Introduction

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It is a great pleasure to introduce readers to this special issue of *Quaderni di Linguistica e Studi Orientali* (Working Papers in Linguistics and Oriental Studies), focusing on the morpho-syntax of (Romance based) Creole and Mixed languages. The papers in this volume address this issue from a variety of viewpoints. It is our humble hope that we have succeeded in broadly enriching the perspective on language creation, contact and change by speaking across different theoretical frameworks and different sets of data.

The idea that the morphosyntactic features of Pidgin/Creole languages can shed light on our language faculty is far from new. Bickerton (1981, 1984) was probably the first to make a specific theoretical point of it, namely the Language Bio-Program hypothesis, with a list of (alleged) proto-typical and universals linguistic features. Since then, the debate is open. Muysken (1988) argues against the claim that there is something like a prototypical and 'innate' morpho-syntax of creoles. Although Creoles are undoubtedly similar with respect to word order, preverbal TAM (tense-aspect-mood) morphemes order, the scarcity of inflectional morphology, and so on, they also differ in many fine-grained respects. Just consider for instance, the study of (subject) clitics and pro drop-phenomena in Creoles/Pidgins (see e.g. DeGraff 1993; Syea 1993; Déprez 1994, among many others), showing a high degree of variability among Pidgin/Creole languages.

Still, it is doubtless true that the very existence of a full array of shared features among Pidgin/Creoles and Mixed languages (as documented for instance in the inventory of features in the APiCS On-line (Michaelis *et al.* 2013) are in need of an explanation by any formal theory addressing the structure of Pidgins/Creoles. We just hope that the present collections of articles, mainly focussing on Romance based varieties, can enrich the theoretical debate on various features of the morphosyntax of Pidgin, Creoles and Mixed Languages.

In their article, **Zribi-Hertz** and **Jean-Louis** (CNRS, University of Paris 8) show that the grammar of locational and directional predications in

Martinican Creole is an interesting illustration of both the genetically hybrid nature of Creole grammars, and the means put to use by natural-language grammars to secure optimal economy. In particular, they show that General Locative Marking in Martinican Creole, namely the use of the same morpheme to encode Source and Goal meaning, results from the combination of two surface homonymies: that of stative locative and Anticipated-Goal arguments, and that of Anticipated-Goal and Source arguments. They argue that the first homonymy, which only obtains when the Path goal head is phonologically null, is not a Creole innovation since it is attested in French as well as in some West-African potential contributors (substrates) to the formation of Martinican Creole. The second homonymy goes unattested in French but is attested in some West-African languages, and primarily results from the non-survival of French *de* in the Martinican Creole lexicon. The authors show how the potentially negative effects on grammatical economy of the absence of a lexical Source marker are handled in MQ by means of universally-available strategies (lexicon/syntax interface, thematic restrictions, lexical innovations) and by serial-verb constructions drawn from the West-African feature pool: by using serial verbs to combine Manner and Path, or Source and Goal, within a clause, Martinican Creole turns out to be even more 'V-framed' than its French forebear – an assumed paragon of 'V-framedness' (see Talmy 2000).

Schang (University of Orléans) presents a series of arguments in favour of the treatment of some functional elements of Gwadloupéyen (Guadeloupean Creole) as multi-word (grammatical) expressions, i.e. periphrasis. Contrary to a syntactic approach of periphrasis, that derives the meaning in a bottom-up manner (syntactic derivation), he defends an approach which considers the periphrasis as a single syntactic element (a complex tree) which is assembled within morphology. He assumes that the only difference between synthetic forms and periphrastic forms is the level (or the domain) where the process takes place. Schang shows that the TAMs in Gwadloupéyen constitute a case of inflectional periphrasis and that inflectional periphrasis can be found outside the verbal domain. The results contribute to the discussion on the morpho-syntax of Creole languages: while some researchers (Seuren and Wekker 1986; McWhorter 2001, among others) have claimed that creole languages are morphologically poor, the facts presented by Schang tend to patently show the contrary.

Adone (University of Cologne, Charles Darwin University, University of Seychelles), **Brück** and **Gabel** (University of Cologne) investigate the form and function of Verb Chains and Serial Verb Constructions in Kreol Seselwa (Seychelles Creole), a French-based Creole language spoken in the Indian Ocean. Prior to Bickerton (1989), it was widely assumed that Serial Verb Constructions were not part of Kreol Seselwa grammar. More recent studies (Adone 2012; Syea 2013, among others) have shown that these constructions do exist in that language. Likewise, in their paper, the authors demonstrate

that from a typological perspective, prototypical as well as non-prototypical Serial Verb Constructions can be found in Kreol Seselwa. In their analysis, they provide evidence that an ethno-syntactic framework can account for certain Serial Verb Constructions in Kreol Seselwa. In particular, they argue that the form and function of Serial Verb Constructions can be accounted for by cultural logic hence stressing the link between grammar and culture.

In their article, **Franco** (CLUNL/FCSH/New University of Lisbon) and **Lorusso** (IUSS, Pavia) provide a comprehensive overview of existential sentences in Romance Creoles. Based on their empirical investigation, they also provide an analysis of existential constructions which mimic 'transitive' possession. This is actually the pattern they retrieved in the vast majority of Romance based Creole languages. Specifically, Franco and Lorusso assume that the pervasiveness of a predicative possession strategy for existentials in Creoles has reflexes in their syntax, for which a possession configuration, building on recent work of Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco and Manzini (2017), Franco and Lorusso (2018) is advanced. In essence, they claim that the 'contextual domain' of existentials (see Francez 2007, 2009) can be encoded as the *possessor* of a (transitive) HAVE predicate including the pivot as its direct object (cf. Rigau 1997; Manzini and Savoia 2005), with the coda which is (optionally) introduced as an adjunct, encoding a further possessor ('locative' *inclusor*) of the predicate (e.g. embedded under a PP constituent).

The paper of **Baldi** and **Savoia** (University of Florence) investigates the distribution of the neuter inflection in some of the Arbëresh dialects spoken in Calabria, Lucania and Apulia in Southern Italy. The authors show that the original inflection of neuter coincides with the one of plural, at least in nominative and accusative forms, and they argue that it singles out a sub-set of mass nouns. Other mass nouns belong to the feminine class and present the corresponding inflection. In several Arbëresh communities, language mixing has led to a partial or, in some cases, deep reorganization of the noun systems, affecting also neuters, that show different types of inflection and agreement. As the first point, Baldi and Savoia examine the nature of the neuter inflection -*t*, assigning it a quantificational value 'inclusion/sub-set' that makes it possible to explain its distribution as the definite nominative/accusative and oblique inflection, specifying a referent interpreted as a part of a (denotationally) recognizable whole along the lines of Manzini and Savoia (2017a, 2017b). The second part of their paper is devoted to the phenomena of mixing that have induced internal morpho-syntactic and phonological reorganization in Arbëresh varieties. As to neuters, there are dialects where neuter nouns select feminine agreement inflection both on pre-nominal modifiers/demonstratives and adjectives; in other dialects the distribution of agreement inflection is less sharp, although some tendencies emerge that align with Romance agreement. A crucial point is the dissociation between agreement and gender inflection in the sense that usually neuters preserve the -*t* inflec-

tion, independently of the gender agreement that is selected. This fits with the proposal that the content of *-t* is substantially quantificational in nature.

Finally, **Franco** addresses the syntax of argument introducing/valency increasing Serial Verbs in Pidgin and Creole languages, providing empirical arguments for the model of grammatical relations advanced in recent works by Manzini and Franco (2016), Franco and Manzini (2017), among others. These authors lay out an analysis of the syntax and interpretation of dative *to*, instrumental *with* and Differential Object Marking (DOM) relators, based on the assumption that these elements are endowed with an elementary interpretive content interacting with the internal organization of the predicate/event. Following this line of reasoning, Franco argues that these oblique relators, expressing a primitive elementary part-whole relation, may be instantiated also by serial light verbs in the grammar of natural languages and provides a formal approach to cross-categorial variation in argument marking, trying to outline a unified morpho-syntactic template, in which so-called 'cases' do not configure a specialized linguistic lexicon of functional features/categories. Actually, it is possible to assume that, on the contrary, they help us outline an underlying ontology of natural languages, of which they pick up some of the most elementary relations. Such primitive relations can be precisely expressed by different lexical means: case, adpositions and light (serial) verbs.

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