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The monograph under review is the first specialized treatment of Lingua Franca in Portuguese, and the second book-length treatment of Lingua Franca (henceforth LF) to appear in print. The earlier monograph, Cifoletti’s *La lingua franca mediterranea* (1989), which the present publication resembles in scope and layout, contains a general discussion of the term “lingua franca”; a history of this speech-form insofar as it can be deduced from the documents at our disposal; a sketch of its phonology, morphology, and syntax; an extensive study of its lexicon, especially that of Anonymous (1830), the most significant direct testimony of LF on record; and a reprint of the

major documentary and literary texts in LF, with a brief linguistic analysis of each fragment, generally followed by a glossary of the lexicon it contains. The present monograph differs from Cifoletti (1989) in that it is, in general, more oriented toward theory than data. In particular, it provides an extensive overview of the major theoretical issues associated with LF (Chaps. 1–2); a detailed discussion of the general characteristics of pidgins, their applicability to LF, and the problems posed by LF for the theoretical foundations of pidgin and creole studies; as well as an historical overview of the sociolinguistic conditions in Algiers and during the crusades.

In the preface (9–10), the author explains that this work is the initial step in his long-term project concerned with the development of creole grammar. The first chapter (*Introdução*, 11–22) provides a short introduction to the major issues of LF studies, such as the origin and synchronic uses of the term “lingua franca”; the linguistic basis of LF and its regional varieties; its linguistic status, variability and areal spread. Also included is a brief sketch of the speech forms frequently confused with LF, namely, colonial Italian (especially Venetian), the mixed Romance-based language of the crusades, the Spanish of the Moors in Spain, and Sabir (which, for the author, represents the last stage of LF; see p. 19).

The second chapter (“Esboço histórico da língua franca”, 23–36) is a continued introduction to the range of theoretical issues associated with LF. Here the author mentions the major theories of the origin of LF; traces the sociolinguistic history of Algiers, the source of some of the most important extant documents in LF; and briefly reviews some of the preceding LF scholarship. The extensive historical overview of the changing sociolinguistic conditions in Algiers presented in this chapter is paralleled by the contents of Chapter 6 (“As cruzadas”, 187–192), in which the author presents a sociolinguistic account of the history of the crusades, and evaluates the possibility of the formation of LF as a linguistic artifact of this movement, a theory put forth in many of the preceding discussions of LF origins. Both accounts represent a step forward in the attempt to elucidate the origins of LF and the reasons for its continuation.

The third chapter (“Textos em língua franca”, 37–110) brings together over thirty linguistic documents believed to be written in LF. These texts are chiefly those published by Cifoletti (1989), but in the present monograph each is provided with a translation into Portuguese. The presentation of texts differs from that adopted by Cifoletti, who explicitly rejects literary fragments as

a faithful representation of LF (1989: 16–17), and presents the documentary evidence first. The texts in the present work are arranged in chronological order and are divided into three periods: “período das origens” (12th–16th centuries), “período dos piratas barbarescos” (17th century – 1830), and “período do saber” (after the French colonization of Algiers in 1830). The division into three periods follows Cifoletti (1989: 22–23); Couto himself adds the fourth period, namely, that of the decline of LF. Each text is accompanied by a Portuguese translation and a few paragraphs about the source of the text and its relative merits for the study of LF. Brief linguistic commentary is also provided.

The fourth chapter (“Declínio e algumas sobrevivências”, 111–120) discusses the causes of the decline of LF, the putative remnants of this pidgin in North Africa during the period of decline, as well as its possible connection with Pidgin Portuguese and the theory of creole monogenesis.

Chapter Five (“Língua franca e língua”, 121–186) – the core of the book – seeks to clarify the status of LF as a speech form. The author begins by discussing the question of what constitutes a language, what defines a pidgin, and what differences there are between jargons, pidgins, and creoles (Sections 5.1–5.2). He then divides the commonly accepted characteristics of a pidgin into linguistic and sociohistorical categories. After considering each of them, he concludes that LF conforms to the parameters of a pidgin (5.3). The final sub-section of this chapter examines the contribution of LF to creole studies. The main angle of discussion here concerns the problems that LF poses for the definition of such basic notions of pidgin and creole linguistics as substrate, superstrate, dominant language, target language, and relexification (5.4). The overall conclusions are briefly summarized in the final chapter (“Conclusão”, 193–196).

The remarks that follow reflect some of the minor inconsistencies and omissions.

- (i) While the author makes clear his position that Spanish Golden Age and sixteenth-century Portuguese stage-dialects representing the speech of foreigners should be kept distinct from LF, he nonetheless reproduces Orlando di Lasso’s “Matona mia cara” in the textual portion of his book (51–53). This sixteenth-century composition belongs to the genre of *todesche*, or burlesque songs aimed at ridiculing the broken Italian of German mercenaries (see, for instance, Bierbach 1987; and Coates 1970).

This song thus cannot be separated both from its proper context (that is, stereotyped stage dialects representing the speech of ethnic minorities, such as *greghesco* [the Italian of Greeks] and *schiaionesco* [the Italian of Slavs; cf. Cortelazzo 1980; and Operstein, in press]) and from the contemporary Spanish and Portuguese stage dialects explicitly rejected by the author as representative of LF (see pp. 18, 109–110).

- (ii) While the book provides a fairly comprehensive survey of the range of problems associated with LF, it leaves out two significant issues discussed hitherto in connection with LF: the possible role of LF in Mediterranean vocabulary-borrowing (e.g. Corominas 1948; and Whinnom 1966–1967), and possible remnants of LF-transmitted vocabulary in slang (e.g. Hancock 1973).
- (iii) Examples of the use of reduplication in LF given on p. 165 include *filfil* (spelled *fil-fil*) ‘pepper’, which most likely is a direct loan from Arabic *filfil* ‘pepper’, itself considered a loan-word from Old Indian via Persian and/or Aramaic (e.g. Klein 1987: 512). Given the background of this form, it cannot be cited as an example of LF reduplication as a language-internal device.
- (iv) There are a few inaccurate renderings in the texts reproduced from Cifoletti (1989) and other sources. For example, the text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (ca. 1204), reproduced from Kahane and Kahane (1976), contains *monipotente* for *monipotante*, *de tout* for *te tout*, *se vout* for *se voet* and *pa* for *par* (40), while the 1521 *villancico* by Juan del Encina has *maqueta* for *marqueta* on lines 21 and 25 (48). Thus, in order to cite linguistic material reproduced in this book it may be necessary to check with the original editions.

Although *A língua franca mediterrânea: histórico, textos e interpretação* does not entirely supplant Cifoletti, this brief yet substantial introduction to LF and the range of problems associated with this speech-form will be of interest to linguists working with pidgins and creoles, as well as to specialists from adjacent fields interested in linguistic simplification and pidginization processes and the theoretical discussions in pidgin and creole linguistics.

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