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### [Review of: L. Lim, U. Ansaldo (2016) Languages in Contact]

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**DOI**

[10.1163/19552629-01101008](https://doi.org/10.1163/19552629-01101008)

**Publication date**

2018

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Journal of Language Contact

**License**

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[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Dorleijn, M. (2018). [Review of: L. Lim, U. Ansaldo (2016) Languages in Contact]. *Journal of Language Contact*, 11(1), 180-188. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19552629-01101008>

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### Lisa Lim and Umberto Ansaldo

2016. *Languages in Contact*. 240 pages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Key Topics in Sociolinguistics.

Considering the impressive body of general (introductory) literature on language contact already published, studies, moreover, that treat the subject from all conceivable perspectives (starting with the seminal study of Weinreich (1953); followed by, a.o. Appel and Muysken (1987); Thomason (2001); Winford (2003); Matras (2009)) the reader is curious to know what a new 'general' book on Language Contact may have to add. Well, this book appears to add many things, as will transpire from this review.

Lim is a phonetician working on World Englishes, Ansaldo a creolist and typologist specialising in Sinitic varieties. In this book they bring their fields of expertise together. As the authors rightly note in the preface of the book, World Englishes versus Pidgins and Creoles are 'almost always written about as separate animals' (p. xi). It is an explicit objective of this book to integrate perspectives and research from the fields of multilingualism and code switching, language shift and endangerment, and language and globalisation, Pidgin and Creole studies, and World Englishes studies. Integrated perspectives are indeed what we need, the authors argue, because many linguistic outcomes of contact are similar and/or the result of similar social and sociolinguistic processes worldwide.

The book has ambitious objectives. In the introductory Chapter 1 the authors state explicitly that 'the most powerful approach to language contact is a sociolinguistic one' (p. 3). Therefore they intend to take a sociolinguistic approach. In addition, the book wants to cover the new sites of contact that globalisation affords, such as computer mediated communication, popular culture, the commodification of language in the globalised economy. Moreover, the authors, whose expertise is on Asian contexts of language contact, want to emphasise the Asian perspective and foreground Asian studies on language contact (their own and those of others), involving languages as typologically diverse as Sinitic, Dravidian, Austronesian and other non-Indo-European varieties. The examples are equally drawn from studies on the Asian context. As Lim and Ansaldo rightly remark, studies on language and language contact have for the larger part been done from an (indo-)European perspective, with the ensuing European bias. All in all, the book has set multiple and ambitious goals, nonetheless the body of the text consists of a mere 204 pages.

The book has eight chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene and offers an outline of the main tenets of the book. Here the basic point is made that 'acknowledging

that “anything goes” as a defining principle of language contact is not admitting defeat; quite the contrary, it is a step forward in understanding that, if constraints exist, they must be sought outside grammar, in sociolinguistic patterns of language use’ (p. 3). This is, the authors propose, corroborated by three different fields of inquiry, the first being linguistic typology, where the central objective should not be to find universals, but rather to account for diversity, the second being usage-based approaches. The third, and the field of inquiry that is the most explicitly considered in this study, is the concept of language evolution, which recognises that contact between different linguistic features is a fundamental underlying force in language evolution at large.

A central concept in the language evolution model is the (multilingual) language ecology, in which social, historical, contextual, interactional and linguistic factors determine the linguistic choices speakers make to solve communicative issues. Central in this model is the metaphor of the ‘pool of features’ (Mufwene, 2001; Aboh and Ansaldo, 2007), the highly varied repertoire of linguistic features from which speakers make their choices according to contextual needs, a metaphor to which Ansaldo adds (Ansaldo, 2009) ‘the typological matrix’: from the pool of features the speaker is more likely to choose features that are the most frequent (or ‘salient’, but that term is a bit problematic as will be discussed below), for example because these features are present in the majority of variants that take part in the feature pool.

Chapter 1 continues with a very condensed version of the kind of overview found in other introductory books as well (e.g. Winford, 2003): Borrowing, Code mixing, contact languages, linguistic areas. This is followed by a discussion on the ‘Asian perspective’, in which the authors offer some critical notes on modern linguistics and contact linguistics, more specifically Creole linguistics that—until recently—has focussed on Caribbean Creoles with the ensuing Indo-European bias. The chapter then turns to a more elaborate discussion of the role of globalisation in language contact, referring to Vertovec’s (2006) concept of ‘superdiversity’ and referring to Blommaert (2010). Citing Heller (2010) the authors identify four direct consequences that globalisation has for language, viz. wider and transnational networks and increased communication across cultures and languages; a wider repertoire of forms of communication used by a broader set of social actors; a tension between relatively anonymous transferable forms of standardisation versus situated, identifiable forms of authenticity; and, as a consequence of a large shift to service-sector work, a central role for (computer mediated) language in the global economy. At the end of Chapter 1 the authors express their trust that their book will be of interest not only to linguists, but also to those who are interested in the interaction

between language and society, and expect to achieve this by not focussing on structural linguistic aspects but on making 'a connection between what goes on in language and what is happening around it'. (p. 25).

In Chapter 2, sociolinguistic research on macro-patterns of code choice, including concepts such as Ferguson's Diglossia and Fishman's Domain, is discussed. Prominent and well-known sociolinguistic perspectives on code switching (e.g. Myers-Scotton's Markedness model) are outlined, and a brief description of structural aspects of code switching is given. A list (derived from Myers-Scotton, 2006) of social contexts and social activities that lead to language contact is provided. The authors emphasize that thinking in terms of 'multilingualism' in the sense of speakers having a repertoire of two or more discrete languages, where each language is allocated a specific function by the speech community, is unrealistic and also too simplistic. Social contexts can be multi-layered and ambiguous. The authors argue that 'mixed code' is a much more likely outcome of language contact. In their definition of Mixed code they follow Auer (1999): it is the mixing of elements from two languages, where each individual code switch or code mix has no communicative function anymore. Mixed Code has been a very common phenomenon in Asia for ages, the authors claim. In the chapter engaging examples are provided that illustrate how the activities of subtle attachment of meaning and of group-demarkation are enacted through subtle variations in code mixing patterns. The chapter ends with a description of how code mixing is successfully employed in education which is, the authors state, '(the) domain that sees most resistance to the use of contact language phenomena' (p. 53). Compelling examples show how code switching is deployed in schools in Singapore and elsewhere for scaffolding and thus manage to bridge the gap between home and school, and as such has a positive influence on the academic results of the pupils.

Chapter 3 gives a very condensed overview of the major theoretical frameworks in which pidgin and creole languages have been studied. Issues and debates that have dominated pidgin and creole studies are outlined. For those who are well informed about the topic, the chapter does not offer very much news, and for those who are not familiar with it, the chapter is probably too dense and inaccessible. Presumably the chapter is intended to provide background knowledge for Chapter 4, in which two recent approaches to pidgin and creole languages are discussed.

The approaches discussed in Chapter 4 are McWorther's Creole Prototype (CP) (1988) and Ansaldo's CLF model. McWorther's central claim is that creole languages are relatively (morphologically) simple because they are relatively new languages and did not have the time to acquire 'complex' morphology, the latter being characteristic of older ('mature') languages. The major debate

is about how complexity vs simplicity should be defined, and about if it is really possible to speak of ‘complex’ vs ‘simple’ languages, and if ‘simplicity’ is really a feature that sets creole languages apart from other languages. The new languages are the result of a-typical language transmission, according to McWorther (and many others, for that matter).

Conversely, the central tenet of the evolutionary approach is, that all language transmission follows the same cognitive processes. The linguistic outcome depends on the ecology the speaker lives in: the combination of social, sociohistorical, demographic, contextual factors and linguistic features. In a present day European context, the linguistic features may vary marginally, but in high contact contexts, the linguistic ecology exhibits a large degree of variation, resulting in plurilingual practices. In uncontrolled transmission processes (not constrained by normative standards brought about by schooling and institutional support) the individual speaker has a wide freedom of choice. Speakers select and recombine from the variety of linguistic features they are exposed to and in such a way reconstruct their own idiolect. It is only the extent of variation in the ‘feature pool’ that differs. The authors therefore argue against the notion of creole languages as an exceptional class. CLF can be seen as an elaboration of the feature pool model (Mufwene, 2001; Aboh and Ansaldo, 2007) in that it brings in the *typological matrix* as an important factor for the linguistic outcome in a given speech community.

In the typological matrix, the notion of type- and token frequency is central: *token frequency* is defined as discourse frequency, which means that tokens are either grammatically obligatory, semantically salient or pragmatically more relevant. The authors do not expand on what ‘semantic saliency’ exactly denotes, and the concept of token frequency therefore remains vague in this book. The reader might for example assume semantic saliency to refer to items that may in fact be rather *infrequent* (such as proper nouns or specific cultural items), as for example, Rącz (2013) suggests. However, from what follows, the reader may infer that token frequency refers to the fact that a token is simply used more often than other, competing tokens and as such more on the foreground in speakers grammars.

*Type frequency* must then be conceived of as linguistic items or constructions that are more common (or ‘unmarked’—which is another tricky term—MD), and, crucially, if the same type occurs in two or more adstrates in the ecology, it is in all likelihood present in the matrix, and, consequently, a likely candidate for selection by the speakers.

By way of illustration of the CLF model and the typological matrix, the authors describe the fascinating case of Sri Lankan Malay (SLM). The Malay community is a minority in Sri Lanka that arrived in the country during the

17<sup>th</sup> until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The community had (and still has) a rather high status, and a distinct, multilingual identity. The Malay language came in contact with two Sri Lankan adstrates, Sinhala and Tamil. The latter had converged to Sinhala to the extent of becoming typologically similar. Sinhala was and is the majority language, and has political and economic prestige on Sri Lanka. Thus it can be assumed that Sinhala has a high *token frequency* in the ecology. Sinhala and Lankan Tamil (a less dominant but still numerically important language), are typologically similar, so that Tamil reinforces the type-frequency of Sinhala features. Sinhala and Tamil, for example, have both SOV word order (and thus a higher *type frequency*), where Malay has SVO. The typological matrix predicts SLM to become SOV, and this prediction is borne out. Sinhala is an inflectional language, Tamil is an agglutinative language, and SLM has features of both (whereas Malay is originally an analytical language), resulting in a typical Lankan grammar with Malay lexicon.

The authors explain this restructuring by the process of metatypy (Ross, 1996, 2001) and identity alignment. The former term refers to a process of strong grammatical convergence while the (original) lexicon is maintained. The latter refers to the process in which diasporic communities create a new, distinct, identity, of which (as in the case of SLM) being multilingual is an essential part, which is then reflected in the creation of 'new' language forms.

In Chapter 5 two fascinating cases of language creation in the 'opposite direction', reminiscent of substrate interference, are discussed: the development of morphemic tone and certain discourse particles from several Sinitic dialects in Singapore English. The authors observe that 'substratum transfer and metatypy simply helps in understanding the direction of forces, but does not entail ontologically different processes' (p. 94). Important is, the authors emphasise, that these processes take place in an essentially multilingual ecology where concepts such as 'native language', 'mother tongue', 'second language acquisition' and so forth do not play the prominent role that they do in predominantly monolingual societies.

It is the ecology that determines linguistic outcomes. Therefore, creole languages have evolved in the way they did: their ecology was different. The authors seem not to see a primary role for SLA-effects in the emergence of creole languages. Some readers may find this difficult to accept. Should the neurological difference between first and second language acquisition not be taken into consideration? This difference is not accounted for satisfactorily in the book. All in all, most creole languages tend to be rather analytic, a property they share with other widely spoken languages in which SLA was involved (e.g. Modern Persian, which was a widely spoken trade language along the silk route, as well

as Central Asian Turkic languages, that have converged to a large degree with Modern Persian, and, not to forget: English.) Studies such as Kusters (2003) and Trudgill (2011) have convinced at least this reader that, indeed, languages that were learnt as a second language on a large scale basis, tend to be more analytic than languages that have evolved in isolation. Of course, one can maintain that the fact that speakers have to select features from a feature pool at adult age, is simply part of their ecology, but then again the reader might wonder whether the CLF-model is rigid enough.

In addition, the CLF-model remains, at least in the way it is discussed in this book, vague about the role of (deliberate) speaker agency: is it the case that SLM-speakers consciously restructure their Malay as an iconic representation of their identity? Or is it better to speak of language maintenance (as a consequence of identity alignment) under heavy pressure of the other languages? I imagine the latter is the case. Conversely, the Sinitic influences in Singapore English and Hongkong English, are they simply a matter of Sinitic substrate interference or do speakers deliberately manipulate the English in order to construct a specific variety or style for identity purposes (in the same fashion as has been described for Urban vernaculars in Europe)? I imagine that deliberate manipulation could have played a role in the latter case.

Notwithstanding the above remarks, the CLF-model is attractive, first of all because the model integrates social, historical and linguistic aspects in a very explicit manner, instead of paying only lip service. Moreover, the fact that the model calls into question concepts such as 'native language', 'mother tongue' and also the idea that identity is attached to one language only, is very refreshing and makes readers from Europe aware of the extent to which these concepts are taken for granted in Europe. Finally, it is argued for convincingly that selection and transmission of linguistic features is a universal cognitive process that in principle is not different in mono- versus multilingual communities. But, again, the neurological difference between the way children vs adults select features from the pool should have been accounted for as well.

Chapter 6 discusses language contact and language shift, in which the theme of language endangerment is discussed. The authors, though of course like all of us regretting the speed at which languages disappear, support Ladefoged's adage that linguists should not interfere with processes of language loss and revitalisation, but simply document and describe languages, since language death is a natural part of the process of human cultural development. Moreover, they argue, referring to Mufwene (2004, 2007, 2008) not *all* is lost when a language is lost, and something is even gained, namely a new contact language. This is again illustrated with numerous fascinating Asian examples,

in which, again, the detailed account of the ecology (including, of course, historical developments) sheds a clear light on the linguistic outcome of the contact languages.

Chapter 7 is devoted to new routes by which languages come into contact in the present era of globalisation. Referring back to their exposé on globalisation in Chapter 1, the authors now provide fascinating examples of those new routes: among others, they discuss the linguistic consequences of the outsourcing of call-center jobs in Asia, of the globalisation of popular culture such as hiphop and rap, of Sino-African economic relations and, of course, of the new communication technology. An example of the latter is the way in which switching keyboard influences idiom, even in oral speech: since writing in Chinese characters requires more effort than using the QWERTY keyboard, users start to translate a Cantonese idioms in English: 'Add oil', meaning something like: 'work harder'. The authors, referring to Lim (2015), have observed that certain groups in Hongkong now actually use the English calque more often than its Cantonese original. Moreover, the fact that people in Hongkong write English in CMC increasingly, rather than Chinese, also feeds back in oral communication, to the extent that in oral communication, too, English is used more often. The authors emphasise that Chapter 7 has an exploratory character. Some of the studies discussed in this chapter have not yet been published. Nevertheless, the chapter offers fascinating and inspiring information.

The final Chapter 8 reflects on the state of the art in the field of language contact, and then outlines the two debates that have been going on among creolists, namely the Universality vs Exceptionalism debate and the Complexity vs. Simplicity debate. The topic of the two debates seems now a bit vacuous and outdated, considering recent developments in usage-based approaches, and, not in the least, considering the concept of the linguistic ecology and the evolutionary approach. After looking back in this way, the chapter ends with a brief discussion of current and future directions. The authors suggest that issues such as the planning and policy concerning contact languages, Computer Mediated Communication, and the development of Urban vernaculars such as street slang are worthwhile studying.

This book is a valuable contribution to the body of literature on Language Contact, because of its innovative approach, its Asian perspective, and because of the way it takes the integration of social and linguistic aspects seriously. The critical stance the authors adopt to such taken-for-granted concepts as 'mother tongue' and 'native speaker' is refreshing, as is their observation that in many places in the world multilingualism can be an important part of ones' group-identity. The case studies, illustrated with fascinating examples, are yet another valuable aspect of the book. Are there some points of critique



then, apart from those discussed earlier? Maybe two. The first one is that, at times, the writing style is not always engaging and somewhat inaccessible, especially in Chapters 3 and 4. This may put off the broader scholarly public the authors are (also) aiming at. The second is, that the overviews of older work on language contact (code switching in Chapter 2 and creole studies in Chapter 3) are, I imagine, too dense for a wider public to fully appreciate, and a bit superfluous for specialists in the field. Better devote that space to yet other case studies or to providing clear definitions for concepts such as saliency. Also some reference to linguistic-anthropological approaches would certainly not have been out of place. But these are minor things, and do not stand in the way of my recommending this book as secondary reading to graduate students.

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