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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

142 (Received 18 March 2013)