Review Of "The Romance Languages" By R. Posner

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generally have uninflected ('invariable') verb forms with tense, aspect, and modality often
recognizable to Romance speakers fall outside the family. Posner points out that creoles
discusses diphthongization and metaphony (the Romance rubric for umlaut). With morphological and syntactic characteristics to help in identifying Romance languages, Creoles with one Romance language base and which often have a lexicon that is highly
common external influences, not just the possibility that the relevant changes occurred in the
as inherited peripheral phenomena, the weight of tradition, influence between the daughters, and
to Latin are discussed. When daughters change in similar ways, we need to consider factors such
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distinctions between proclitics and enclitics, clitic climbing, all of these and more are handled
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suffixation of -mente, which comes from the Latin noun MENS 'mind' (the source, then, being
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Morphological characteristics are particularly helpful in recognizing language families. Derivation and inflection in the Romance languages are affixal, prefixes and suffixes clearly
coming from Latin. Adverb formation quite generally (though not pan-Romance) involves the
the suffixation of -mente, which comes from the Latin noun MENS 'mind' (the source, then, being
concatenative). Concatenative compounding is somewhat limited (especially in comparison to the
Germanic family), although Posner, unfortunately, doesn't mention the strong similarities in
restrictions on compounding across Romance and their source in Latin. Prepositions stand out
as a class, deriving from Latin, with variations in meaning across the daughters. Pronouns and
possessives are especially conservative, holding true to a pattern traced back to Indo-European.
The number of conjugations and their identification via theme vowel, the range of tenses and
aspects, the use of an analytic perfect (what Posner calls a 'compound' perfect), moods - all of
these are quite similar across Romance and all originate in Latin.
Syntactic characteristics are, likewise, helpful. The development of clitics, their doubling, the
distinctions between proclitics and enclitics, clitic climbing, all of these and more are handled here. Characteristics that are common to many daughter languages and that were not common to Latin are discussed. When daughters change in similar ways, we need to consider factors such
as inherited peripheral phenomena, the weight of tradition, influence between the daughters, and
common external influences, not just the possibility that the relevant changes occurred in the
proto-language before the divergence into the daughters. In this regard, for phonology Posner
discusses diphthongization and metaphor (the Romance rubric for umlaut).
With morphological and syntactic characteristics to help in identifying Romance languages, Creoles with one Romance language base and which often have a lexicon that is highly
recognizable to Romance speakers fall outside the family. Posner points out that creoles
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conveyed via forms that precede the verb (and she labels each a ‘prefix’, without discussion to support that morphological status, 72).

The second half of the book is more traditional than the first half. Posner spends one chapter (Chapter 5) discussing the standards one uses in counting languages. She talks about the issues involved in using political boundaries as definitional for contrasting a language to a dialect. She points out the literary and political reasons for calling some dialects languages, including Occitan and Catalan. She points out how the claims by earlier philologists as to language identity have influenced our calling some dialects languages, including Rhaeto-Romance (a group comprised of Ladin, Romansh, Friulian, and others). Within the Romance languages, she points out tendencies that some languages share more than others, grouping French and Italian, on the one hand, and Spanish, Portuguese, Sard, Romanian, and Engadine Rhaeto-Romance, on the other. Posner then gives an overview of the history of language standardization in various Romance-speaking countries. A very interesting, though brief, survey of Romance creoles closes the chapter. In Chapter 6 Posner talks about when the Romance languages differentiated one from another, and in Chapter 7 she talks about how they differentiated. The latter chapter has a particularly nice balance of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The final chapter is sociolinguistic, looking at the interaction between different Romance varieties of speech and the interaction between Romance languages and neighboring non-Romance languages. Here Canadian French is compared to the French of France, linguistic conflict is discussed with respect to Catalan and Castilian, bilingualism and diglossia are noted with particular attention to the Italian situation.

There is, in the end, little new in this book and some repetition of topics, perhaps due to the unusual organization of the material. However, the grouping together of information on Creoles, the attention to different standards for grouping languages, and the references to relatively recent generative ways of approaching various phenomena make the book interesting and suggest its use as a text in courses on comparative Romance, particularly for the undergraduate, where breadth without (sometimes tedious) depth is more apt to be appreciated.

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Reviewed by Bernard Comrie, University of Southern California

This second volume of articles on the tense systems of European languages consists of an editorial introduction, two essays on Germanic languages, four on Romance languages, four on Slavonic languages, four on other Indo-European languages, and two on non-Indo-European languages of Europe, as follows: Rolf Thieroff ‘More on inherent verb categories in European languages’ (1–36), Maria Bonner ‘Zum Tempussystem des Isländischen’ (37–58, on Icelandic), Östen Dahl ‘The tense system of Swedish’ (59–68), Hans Petter Helland ‘A compositional analysis of the French tense system’ (69–94), Fátima Oliveira and Ana Lopes ‘Tense and aspect in Portuguese’ (95–115), Mario Squartini ‘Tense and aspect in Italian’ (117–134), Martin Haase ‘Tense, aspect and mood in Romanian’ (135–152), Heinz Vater ‘The tense system of Polish’ (153–165), Ronald Lötzsch ‘Das sorbische Tempussystem’ (167–179), Jadranka Gvozdanović ‘Western South Slavic tenses in a typological perspective’ (181–194), Tania Kuteva ‘Bulgarian tenses’ (195–213), Nijolė Sližienė ‘The tense system of Lithuanian’ (215–232), Eva Hedin ‘The tense aspect system of Modern Greek’ (233–251), Jean-Louis Duchet ‘The Albanian tense system’ (253–275), Natalia Kozintseva ‘The tense system of Modern Eastern Armenian’ (277–297), Helle Metslang and Hannu Tommola ‘Zum Tempussystem des Estnischen’ (299–326, on Estonian), and Ray Fabri ‘The tense and aspect system of Maltese’ (327–343); a list of contributors, including e-mail addresses, appears on page 345. As is indicated in the titles of the