

Preface and Acknowledgments

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 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cll.19.01spe>

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**The Structure and Status of Pidgins and Creoles: Including
selected papers from meetings of the Society for Pidgin
and Creole linguistics**

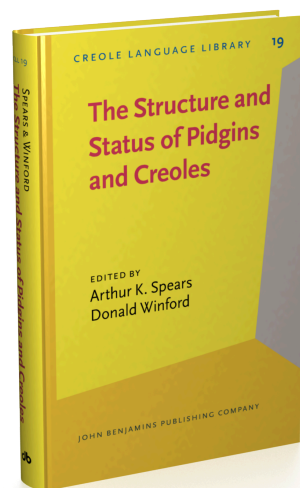
Edited by Arthur K. Spears and Donald Winford

[Creole Language Library, 19] 1997. viii, 461 pp.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I first undertook to do this volume, I felt that it should be something more than a collection of conference papers, though certainly such collections have been valuable, and in some instances, helped to redefine a field. This period in the study of pidgins and creoles seemed especially beclouded by the questions hanging over our entire enterprise, questions which go to the core of what we are about. Perhaps the most challenging of them are (a) whether the study of pidgins and creoles and attendant phenomena should be examined without a full taking into account of contact languages in general and (b) whether the terms themselves that we habitually use—*pidgin*, *creole*, *jargon*, etc.—would not be better rethought or, perhaps in some cases, abandoned in producing a new terminological tool kit more adequately reflecting what has been learned since the mushrooming of research following the 1970s. In order to produce stock-taking answers to these and related questions, it seemed appropriate to ask eminent scholars in pidgin and creole studies to prepare contributions especially for this volume. Having agreed to serve as second editor, Don Winford proceeded with me to elaborate and refine the volume's themes, which, as indicated by the title, focus on the structure and status of pidgins and creoles.

It will become clear from reading the conference papers that a number of them deal with broad issues of central importance, their authors having taken to heart our call for revisions that would enhance the thematic unity and goals of the end product. Thus, the invited contributions (those of Mufwene and Thomason), in terms of scope and timeliness are matched by significantly expanded conference papers.

We want to thank a number of scholars for their time-consuming efforts in reviewing papers submitted to be considered for this volume: Salikoko Mufwene, Armin Schwegler, John Singler, John Lipski, and Frank Byrne. We would like especially to thank Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics president, John Singler, who, as co-editor of the Creole Language Library, provided input during this volume's preparation. Kees Vaes, at John Benjamins, was also instrumental in moving the project forward.

We also express our appreciation to those who assisted in the preparation of camera-ready copy for the publisher and those who assisted in various other ways: Charles Hamilton Townsend, Erick Riley, Gloria Thomas, Judith Tucker, Emeye Guqsa, Michael Mueller, Carlos Sanchez, and Andrea Lee. Without their help this volume would certainly have taken even longer. Special thanks are due to Harold Marcano, who kept this project from becoming a truly Sisyphean task by helping me to select computer equipment, teaching me all about Windows and WordPerfect, and making several word-processing problems much less obstructive

than they might have been. To Verneta Hill, I give special recognition for her ever present support.

Lastly, we thank the contributors for their patience and cooperation, but above all for providing our field with papers of unaccustomed timeliness and import as we attempt to decide what the scope and primary research questions will be over the coming decades.

And what now? *Deyè mòn, gen mòn.*

Arthur K. Spears