

Cabo Verdean Creole and Mandinka DP Domain: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Creole languages typically emerge in multilingual settings among language users endowed with distinct first languages. As a result of the intense and oftentimes long-term contact between users, the languages in contact leave long-lasting imprints on the emerging Creole language. The traces of the founding populations (the *Founder Principle*, Mufwene, 1996) can be observed at the lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic levels of the Creole language, next to internal developments and genuine innovations that make the Creole language a distinct linguistic system that stands independently from its source languages.

The objective of this presentation is to compare Cabo Verdean Creole both to its Portuguese lexifier and to one of its main substrates, Mandinka (Quint, 2006), to evaluate whether traces of these source languages are observable in Cabo Verdean, specifically with respect to its use of demonstrative and definite determiners.

We show that with respect to number morphology on demonstrative phrases, the behavior of the Cabo Verdean demonstrative can align either with Portuguese or with Mandinka, leading to the variation documented in Baptista and Dayal (to appear). These results support the *Founder Principle*. In contrast, when one examines reference to kinds/genericity, the behavior of Cabo Verdean is distinct from both Portuguese and Mandinka which require definiteness marking on both singular and plural nouns. Cabo Verdean only uses bare nouns. This does not support the *Founder Principle*, showing instead that Cabo Verdean has undergone internal development in that aspect of its grammar.