middle of the eighteenth century  
74 among the urbanizing, freed Afro-Caribbean community. Sabino argues that Jan  
75 Petrus Benjamin de Jong’s texts and songs collected in the 1920s from N and  
76 VIEC bilinguals and her own data from the last surviving speaker of N closely  
77 resemble Afro-Caribbean N.

78 Chs. 5 and 6 reconstruct the nature of the contact setting that produced N. Ch. 5  
79 explores five social variables that research has identified as affecting the rate of  
80 language learning. They include age of arrival, trauma/anxiety, aptitude and multi-  
81 lingualism, investment/intentionality, and sex. Exploration suggests that Africans’  
82 learning of European’s practices was not very successful and hampered by factors  
83 such as Africans’ lack of access, the trauma of enslavement, and Africans’ lack of  
84 desire to invest in their oppressors’ culture. The resulting practices involved variation  
85 typical of early to intermediate stages of learning and were characterized by features  
86 resulting from general learning strategies and Africans’ own language background.

87 Sabino proposes that N's Kwa features emerged at that time and conventionalized  
 88 later when Africans from similar backgrounds learned this emerging language.  
 89 The linguistic situation on St. Thomas is the focus of Ch. 6. Sabino argues that  
 90 early Africans were faced with different varieties of Germanic languages (Danish,  
 91 Dutch, English), including reduced forms, and different Kwa languages (Ga,  
 92 Akan, Twi, Ewe). In terms of N's emergence, she identifies interactions among Afri-  
 93 cans as crucial because they shared resources and common life worlds, and their en-  
 94 counters were interactionally rich and allowed for linguistic negotiation. Africans  
 95 imposed structures from their shared linguistic background onto the Germanic  
 96 input they encountered, thus molding it according to Kwa typological structures.

97 Chs. 7 to 9 examine the impact of Kwa and Germanic on N. Sabino shows that  
 98 there are seven contrastive vowels and three diphthongs. Diphthongs and the  
 99 absence of tone result from Germanic influence, while contrastive mid vowels and  
 100 noncontrastive high vowels come from African influence. Sabino argues that  
 101 vowel copying and assimilation of vowel height to consonant height is due to  
 102 African influences, while patterns of variation between mid vowels resulted from  
 103 different approximations to stressed vowels not found in African languages and alter-  
 104 nate input from different Germanic sources. In terms of the consonant inventory, she  
 105 argues that postaleveolar affricates and palatal voiceless fricatives are due to Dutch  
 106 influence. Some of the latter, however, also emerged due to the palatalization of /s/  
 107 before high vowels common in Kwa. Comparing the frequency of different syllable  
 108 structure types in Kwa, Germanic languages, HK, and N, it is evident that N strongly  
 109 patterns with Kwa while HK is intermediate between Kwa and Germanic languages.  
 110 This supports Sabino's hypothesis that the two are distinct and that HK emerged  
 111 because Europeans purposefully replaced Kwa with Germanic features.

112 Ch. 8 investigates plural marking in N and HK. As in other Caribbean creoles,  
 113 plurality is indicated by a morpheme related to the third-person plural pronoun. This  
 114 is similar to Kwa languages, which either use a suffix (Akan) or an independent  
 115 form (Fante, Ga) derived from it or employ a form used for pluralizing both  
 116 nouns and pronouns. As in the Kwa, plural marking occurs mostly with nouns re-  
 117 ferring to humans, animates, and definite nouns, and unmarked nouns also have a  
 118 generic plural reading. The plural marker derives from the West Flemish third-  
 119 person plural pronoun *sinder*, but it has various realizations. While Sabino's  
 120 consultant mostly used *senu* for plural marking and *sen* as pronoun, de Jong's con-  
 121 sultants used *sin*. HK's plural-marking patterns are intermediate between those of N  
 122 and Germanic languages. Nearly twice as many definite nouns in HK and even  
 123 more in the missionary texts were overtly marked for plurality, suggesting approxi-  
 124 mation of Germanic norms.

125 In Ch. 9 Sabino shows that N had a wide range of serial verb constructions  
 126 (SVCs) also found in other Caribbean creoles. She shows, for instance, that *lo*  
 127 'go' and *ko(m)* function as purposive and directional markers and that *lo* also  
 128 serves as proximate future marker and imperfective marker. The verb *gi* is used  
 129 as a recipient and benefactive marker, and there is also some evidence that *ne*

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130 'take' and *se* 'say' served instrumental, committative, and complementizer func-  
131 tions, respectively. Sabino argues that SVCs did not directly descend from Kwa  
132 SVCs, but emerged due to the application of Kwa discourse patterns to Germanic  
133 material. In contrast to N, HKs two verb sequences are essentially bare infinitival  
134 complements, further supporting the view that HK is different to N.

135 Appendices 1 and 2 provide a translation from German and Dutch respectively  
136 of Pontoppidan's observations of and texts in N and a fifty-nine-page glossary that  
137 documents lexical variability in N.

138 This study of the history of VIDC is not only of interest to researchers interested  
139 in Dutch creoles. It is a fine demonstration of how careful cross-disciplinary re-  
140 search can provide invaluable insights into the conditions, processes, and outcomes  
141 of language-contact situations past and present.

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