PORTUGUESE- AND SPANISH-BASED CREOLES AND TYPOLOGIES

John Holm, U. of Coimbra

1. Introduction

The present study is intended to cast light on the question of whether creole languages in general share structural similarities that could be said to constitute a typology. Although there is mounting evidence that they do not, especially when Atlantic creoles are compared to those of Asia and the Pacific area, the question is still open as to what degree particular groups of creoles reflect the typological similarities of their superstrate and substrate languages, thus forming typological groups of their own.

This study builds on a previous article (Holm 2001) comparing nearly 100 morphosyntactic features in three creoles with Spanish as their lexifier: Zamboangueño (now based on Lipski and Santoro fc.), Papiamentu (Kouwenberg and Michel fc.) and Palenquero (Green-Pichard and Schwegler fc.). This comparison has been expanded to survey the same features in Portuguese-based creoles from various subgroups: Cape Verdean and Guiné-Bissau CP (Baptista, Mello, and Suzuki fc.), Angolar (Lorenzino fc.), and Korlai CP (Clements fc.).

2. The data

The point of this study is to draw conclusions from the quantification of structual similarities within groups of creoles, particularly by superstrate and substrate. For the latter purpose, the comparison includes a seventh creole which does not share either Iberian superstrate, but does share the Austronesian substrate of Zamboangueño: Tok Pisin Pidgin/Creole English (Faraclas fc.). The structures surveyed include the verb phrase, examining such features as the time reference of tense markers, the semantics of aspect markers, how these can co-occur, etc. The noun phrase is examined as well, including the use of determiners, plural marking, the position of modifiers, gender marking, etc. Finally, the structure of main and dependent clauses is analyzed, as can be seen in the following table.

The abbreviations used in this table are as follows:

AN = Angolar CP   + = presence of feature attested
CP = Creole Portugues   0 = absence of feature attested
CS = Creole Spanish   R = feature's presence attested but rare
CV = Cape Verdean CP   ? = feature's presence or absence unknown
KL = Korlai CP
P/C = Pidgin or Creole
PL = Palenquero CS
PP = Papiamentu CS
TP = Tok Pisin P/C English
ZM = Zamboangueño CS

1.0 UNMARKED VERBS:	ZM	TP	PL	PP		AN	CV	KL
1.1 Statives with non-past reference	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
1.2 Statives with past reference	+	R	+	0		+	+	R
1.3 Non-stative with past reference	+	+	+	0		+	+	0
1.4 Non-statives with non-past reference	+	R	+	0		0	+	0

2.0 PAST TENSE MARKER	ZM	TP	PL	PP		AN	CV	KL
2.1 Before statives with past reference	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
2.2 Before non-statives with past reference	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
2.3 Past = counterfactual	0	R	+	+		0	+	+
2.4 Past with adjectival verb	+	+	0	0		0	0	0
2.5 Past with locative	+	+	R	0		0	0	0

3.0 PROGRESSIVE ASPECT MARKER	ZM	TP	PL	PP		AN	CV	KL
3.1 Indicating progressive	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
3.2 Indicating future	+	0	0	+		+	+	+
3.3 Anterior plus progressive	0	+	+	+		+	+	+
3.4 Progressive with adjectival verb	0	+	0	0		+	0	0

4.0 HABITUAL ASPECT	ZM	TP	PL	PP		AN	CV	KL
4.1 Zero marker for habitual	+	0	+	+		+	+	0
4.2 Progressive marker for habitual	+	0	0	+		+	0	0
4.3 Marker for habitual only	0	+	+	+		+	0	+
4.4 Past plus habitual	0	+	+	+		+	+	+

5.0 COMPLETIVE ASPECT	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
5.1 Completive only (before/after verb)......	+	+	+	+	+	0	0
5.2 Completive + adjectival verb.................	?	+	0	0	0	0	0
5.3 Anterior (or other) + Completive..........	0	+	+	+	0	+	+

6.0 IRREALIS MODE	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
6.1 Future...	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
6.2 Past + Irrealis = conditional..................	0	R	+	+	+	+	0
6.3 Past + Irrealis = future in the past..........	+	+	+	+	0	+	0
6.4 Past + Irrealis = future perfect................	0	+	0	0	0	0	0

7.0 OTHER COMBINATIONS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
7.1 Irrealis + Progressive.............................	0	+	0	+	0	+	+
7.2 Past + Irrealis + Progressive...................	0	0	+	+	0	+	0
7.3 Other auxiliary-like elements..................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

8.0 NEGATION	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
8.1 Single negation (verbal).........................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8.2 Discontinous double negation................	0	0	+	0	+	0	0
8.3 Negative concord..................................	+	0	+	+	+	+	+

9.0 PASSIVE	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
9.1 Passive construction.............................	0	0	0	+	+	+	R
9.2 Passive equivalent................................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

10.0 ADJECTIVES/ non-verbal predicates	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
10.1 Preverbal markers before adjectives...	0	+	0	0	R	0	0
10.2 Preverbal markers before nouns.........	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
10.3 Preverbal markers before locatives.....	0	+	0	0	0	+	0
10.4 Predicate clefting: adjectives...............	0	+	0	+	0	+	+
10.5 Predicate clefting: (other) verbs.........	0	+	0	+	+	+	+
10.6 Comparison with `PASS'....................	0	+	0	R	0	0	0
10.7 Comparison as in superstrate.............	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

11.0 THE COPULA	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
11.1 Equative copula (before NP)................	0	0	+	+	+	+	+
11.2 Different locative copula (before place)?....	+	+	+	0	+	+	+
11.3 Zero copula before adjectives?............	+	+	0	0	+	+	0
11.4 Existential (`have' = `there is').............	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
11.5 Highlighter with question words..........	0	+	+	+	+	+	0
11.6 Highlighter with other structures.........	0	+	+	+	+	+	0

12.0 SERIAL VERBS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
12.1 Directional with `go'............................	0	+	0	+	+	+	+
12.2 Directional with `come'......................	+	+	0	+	+	+	+
12.3 Serial `give' meaning `to, for'.............	0	+	0	+	+	0	0
12.4 Serial `say' meaning `that'..................	0	0	0	0	+	+	0
12.5 Serial `pass' meaning `more than'........	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
12.6 Three serial verb construction.............	+	+	0	+	R	+	+
12.7 Constructions with four + serial verbs....	+	+	0	+	0	0	+

13.0 NOUNS AND MODIFIERS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
13.1 Bare nouns (generic?)..........................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
13.2 Indefinite article.................................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
13.3 Definite art. (from superstrate deictic?)......	0	+	0	+	+	+	0
13.4 Plural marker (='they'?)......................	0	+	0	+	+	0	0
13.5 Personal nouns plus plural marker......	+	+	0	+	+	0	0
13.6 Demonstratives..................................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
13.7 Demonstrative plus definite or plural.....	0	+	+	+	+	0	0
13.8 Rel. clauses + definite or plural marker.......	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
13.9 Prenominal adjective..........................	+	+	+	+	R	+	+

	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
13.10 Postnominal adjective.......................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
13.11 Gender agreement?...........................	0	0	R	0	0	+	0

14.0 POSSESSION	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
14.1 Nouns: juxtaposition [possessor + possessed]......	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
14.2 Nouns: preposition [possessed OF possessor]....	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
14.3 Nouns: poss. adj. [possessor HIS possessed]......	0	0	0	+	0	0	+
14.4 Possessive adjectives: prenominal?....................	+	+	0	+	0	+	+
14.5 Possessive pronouns: different form?................	+	0	0	+	+	+	0
14.6 Poss. pronouns as emphatic poss. adjectives......	0	0	0	+	0	?	0

15.0 PRONOUNS: case distinctions?	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
15.1 Personal pronouns: first person singular......	+	0	+	0	0	0	+
15.2 Personal pronouns: second person singular.....	+	0	0	0	0	0	+
15.3 Personal pronouns: third person singular........	+	+	0	0	0	0	+

	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
15.4 Personal pronouns: first person plural.........	+	0	0	0	0	0	+
15.5 Personal pronouns: second person plural....	+	0	0	0	0	0	+
15.6 Personal pronouns: third person plural.......	+	0	0	+	0	0	+
15.7 Reflexive pronoun: distinct form?..............	+	+	0	+	+	+	0
15.8 Interrogative pronouns: some bimorphemic?.....	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
15.9 Relative pronouns......................................	0	+	+	+	+	+	+

16.0 COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
16.1 `AND' joining sentences.......................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
16.2 'AND' joining sentence parts: distinct?....	0	0	0	+	+	+	+

17.0 PREPOSITIONS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
17.1 General locative preposition................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
17.2 Zero prep. after motion verb + place......	0	+	0	+	+	+	+

18.0 COMPLEMENTIZERS	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
18.1 No infinitive marker.....................................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
18.2 `FOR' as infinitive marker.............................	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
18.3 `FOR' as a (quasi-) modal.............................	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
18.4 `FOR' introducing a tensed clause................	0	+	+	+	+	?	0
18.5 Subordinator from superstrate `THAT'.........	+	0	+	+	+	+	+
18.6 Distinct subord. after verb of speaking etc....	0	+	0	0	+	+	+
18.7 Zero subordinator possible...........................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

19.0 DEPENDENT CLAUSES	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
19.1 Subordinate clauses (non-embedded)..........	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
19.2 Subordinate clauses (embedded).................	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
19.3 Rel. clauses (rel. pronoun = subject)...........	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
19.4 Rel. clauses (rel. pronoun = direct object)...	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
19.5 Rel. clauses (rel. pronoun = obj. of prep.)...	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
19.6 Relative clauses (no relative pronoun).........	+	+	0	+	+	0	0

20.0 WORD ORDER	ZM	TP	PL	PP	AN	CV	KL
20.1 Word order: same in questions?...........	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
20.2 Sentence final -o.................................	0	R	0	+	+	0	0

3. Analysis

There are at least two ways of quantifying this kind of typological data in order to compare the results for particular languages. The first is that used in Holm (2001), which matches pairs of languages and allows a comparison of the Spanish-based creoles in that study with the Portuguese-based creoles in this study. The second, used in Thomason and Kaufman (1988) quantifies the general tendency in each of a number of languages towards a particular typology.

3.1 Pairing

In Holm (2001) it was noted that there are a total of 97 grammatical features surveyed in the above charts. If we count exact matches only (e.g. + = +, 0 = 0), ignoring possible matches (e.g. R = +), we find the following:

Spanish-based creoles	Portuguese-based creoles
ZM = (TP): 48 (49%)	
ZM = PP: 52 (53%)	AN = KL: 49 (51%)
PL = PP: 60 (62%)	CV = KL: 63 (65%)
ZM = PL: 61 (63%)	AN = CV: 71 (73%)

It should be noted that the above figures for the Spanish-based creoles differ from those in Holm (2001) in which earlier versions of the studies of ZM and PL were used; these are likely not to have been as accurate as the current studies on which the present figures are based.

To begin with the Spanish-based creoles, these figures offer some surprises about the importance of both the superstrate and the substrate as a source of creole grammatical features. The lowest percentage of parallel constructions is found between Zamboangueño and Tok Pisin, which share an Austronesian substrate but which have two different superstrates: Spanish and English. A higher percentage of parallel features is found between Zamboangueño and the two other Spanish-based creoles: Papiamentu on the one hand (53%) and Palenquero on the other (63%)--although the Niger-Congo languages that form their substrates are typologically quite distinct from Austronesian languages. It is interesting that about the same percentage of parallel constructions is found between Palenquero and Papiamentu (62%)--languages that share both a superstrate and a substrate (even though there are some important typological differences between the West African Kwa languages that influenced Papiamentu and the Central African Bantu languages that influenced Palenquero, although both subgroups are part of the larger Niger-Congo family).

To continue with the Portuguese-based creoles, the lowest percentage of parallel constructions is found between Angolar and Korlai CP, which share their superstrate but not their substrate (Niger-Congo and Indic, respectively). Surprisingly, Cape Verdean and Korlai CP, with the same respective substrates, have a considerably higher percentage of common features (65%). Less surprisingly, Angolar and Cape Verdean have the highest percentage of such features (73%), both having substrate languages from the Niger-Congo family, albeit from different subgroups (Kwa and Bantu for Angolar, Mande and West Atlantic for Cape Verdean).

3.2 Plussing

The second method of quantifying data in a typological survey is that used by Thomason and Kaufman (1988:315): "Each feature is assigned a weight of one point, and a marginal or less decided feature is given half a point. Plus (+) means present; minus (-) means absent; marginal features are in parentheses; (?) means unknown or unclear." Adjusting this for the symbols above, each plus for a particular language is given one point, each 0 is given 0, each R is given half a point, and each ? remains untabulated. This yields the following results:

Palenquero CS	52.5
Korlai CP	53
Zamboangueño CS	57
Cape Verdean CP	65
Angolar CP	66.5
Papiamentu CS	72.5

These figures lend themselves less readily to analysis. My original selection of structural features was guided by those discussed in the chapters on syntax in Holm 1988, and this selection was influenced by my own research up to that point, which had focussed largely on the Atlantic creoles. Thus it is possible that the above figures simply reveal a cline of Atlanticness.

4. Conclusions

It still seems premature to claim that anything is the most crucial factor in determining the structure of a creole language. These are preliminary findings and need to be reexamined in the light of more such studies, the methodology of which could almost certainly profit from further work. However, the present study does suggest

a promising agenda for future research, such as the structural comparison of creole languages which have the same superstrate and exactly the same substrate, or those which have different superstrates and exactly the same substrate.

Up to now, our methods of measuring similarity and difference among creole languages have been either too subjective (e.g. the scores of comprehension tests of a French-creole-speaker listening to tape recordings made by speakers of related creoles [Graham 1985] or too tightly focused on lexicon rather than structure (e.g. Ivens Ferraz 1979 on cognate vocabulary within the Gulf of Guinea varieties of creole Portuguese)--although such methods certainly lend themselves more readily to measurement than anecdotal observations (e.g. that basilectal speakers of the restructured English of Sierra Leone and Liberia cannot understand one another [Holm 1989:409]).

The methodology that has been evolving in the comparative creole syntax project that I have been working on with Peter Patrick and a number of colleagues (Holm and Patrick, eds. fc.) is not easy: it involves massive amounts of linguistic data and a daunting number of judgments to evaluate the precise nature of those data. However, this methodology is coming to grips with some of the basic problems of comparative syntax and yielding results that are highly relevant to the development of theory.

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