

# Introduction

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## 1. Foreword

This volume contains a selection of papers presented during a one-day workshop held at the University of Amsterdam on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The event was entitled “Continuity, contagion and contiguity: Accounting for commonalities among the Asian-Portuguese varieties”, and it invited contributors to reflect on the similarities between the various Portuguese-based creoles of Asia and on how to account for them.

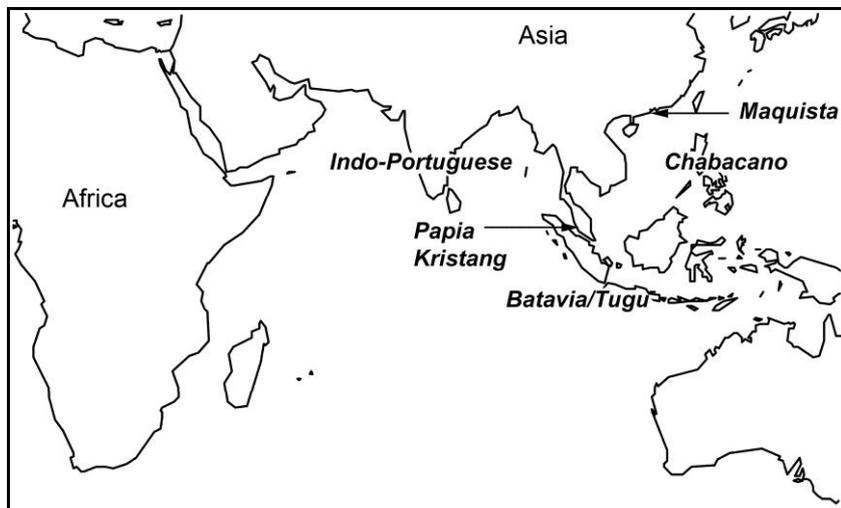
Both the organisation of the workshop and the publication of the present volume serve the explicit purpose of contributing towards the advancement of scholarship on the Portuguese-based creoles of Asia by revisiting assumptions and previous proposals in the light of recently available linguistic, socio-demographic and documentary data. We are very grateful to all those who participated in the workshop – both presenters and audience –, and particularly to the authors who submitted their articles for publication. We are also indebted to the editors of the *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* for the opportunity to publish this special issue at a time when the contact languages of Asia gain increasing prominence within the field of contact linguistics.

## 2. Background

Portuguese colonial expansion across the Indian Ocean, from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, produced a string of linguistic varieties born out of contact between Portuguese and various Asian languages. In addition to the very few varieties that subsist (in India, Sri Lanka, Malacca and Macau), we also avail of corpora for some of the extinct ones (e.g. those of Mangalore, Mahé and Nagappatinam in South India; Batavia/Tugu in Java) to assist in reconstructing the formation and development of the Asian-Portuguese creoles (Ladhams 2009). Map 1 below indicates the location of the main contact languages of Asia studied in this volume: Indo-Portuguese (a term

covering the various creoles of South Asia), *Papia Kristang* (still actively spoken in Malacca), *Maquista* or *Makista* (the highly-endangered language of the Macanese community) and the varieties of *Batavia* and *Tugu* (on the Indonesian island of Java); in addition, the article by Baxter also discusses data from *Chabacano*, the cluster of Spanish-lexified contact varieties of the Philippines:

Map 1: Asian contact varieties studied in this volume.



It is by now the matter of relative consensus that the various Portuguese-based creoles of Asia show significant similarities within various domains. Established points of contact (most of which do not apply across the board, only to subsets of these varieties) include the following (see Ferraz, 1987; Holm, 1989; Baxter, 1996):

- (i) the typical structure of the possessive construction (Possessor + *su/sø* + Possessed);
- (ii) Noun-Modifier word order;
- (iii) Dative-Accusative case, expressed by an adposition derived either from Portuguese *para* 'for' or *por* 'by', or from Portuguese *com* 'with';
- (iv) the form of preverbal Tense-Aspect markers, normally derived from Portuguese *já* 'already' (Past/Perfective), *está/ar* 'is/to be' (Non-punctual aspect) and *logo* 'immediately, later' (Future/Irrealis);
- (v) identity of form of existential/possessive/copular verbs;
- (vi) a special future negator derived from Portuguese *não há-de* 'shall not';
- (vii) certain lexical items, such as *ada/ade/adi* 'duck'.

This general observation has motivated a number of assumptions and proposals, not always firmly grounded in empirical research, many of which essentially hinge on the following concepts:

- (i) *Continuity*: the possibility that the different varieties establish relationships of ancestry and progeny;
- (ii) *Contagion*: the possibility that the different Asian-Portuguese varieties exerted some degree of influence on one another; and
- (iii) *Contiguity*: the possibility that the similarities observed between subsets of the Asian-Portuguese varieties are due to relative contiguity in geographical and typological terms, including shared input from the relevant language(s) in the contact situation.

This volume is intended as a contribution towards a deeper understanding of the relevance and the interplay of these and other proposals in explaining the similarities observed between the Asian-Portuguese creoles; but it also introduces other relevant factors, such as the importance of frequency, perceptual salience, notions of social structure and degree of social cohesion for the outcome of language contact.

The reader will notice that the various articles appeal to (and often articulate) rather different explanatory strands. Given that language contact typically happens in highly multilingual and porous environments, it is not always easy to clearly elevate one factor over the other, and it is often difficult to identify exact linguistic sources of the varieties in contact. Moreover, the nature of maritime trade typically conducted along official as well as clandestine routes, and the complex, intricate and not always well-documented patterns of population movement that accompany it (Ansaldo, 2009), pose a challenge for socio-historical reconstruction, without which a proper appreciation of contact language formation is difficult to achieve (see e.g. Arends, 2002; Singler, 2008).

The papers in this volume make substantial contributions to methodological development in the study of these issues, as well as to the empirical foundation of their debate. In engaging with the topic of the similarities between the Asian-Portuguese varieties, the authors do not simply assume the established commonalities; they also make use of recently accessible data to identify further points of contact and divergence. In his paper, Holm revisits the possibility of the expansion of Portuguese-based contact varieties from the Atlantic into the Asian context, by surveying the commonalities already proposed and identifying new ones. Clements focuses on a number of features of the Indo-Portuguese creoles (notably those of Daman, Diu and Korlai) and seeks an explanation for their similarities and differences not only in socio-historical/demographic factors (viz. the variables of duration of contact with the lexifier and time since the end of contact, community size and social organisation) but also in the frequency of linguistic features in the contact

pool, as well as dynamics of language processing and acquisition. In her article, Tomás conducts a study of the implications of population movement, with particular focus on the role of women in the formation and development of the creoles of South-east and East Asia (Malacca, Java, Macau), a much appreciated addition to our understanding of social dynamics in the region. Finally, Baxter's study, focusing on causative constructions expressed through partly similar verb serialisation patterns across the Iberian-based creoles of Asia, reveals concrete ways in which these languages align with or depart from lexifier-language input, suggesting that the product of linguistic contact often reflects the convergence of substrate and superstrate systems.

### **3. Continuity, contagion and contiguity**

Considering the diverse ecologies in which varieties of Portuguese developed across the globe, which include various socio-historical settings and different substrate/adstrate languages, the structural similarities noted above have attracted the attention of creolists for a number of years, particularly as indicators in favour of a monogenetic explanation for the formation of these and other creoles – see Holm's contribution to this volume for a survey of how the similarities between the Asian-Portuguese varieties were articulated into the monogenetic debate. In point of fact, the study of Portuguese-lexified creoles has perhaps constituted the strongest indication of some monogenetic tendencies in the evolution of contact languages and, as such, the issue of *continuity* needs further exploration. While it is too simplistic to assume that one single variety of Portuguese would have been exported from Portugal all the way to the Far East, various strands of continuity have been proposed, including: (i) the possible relationship between Portuguese as used by rural and urban slaves in Portugal and Portuguese varieties that developed in West Africa (e.g. Naro, 1978; Clements, 2009: 47-48) and elsewhere; (ii) the possibility that contact varieties of Portuguese may have been carried from the Atlantic area to Asia; (iii) the role of the South Indian centres of the Portuguese eastern empire (Cochin, then Goa) in the expansion of language across the region; and (iv) the role of Malacca in the settlement of Macau, confirmed by the extensive structural similarities between Papia Kristang and Maquista (e.g. Baxter 1996, Ansaldo 2009).

The papers in this volume contribute to clarify some of these aspects. In the literature, the relationship between the Portuguese-lexified creoles of Asia and their West African counterparts has been the matter of some controversy. Even though Ferraz (1987) made a negative assessment of the scenario of linguistic continuity between Africa and Asia, instead proposing an absolute split between the Portuguese-based creoles of the two areas, studies such as Tomás (1992) and Clements (2000) reopened the possibility. In this volume, Holm assesses a few striking similarities between the creoles of Africa and

those of Asia, and concludes that a degree of continuity must be conceded. But the question remains of who the agents of this diffusion were, whether Portuguese settlers and sailors – as proposed, for instance, by Smith (1984) and Clements (2000) –, or slaves (for more on the role of slaves in the Portuguese settlements of Asia, see Cardoso, 2010). This question is not addressed in this volume, but its answer is significant in order to be able to appreciate exactly what variety of Portuguese was being transmitted. With respect to the link between Malacca and Macau, it is reinforced by the demographic data analysed by Tomás, whose article goes one step further by demonstrating the central role of Papia Kristang in the formation of creoles in Batavia, Tugu, and the Indonesian archipelago.

Another important element addressed in this volume concerns the directionality of language spread within the Portuguese eastern empire. As a matter of fact, the notion that certain varieties fed into (or sparked off) the development of others meets with the intuitive hypothesis that, accompanying the eastward expansion of Portuguese influence in Asia in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, significant population and linguistic transfer must have proceeded strictly eastwards, and the instances of continuity mentioned above appear to support it. However, Dalgado's (1917) concept of 'recíproca transfusão parcial' [partial reciprocal transfusion] – the proposal that the different Asian-Portuguese varieties exerted mutual influence on one another – built multilateralism into the picture. Dalgado's perspective underlies our notion of *contagion* – for which Tomás employs the more benign metaphor of 'cross-pollination' –, which, in our view, cannot be dissociated from the debate on continuity. The 'partial reciprocal transfusion' hypothesis is reinforced in this volume, not only from the analysis of linguistic data but also historical and demographic data. Historical evidence analysed in the articles by Tomás and Baxter shows that population movement was not unidirectional: Tomás clarifies that the Portuguese empire in Asia took the shape of a network of trade and influence, while Baxter emphasises the links between Malacca/Macau and the Indian subcontinent, notably the Coromandel Coast. There appears to be growing consensus that movements of people such as soldiers, slaves and servants, 'marriage market' limitations, as well as intense contact between a number of colonies, ended transmission of linguistic features in more than one direction. Interestingly, Holm suggests that the linguistic ecology of Malacca is the most likely source of the pluralising function of reduplication encountered not only in Papia Kristang and Macau, but also in certain registers of Indo-Portuguese (see Cardoso, 2009). If this hypothesis proves true, it will illustrate the westward spread of an important structural development.

Finally, the effects of *contiguity* – the possibility that the similarities observed between subsets of the Asian-Portuguese varieties are due to relative geographical proximity, not to the extent that that would facilitate interchange but because it may bring about similarities in the social and typological context of these languages (including shared input from the relevant

language/s in the contact situation) – demand consideration. A strong argument in favour of areal traits in the observed similarities among creole languages has been put forward, for example, in Ansaldo *et al.* (2007). Note that, though areality is a concept that does not apply easily to contact languages, which often develop in ecologies that are difficult to compare in terms of linguistic variation, some traces of areal effects may be identifiable in Asian-Portuguese varieties. For example, the morphological case-marking that appears markedly in Sri Lankan Creole Portuguese is not found to the same degree in other Portuguese varieties. This could be due to the influence of Lankan languages, with robust case systems, which produced comparable structures in restructured varieties as typologically distant as Sri Lanka Malay (Ansaldo, 2009). In the case of Indo-Portuguese, Schuchardt (1889) proposed a taxonomy which reflected the typological classification of the South Asian languages active in the environment (*Gauro-Portuguese* for the varieties influenced by Indo-Aryan languages, *Dravido-Portuguese* for those resulting from contact with Dravidian languages) and, in so doing, admitted the relevance of the local languages for the outcome of contact.

Furthermore, it is clear that the *Norteiro* varieties of Indo-Portuguese (i.e., those spoken in the Bassein/Bombay region and, in a broader sense, also those of Korlai, Diu and Daman) form a particularly close cluster of varieties (see also Dalgado, 1902-1903). Clement's article tackles the issue of similarity and dissimilarity among the *Norteiro* creoles. He makes the point that, despite geographical proximity and comparable social circumstances, variables such as the duration of contact with the colonial language, amount of time since the end of contact, or social organisation can dictate different outcomes in the long run. Nonetheless, his data also suggest that the early creoles of Daman, Diu and Korlai may have shared more structural similarities than revealed by their present state, at least in terms of their phonology, pronominal paradigms and word order; with respect to the domains analysed, the speech-communities' different histories and social characteristics would have mostly determined the degree and directionality of change from this similar point of departure, which is particularly evident in the present distribution of 'acrolectal' and 'basilectal' features.

The factors discussed so far have mostly concerned conditions which are specific to the various Asian-Portuguese varieties and their context. However, the solutions proposed by the authors to account for similarities and differences between them go beyond such considerations. These will be explored in the following section.

#### **4. Further explanations and final remarks**

The general debate surrounding the formation of high-contact varieties has always stressed the role of universals of various types – be them universals of

second language acquisition (e.g. Siegel, 2008) and processing (e.g. Clements, 2009) or innate linguistic tendencies (e.g. Bickerton, 1984) –, particularly to account for similarities observed between apparently unrelated pidgins and creoles. While the central concern of this volume is to explain the commonalities between the Asian-Portuguese varieties with particular reference to the geographical, social and historical links between them, the authors remind us that there are wider processes at play as well, and that failing to recognise that can lead to misinterpretation of the data.

In his contribution to this volume, Clements appeals to proposed universal patterns of language change to account for the degree of lexical replacement affecting the core vocabulary of the Norteiro varieties. He also offers the notions of frequency and perceptual salience as additional explanations for why certain forms and structures may end up being shared by various creoles. This perspective is interesting because it suggests, *in extremis*, that some of the observed similarities may be easily derived from the interplay between lexifier input and universal tendencies of processing/acquisition and, as such, are not good candidates to test hypotheses concerning continuity, contagion or contiguity. Nonetheless, as Clements' article also illustrates, a uniformitarian approach which takes on board universals of language processing and acquisition need not be at odds with the significance of social, historical and areal variables in language contact. In fact, the diversity of approaches followed in this volume testifies to the complex nature of the phenomenon of language contact.

As we approach the Asian-Portuguese varieties from a diachronic perspective, we are constantly reminded that the available data is often relatively recent and that, in the absence of early written records and documentary evidence, one is left with considerable uncharted periods. There resides one of the greatest challenges to the reconstruction of the history of these languages and exact relationship between them. At any rate, the contributions to this volume show that a great deal of ground can be covered by in-depth analysis of the languages' ecology (involving linguistic as well as socio-historical considerations), and that we can profit from insights gained elsewhere from research on patterns of language contact, change, processing and acquisition.

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