How the brain constructs grammar (without a tutor): evidence from some Portuguese- and Spanish-lexified contact varieties

J. Clancy Clements
Indiana University

One of the things the brain does very well is recognize patterns. It is also sensitive to input and input frequency in creating the patterns. In this presentation, I show how frequency of occurrence of nominal and verbal forms in discourse can be determined, and how this form frequency, along with the perceptual salience of such forms, can serve to predict form selection in the language acquisition/creation process, and account for the restructuring found in immigrant and creole languages. The data are taken from a representative sample of Portuguese- and Spanish-based language-contact varieties.