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Natalie Operstein
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The Lingua Franca

Whose name is hidden behind the anonymity of the key publication on Mediterranean Lingua Franca? What linguistic reality does the label "Lingua Franca" conceal? These and related questions are explored in this new book on an enduringly important topic. The book presents a typologically informed analysis of Mediterranean Lingua Franca, as documented in the *Dictionnaire de la langue franque ou petit mauresque*, which provides an important historical snapshot of contact-induced language change. Based on a close study of the *Dictionnaire* in its historical and linguistic contexts, the book proposes hypotheses concerning its models, authorship, and publication history and examines the place of the *Dictionnaire*'s Lingua Franca in the structural typological space between Romance languages, on one hand, and pidgins, on the other. It refines our understanding of the typology of contact outcomes while at the same time opening unexpected new avenues for both linguistic and historical research.

NATALIE OPERSTEIN'S publications include *Consonant Structure and Prevocalization* (2010), *Zaniza Zapotec* (2015), *Valence Changes in Zapotec* (ed. with A. H. Sonnenschein, 2015), and *Language Contact and Change in Mesoamerica and Beyond* (ed. with K. Dakin and C. Parodi, 2017). She is a recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship.

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Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact is an interdisciplinary series bringing together work on language contact from a diverse range of research areas. The series focuses on key topics in the study of contact between languages or dialects, including the development of pidgins and creoles, language evolution and change, world Englishes, code-switching and code-mixing, bilingualism and second language acquisition, borrowing, interference, and convergence phenomena.

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Contact-Induced Language Change in the Mediterranean

Natalie Operstein
University of California

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Series Editor's Foreword

The series Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact (CALC) was set up to publish outstanding monographs and, occasionally, anthologies on language contact. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on the subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Topics of interest to us include but are not limited to the following: language diversification (e.g., the emergence of creoles, pidgins, and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), multilingual language development and practice, code-switching/mixing (translanguaging), and language endangerment. We provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding (dynamics of) language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favor approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors' own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavor to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

We are proud to add to our list Natalie Operstein's *The Lingua Franca: Contact-Induced Language Change in the Mediterranean*. It is a thorough documentation of a language variety that has caught the attention of students of creoles and pidgins since the late nineteenth century, starting with Hugo Schuchardt's (1909) article "Die Lingua franca." For both good and mistaken reasons, its nineteenth-century variety, called Sabir, was invoked as the proto-variety of pidgins lexified by European languages around the world, having putatively morphed into them through what creolists refer to as relexification (see, e.g., Keith Whinnom 1965, 1977a, 1977b). For sure, the role Lingua Franca played in the Mediterranean trade from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century explains why it has become customary in modern linguistics to characterize as *lingua francas* various languages with similar roles, regardless of whether their standard varieties are used and/or whether the users include native or heritage speakers. Pidgins themselves are usually associated with the lingua franca function (i.e., as bridge language varieties arising in multilingual contexts in which typically the trading parties have had no

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common language), by opposition to creoles and expanded pidgins, which have a vernacular function.

Let me note that Lingua Franca arose in the trade between Arabs in North Africa and Europeans in Northern Mediterranean, at a time when Venetians dominated in the trade, before being joined by people in Iberia and by the Ottomans. Iberia then included Arab and Moor colonists who must have been able to speak Iberian language varieties. Those of these colonists and Jews who did not want to convert to Christianity during the Inquisition – practiced during the Reconquista – left for North Africa especially from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. We can expect them to have spoken some Iberian language varieties too, regardless of the extent to which their nonheritage systems were undoubtedly influenced by Arabic or Hebrew. Judeo-Spanish is evidence of this. There is no reason why some of these people and their descendants would not have participated in the Mediterranean trade. This is to say that some North African Arabs and Jews were familiar with some Romance languages, which some other Arabs identified collectively as the "language of the Franks," the meaning of *Lingua Franca*. The label was not in reference to the Germanic Franks (who had invaded Gaul) but to Europeans north of the Mediterranean. This information is relevant to the discussions that this book is likely to generate, as I point out below.

How uniform was Lingua Franca? Was it not a continuum from native-like to nonnative varieties of the languages of the "Franks," regardless of whether the poles may be characterized as acrolectal and basilectal, respectively? I add this because what is identified as acrolectal in creole continua is a standard variety, and I wonder how much standardization or social stratification of European language varieties was in place in the trade in which Lingua Franca served as a bridge language. In any case, Natalie Operstein shows that Lingua Franca existed as a continuum, with variation in its grammatical system (albeit not of the kind described by Derek Bickerton as macaronic), and she provides many useful philological considerations on the structures that she has documented and analyzed meticulously. We are told that many of the structures and forms are retentions from its lexifiers, which were genetically related, being Romance languages. Although they did not have identical structural templates, congruence among them played an important role in producing the common features of different varieties of Lingua Franca.

According to Operstein, Lingua Franca was only in some respects like a pidgin and in some others like a koiné. This conclusion should not be surprising, since nonnative speakers of the Romance lexifiers were involved in shaping it, contributing their adstrate features to the feature pool. On the other hand, structural congruence between the primary lexifiers is consistent with the traditional conception of koinéization as reduction to a common denominator of structures of genetically related language varieties in contact, especially if in

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the case of Lingua Franca, in the formation of which the role of foreigner talk is partial but enhanced by congruence between the lexifiers. What is also remarkable is the lack of evidence for a break in the transmission of the lexifier, bearing in mind the historical context I present above.

The book is a gold mine likely to generate much discussion about the emergence of Lingua Franca and comparative studies between it and pidgins, incipient (still to be documented in the creolistics literature) and expanded ones alike. I am happy to recommend it to our readers.

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	adjective
Adv	adverb
Ar.	Arabic
ART (art.)	article
Cat.	Catalan
ChI	chancery Italian
CS	code-switching
DO	direct object
DOM	differential object marker
DOM	differential object marking
Eng.	English
F (f.)	feminine
FAI	Fremdarbeiteritalienisch
Ferr.	Ferrarese
Fr.	French
FT	foreigner talk
FUT	future
GRD	gerund
Gr.	Greek
IMPF	imperfect, imperfective
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
intr.	intransitive
IO	indirect object
It.	Italian
J.-Sp.	Judeo-Spanish
L1	first language
L2	second language

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Lat.	Latin
LF	Lingua Franca
lit.	literally
M (m.)	masculine
MCA	Moroccan Colloquial Arabic
N (n.)	noun
neut.	neuter
NEG	negative morpheme
Num	numeral
OBJ	object
OBL	oblique
Oc.	Occitan
PF	perfect, perfective
PL (pl.)	plural
POSS	possessive
PPLE (Pple)	participle
PREP (P)	preposition
PRES	present
PRET	preterit
PRO	pronoun
Ptg.	Portuguese
REFL	reflexive
S (sg.)	singular
SBJ	subject
Sard.	Sardinian
Sic.	Sicilian
SIE	Simplified Italian of Ethiopia
SLA	second language acquisition
Sp.	Spanish
SUBJ	subject
TAM	tense-aspect-mood
TMA	tense-mood-aspect
tr.	transitive
TTR	type–token ratio
Tu.	Turkish
V (v.)	verb
Ven.	Venetian
VL	Vulgar Latin

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