

Creole studies. A theoretical linguist's field guide

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The *doyen* of Caribbean Creole Studies, Mervyn Alleyne, was born in Trinidad, lives in Jamaica, and likes to come to Amsterdam on a visit from time to time. In Amsterdam, he noticed on one of these visits, linguists do a lot of their fieldwork on Saramaccan with the local expatriate Saramaccan group, rather than travelling to the maroon communities in upriver, *liba sey* (<Port. *riba* 'above', Eng. *side*), Surinam. 'Ah', he said, 'Saramaccan without tears!' This field guide might be termed Creole Studies Without Tears, were it not for the fact that there is no serious scholarly endeavour without tears (or joy, for that matter, if things work out).

Not infrequently we are approached by theoretical linguists who would like to do some work on creoles, but do not know how to go about it. Hence this field guide, in which the word 'field' refers to the scholarly domain rather than to actual creole speaking communities.

We begin with a snap review of some of the introductions, journals, collective volumes, perspectives on origins, and debates in the field in section 1, before turning to analytical issues in the field in section 2. Section 3 presents some perspectives for new research. A caveat is that with an endeavour such as writing this guide one runs the risk of being highly personal, incomplete, biased, etc. Hopefully someone will write a Rejoinder pointing out the issues we do not discuss. Most of our material is drawn from the Atlantic rather than the Pacific.

1. Ground work

There are a number of introductions to the field. Mühlhäusler (1986) is particularly strong on the author's own research area, the history of Tok Pisin; it is pleasantly ideosyncratic. Romaine (1988), too, is more focused on the Pacific than on the Atlantic; it is very strong in the links it establishes between pidgin and creole studies and with fields such as language typology and acquisition. Arends *et al.* (1995a) is a multiauthor volume; focusing on the Atlantic, it covers a number of grammatical issues in several languages. Linguistically, it is the most technical of the introductions. Sebba (1997), in contrast, providing a wide scope (that of contact languages in general), presents the least technical, most accessible treatment.

1.1. Journals and web activities

The *Carrier Pidgin* has been around longest (first issue 1972), but it is more of a newsletter and set of reviews than a real journal. The *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* (JPCL) was founded in 1986 and is edited by Glenn Gilbert (University of Southern Illinois). It has a regular column, and is strongest in its detailed studies presenting new data sets. *Études Créoles* (first issue 1978) is a French journal edited in Aix-en-Provence under the responsibility of the Comité International des Études Créoles. Finally, *Papia* (first issue 1990) is edited by Hildo do Couto (Universidade de Brasília), and contains articles in Spanish and Portuguese on Ibero-Romance lexifier creoles. There is a discussion list edited by Mikael Parkvall in Stockholm: CreoLIST@ling.su.se, and an excellent web site at the same place, <http://www.ling.su.se/creole>.

1.2. Collective volumes

The recent history of the field has been marked by a series of collective volumes, which show an increasing specialization and an increasingly technical focus. We can only be very selective here. The tremendously influential collection edited by Dell Hymes (1971) established the field as a separate subdiscipline and contains several papers which have withstood the tooth of time. Valdman & Highfield (1980) marks the coming of age of the discipline; as the title *Theoretical orientations in Creole studies* indicates, it sets out a number of theoretical issues. Muysken & Smith (eds, 1986) establishes the parameters of one of the core debates in the field: substrates vs. universals (see below). DeGraff (2000) is certainly the most beautiful of these books, theoretically linking creole studies to issues of language development and language change; we highly recommend the carefully reasoned epilogue by the editor.

1.3. Creole languages and their origins

Prototypical creoles, spoken in the Caribbean, include plantation creoles like Haitian, Jamaican Creole,

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Papiamentu, and the Surinam creole language Sranan. Also recognized as focal members of the set of creole languages are Maroon creoles such as Saramaccan (again Surinam) and Palenquero (near Cartagena in Colombia). All these languages emerged fairly rapidly, in the context of the African slave trade, associated with European plantation agriculture, in the period 1650–1750, and in areas with a large proportion of non-target language speakers in the overall population. Recruitment areas were mostly Kwa (Akan, Fongbe) and Bantu (Kikongo) speaking.

Next to the core group of proto-typical creoles, we find other languages, which differ in one or more of these features: there are plantation creole languages that emerged in West Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific, rather than in the Caribbean. Some of these involved African slaves with the same language background as those of the core creoles; others, such as Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), involved speakers of very different languages.

	fairly rapidly	African slave	European plant.	1650–1750	non-target	Car. set.
Sranan	+	+	+	+	+	+
HCE	+	–	+	–	+	–
Tok Pisin	±	–	±	–	+	–
Sao Tomé	+	+	+	+	+	–
Seselwa	+	±	+	–	+	–

The delimitation issue of what counts as a creole language is a vexed one. It is particularly important in the context of linguistic investigations because we do not know which features of the creoles are due to universal processes of creolization and which to specific properties of the languages involved.

A great deal has been written about the genesis of creole languages. We need a multidimensional model for creole genesis, in which at least the following specific processes interact with general properties of the human language faculty. In the genesis of different creoles, the contribution of these various processes differs, while they frequently interact.

The first process is the **simplification** of the European target language input, due to accommodation by native speakers of these languages in contact settings but most of all to second language learning strategies on the part of the slaves (Bickerton, 1980; Andersen, 1983). This simplification is apparent in several ways. There is selective adoption of target language material: content words and phonetically strong forms are taken over, most morphological endings and (unstressed) preverbal clitics disappear. Syntactically, simplification is manifest in the loss of ordering possibilities. Creoles generally have much less variable word order than their European lexifier languages.

A second process concerns **relexification** of the structural patterns of the first language with words from the European colonial languages. This process is alternatively referred to as intertwining (Bakker, 1997), and is similar in its results to what is often termed native language transfer, conservation of L1 patterns, and insertion or embedding of new vocabu-

lary in a native matrix language structure (Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1997).

The third major process involved in at least some cases of creole genesis is **convergence** between the patterns of the languages in contact. This process was referred to in terms of multilevel generative systems by Silverstein (1972a, b) when he discussed the mutual adaptation of English and Chinook in the emergence of Chinook Jargon. It has been taken up again by Kouwenberg (1992) in an analysis of the mutual adaptations of Kalabari Ijo and Dutch to produce Berbice Dutch, a creole spoken in Guyana. The surface convergence is assumed to be based on compromises between the categories of the different languages as well as between their word order patterns.

1.4. Debates

The creolist field has been characterized by a number of fierce debates. A debate raging around 1970 was that of **monogenesis versus polygenesis**. Were the perceived similarities between the creoles due to a common historical source (a Portuguese lexifier pidgin from West Africa or even the Mediterranean *Lingua Franca*), or the result of parallel processes of development? Slightly later the question of how to deal with the **linguistic variation** characteristic of many creole speaking communities came to the fore. How can we use the formal representations of generative grammar to describe these highly variable systems?

Soon, however, these debates were overshadowed by the controversy surrounding the **bioprogram** hypothesis presented by Derek Bickerton at the 1975 Hawaii conference, later in his book *The roots of language* (1981), and in a 1984 article in *Brain and Behavioural Sciences*. This hypothesis, in a nutshell, states that there are fundamental semantactic parallels between a number of proto-typical creoles, and these parallels are due to a basic human linguistic capacity, the bioprogram (the term ‘semantactic’ is C.-J.N. Bailey’s, an important early influence on Bickerton). Since children were growing up in plantation settings without a structured and complete linguistic input from their pidgin-speaking parents, the hypothesis goes, their language development was pure and had to rely on their linguistic capacity to actually create a new language.

It is fair to say that Bickerton’s hypothesis still dominates the debate in the field, even if there are few people left who adhere to his position directly. The bioprogram hypothesis has been criticized from at least four perspectives.

First of all, a number of researchers have simply tried to argue that the data in a particular creole do not fit the generalizations made in the bioprogram, without suggesting an alternative comprehensive model. Bickerton has consistently countered this type of argument saying that the data in question came from a non-radical creole, i.e. a creole too much influenced by a European model or by other languages, including sometimes the substrate languages. In itself,

the criticism is not too interesting; however, it is a warning that perhaps the alleged similarities between the creoles are more in the eye of the (Euro-centric) beholder than truly characteristic of creoles.

A second set of criticisms came from the perspective of specialists on the early demographic history of the creole communities. For a long time, many plantation holders found it cheaper to work their slaves to death and buy new ones than create the slightly more stable living conditions that would permit the raising of children. Thus creole-like language systems may have emerged gradually, without the intervention of child language creators. This position is referred to as gradualism (Carden & Stewart, 1988; Arends, 1989, 1993).

The strongest criticism of the universalist Bickertonian position has come from the advocates of relexification, the idea that creole languages basically are the result of a match between African structures and European lexicon (cf. Alleyne, 1980; Lefebvre, 1999). In this perspective the universality of creole structures is circumscribed by UG, but their particular features are in fact quite specific and due to specific West-African languages.

In recent research, yet a fourth approach critical of Bickerton's bioprogram is being pursued, namely from the perspective of language typology. The reasoning here goes like this: cross-linguistic typological research tells us quite a bit about what are patterns common to all or many languages and what are rather peculiar, marked properties characteristic of only a few languages. There really is no reason to assume that the types of patterns that turn out to be unmarked from a cross-linguistic typological perspective are not the same as those we would expect if the Language Acquisition Device or Language Bioprogram had a chance to run its course unchecked by input. This line of research is currently gaining impetus.

The typological discussion has had as an off-shoot the proposal that there is a creole type (McWhorter, 1998), a typologically definable group of languages with a unique set of structural criteria. In earlier work Muysken (1988) has denied the existence of a creole 'type' implied by Bickerton (1980, 1984), on the basis of the type of variation in grammatical structures encountered even in the proto-typical Caribbean creole languages. McWhorter's (1998) claim that all creoles share three features not shared in that combination by other languages would allow us to speak of creoles as a unique typological class, structurally distinguishable from other languages: (a) little or no inflectional affixation; (b) little or no use of tone to lexically contrast monosyllables or encode syntax; (c) semantically regular derivational affixation.

McWhorter's argument can be tackled in two ways: empirical and conceptual. Let us take the claims one by one. There is no doubt that in many core creoles there is very little inflectional affixation. This is also to be expected since in the second language acquisition of the European colonial languages, during the early stages of the process of creole formation, inflection is

often lost. However, the contributing superstrate and substrate languages were not very rich in their inflection either, and in several cases (Berbice Dutch Creole, Papiamentu, Cape Verdian) we do get some inflection. If we take creolization in typologically very different languages such as Shaba Swahili (de Rooij *et al.*, 1995) and Amazonian Ecuadorian Quechua (Muysken, 2000) there is simplification and regularization of inflection, but not loss of inflection. The absence of inflection is the singlemost frequently noted supposedly typological feature of creoles, and indeed may be the way many people identify a language as a creole. However, it may be the accidental by-result, from a scholarly point of view, of the limited typological spread in the languages contributing to the proto-typical creoles. A final remark concerns the question of the overtness of inflection. As can be shown with respect to passive and null-subjects, some creoles behave syntactically as if there is inflection present, even if this is not visible.

There is no space here to discuss in depth McWhorter's claims concerning tone in creoles. Voorhoeve's well-known (1961) study on tone and grammar in Saramaccan and Rountree's (1972) follow up study, neither of which is cited by McWhorter (1998), argue that tonal contrasts play a central role in Saramaccan grammar. Römer (1992) documents a number of ways that the Papiamentu lexicon and syntax depend on tonal contrasts. The role that tonal contrasts play in Caribbean creoles is not surprising given the importance of tone in West-African languages. The only reason, it appears, why McWhorter puts so much emphasis on tone is to maximize the differences between the creoles and languages like Chinese, which shares many syntactic features with the Caribbean creoles.

The only detailed study of the derivational morphology of a Caribbean creole, finally, is Dijkhoff's (1993) work on Papiamentu. It shows a very considerable amount of semantically non-transparent derivational morphology. Here are some Papiamentu examples from Dijkhoff (1993) (see the list of abbreviations at the end of the article):

- | | | |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) a. | balia-mentu | 'dance' |
| | dance-ment | |
| | b. lubida-dó | 'absent-minded' |
| | forget-AG | |
| | c. kabe'i boto | 'prow; lift' |
| | head-of-boat | |

McWhorter assumes that derivational morphology in the creoles would be transparent because of their recent emergence. However, non-transparent meanings take a very short time to arise and gel in the lexicon, much shorter than the 300 years that we are dealing with in the case of the Caribbean creoles discussed here.

There are psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic universals underlying the processes we outlined above, that have played a role in creole genesis: simplification, relexification, and convergence. However, we are not yet at the point of understanding how these

universals manifest themselves in the interaction of various typologically different language pairs.

2. Issues frequently discussed in the creolist literature

Creole languages are of particular interest for grammatical analysis in comparison with better known languages like English, French, Japanese or Swahili. First, creoles have a relatively young history. Most of them are no more than five hundred years old. Furthermore, they are products of language contact, a result of speakers of different languages wanting to create a common language for communication. Despite their apparently unique character, creole languages resemble non-creole languages in many substantial ways, a hardly surprising fact since they are but manifestations of grammatical principles constituting the human language faculty. As a result, there remains a constant tension in the field of Creole studies between treating these languages as special cases, unique due to their special origin, or as ordinary languages similar to others. It is the combination of features reminiscent of those of better-studied languages and a specific position vis à vis these languages which continues to give them their attractiveness for theoretical linguists working on comparative syntax.

We begin by listing some issues of grammatical analysis that have been particularly frequently discussed in the creolist literature.

2.1. Categories

With respect to their categorial inventory, a number of issues come to the fore. The limited lexical inventory inherited from the European languages, coupled with the paucity of derivational affixes, lead to considerable **multifunctionality** (cf. Hancock, 1980). The first issue concerns the status of the preverbal **Tense/Mood/Aspect (TMA) markers**. They can be related to several other categories. A typical first example concerns the status of elements like Haitian *pou* (<French *pour*, cf. Sterlin, 1989), which can function as a preposition, complementizer, and mood marker:

- (2) a. Pote sa pou mwen.
carry this for me
'Bring this for me.'
(Koopman & Lefebvre, 1980, 203)
- b. Li pa-jam tro ta pou chen anraje.
3SG NEG-ever too late for dog go.mad
'It is never too late for a dog to go mad.'
(Hall, 1953, 192)
- c. Nou pa te pou wè sa.
1PL NEG ANT MD see this
'We did not have to see this.'
(Koopman & Lefebvre, 1980, 209)

Another categorial issue relating to the preverbal markers is whether they may or may not be verbs. One example is *te* in (2c), etymologically related to

French *était*. Although some scholars have claimed that the pre-verbal particles in Creoles marking tense/mood/aspect are indeed verbs, this cannot be a general conclusion. There are particles such as *-a* in the Berbice Dutch example (3) (Kouwenberg, 1995, 82), which also contains a verb-derived element *wa*:

- (3) èk wa jefi-a kali kali
1SG ANT eat-DUR little little
'I was eating very little.'

This type of example, with an affix (here durative *a*) is rare in the Caribbean creoles. There are some affixal tense and aspect markers in the West-African Portuguese creoles, and Papiamentu has *-ndo*, derived from Spanish or Portuguese gerundial *-ndo*, but these are the exceptions.

A second categorial issue concerns the potential **distinction between the categories Adjective and Verb**. In Papiamentu, as exemplified in (4), this distinction is transparent: here we have a regular and invariant copula that precedes nonverbal predicates (all Papiamentu data in this article are from fieldwork by Muysken, unless otherwise indicated):

- (4) a. Mi ta na kas
1SG COP LOC house
'I am in the house.'
- b. Mi ta Pedro.
1SG COP Pedro
'I am Pedro.'
- c. Mi ta grandi
1SG COP big
'I am tall.'

However, in many other creoles stative descriptive predicates can occur without a copula, casting doubt on the verb/adjective distinction. The following pair is from Saramaccan (Alleyne, 1987; Bakker *et al.*, 1995):

- (5) a. di mujee hanse
DET woman beautiful
'The woman is beautiful.'
- b. di pasi limbo
DET path clear
'The path is clear.'

In Saramaccan there is a presentative copula *da*, and a form *de* used in locatives:

- (6) a. de da wanlo mii u mi
3PL COP some child GEN 1SG
'They are some of my children.'
- b. mi de a wosu aki
1SG COP LOC house here
'I am in this house.'

Notice now that with reduplicated predicates *de* is obligatory:

- (7) mi de tjalitjali
1SG COP sad.REDUP
'I am sad.'

This suggests that the non-reduplicated forms are true verbs, and the reduplicated forms derived adjectives.

Often the reduplicated form has a derived, more specific meaning in Saramaccan, suggesting its lexicalized status:

- (8) a. di mii bunu
 DET child good
 'The child is good.'
 b. di mii de bunbunu
 DET child COP good-REDUP
 'The child is fine.'
- (9) a. a satu
 3SG salt
 'It has been salted.'
 b. a de satusatu
 3SG COP salt.REDUP
 'It is salty.'

The reduplicated forms can also occur in prenominal position:

- (10) a. di lailai goni
 DET load.REDUP gun
 'the loaded gun'
 (Bakker, 1987, 25)
 b. di dɛɛ-dɛɛ koosu
 DET dry.REDUP cloth
 'the dried cloth'

A final categorial issue concerns the intricate relation between nouns and adpositions in several creole languages, such as Sranan and Berbice Dutch. Consider the following data from Sranan (Adamson & Smith, 1995, 228)

- (11) a. na fesi/tapu a skowtu-oso
 LOC face/top DET police-house
 'in front of/above the police station'
 b. na a skowtu-oso fesi/tapu
 LOC DET police-house face/top
 'at the front of/on top of the police station'

While in (11a) it seems more like prepositional use, in (11b) the whole structure seems more nominal in character. From a grammaticalization perspective (11a) could be viewed as derived from (11b). Bruyn (1995), however, has shown that even if grammaticalization has taken place, it has already taken place in a West-African ancestor of Sranan, rather than in the creole itself.

2.2. Finiteness, tense, and aspect

In addition to their categorial status, the TMA-markers raise complicated issues with respect to **finiteness**. Papiamentu *ta* occurs in main clauses, but not with infinitives:

- (12) a. mi ta kome
 1SG ASP eat
 'I eat/I am eating.'
 b. mi a ker kome
 1SG PA want eat
 'I wanted to eat.'

However, clauses marked with *ta* as in *mi mes ta kanta na radio* 'myself singing on the radio' allow a reflexive anaphor in subject position, as in (13a), while true finite clauses introduced by *ku* 'that' do not, as in (13b):

- (13) a. Mi a tende mi mes ta
 1SG PA hear 1SG self ASP
 kanta na radio.
 sing LOC radio.
 'I heard myself singing on the radio.'
 b. *Mi a tende ku mi mes
 1SG PA hear that 1SG self
 ta kanta na radio.
 ASP sing LOC radio.'
 'I heard that myself was singing on the radio.'

Similarly, a negated universal quantifier can take wide scope in a clause marked with *ta*, as in (14a), but only narrow in a finite clause, as in (14b):

- (14) a. Mi ta mira [niun hende ta sali].
 1SG ASP see not.one person ASP leave
 'I see no one leaving.' (There is no one such that I see that person leaving.)
 b. Mi ta mira [ku niun hende ta sali].
 1SG ASP see that not.one person ASP leave
 'I see that no one is leaving.' (I see that there is no one such that that person is leaving.)

Thus *ta* is similar to English *-ing*. This is also clear from the fact that it can appear on the complement of aspectual verbs:

- (15) E-l-a kumisá ta kome djente.
 3SG-EU-PA start ASP eat tooth
 'He started grinding his teeth.'
 (Maurer, 1988, 262)

Again, preverbal *ta* resembles English *-ing* here or Spanish *-ndo* (cf. also Kouwenberg, 1989).

Haitian creole, like other creoles, has very little morphology on pronouns and verbs. The same forms of pronouns are used for different grammatical functions, in contrast with many European languages, as illustrated in (16) and (17):

- (16) a. Li wè Mari.
 3SG see Mari
 'He saw Mari.'
 b. Mari wè li.
 Mari see 3SG
 'Mari saw him.'
- (17) a. I saw him.
 b. He saw me.

Similarly, the verb not only has the same form for subjects of different person and number in finite clauses, as shown in (18), it also has the same form as in nonfinite clauses, as shown in (19):

- (18) Mwen/ou/li/nou/yo pati.
 SG/2SG/3SG/1 PL2 PL/3 PL leave
 I/you(sg)/he/she/it/we/you(pl) left.'

Nevertheless, the same form of the verb does not necessarily have the same grammatical property. In particular, an overt subject is possible in (18) and (19a), but not in (19b), even though the form of the verb is superficially the same:

- (19) a. Li plante mayi li.
3SG plant corn SG
'He plants his corn.'
b. Jan te seye (*li) plante mayi li.
Jan ANT try 3SG plant corn 3SG
'Jan tried to plant his corn.'

When we consider the English or French counterparts of the examples in (19), the impossibility of an overt subject in the embedded clause in (19b) is particularly interesting:

- (20) a. John plants his corn.
b. John tries (*he) to plant his corn.
(21) a. Jean plante son mais.
b. Jean essaie de (*il) planter son mais.

It shows that even though Haitian creole has no overt morphological distinction for finiteness, it has exactly the same property with respect to the occurrence of overt subjects (cf. also DeGraff, 1993).

The lack of morphological distinction for pronouns sometimes gives rise to ambiguity. Consider the example in (22) with the verb *di*. On one interpretation, the pronoun *li* may be coreferential with the matrix subject *Jan*, as indicated in (i); and on the other interpretation, it may not, as indicated in (ii):

- (22) a. Jan di li ale nan mache.
Jan say 3SG go LOC market
i. 'Jan said that he is going to the market.'
ii. 'Jan told him to go to the market.'

From the grammatical point of view, the ambiguous interpretation of the pronoun *li* is due to its occurring either as the subject of the embedded verb *ale* 'to go' (cf. the interpretation in (i)), or as object of the matrix verb *di* 'say' (cf. the interpretation in (ii)). Thus, in spite of the lack of morphological distinction for case, Haitian pronouns, just like their English counterparts with overt morphological distinction for case, have the same property with respect to semantic interpretation according as their grammatical function.

2.3. Word order in double object constructions

Most creole languages have fairly rigid word order:

- (23) Subject – TMA elements – NEG – V – Indirect
Object – Direct Object –
Adverbial and Prepositional complements

What is remarkable is the fact that in double object constructions the order almost invariably is IO – DO. This is not only the case with languages with a lexicon derived from English and Dutch, where we might expect this order given the Dutch and English models:

- (24) a. NEGERHOLLANDS (Bruyn *et al.*, 1999)
ham a gi de man ši gout
3sg ASP give DET man 3sg.POSS gold
'He gave the man his gold.'
b. SARAMACCAN (Bruyn *et al.*, 1999)
mi ke pindja i wan soni
1SG want tell 2SG one thing
'I want to tell you something (in secret).'

However, it also holds for languages with a Romance-derived lexicon, such as Papiamentu and Haitian Creole:

- (25) a. PAPIAMENTU
bo a duna-mi e buki
2SG ASP give-1SG DET book
'You have given me the book.'
b. HAITIAN (Bruyn *et al.*, 1999)
li rakonte papa-li istwa sa-a
3SG tell father-3SG story this
'He told his father this story.'

In Papiamentu the order of the two objects is not affected by the noun/pronoun distinction:

- (26) a. bo a duna-mi e buki
2SG ASP give-1SG DET book
'You have given me the book.'
b. bo a duna mi ruman e
2SG PA give 1SG brother 3SG
'You gave my brother him/it.'
c. bo a duna mi e
you ASP give 1SG 3SG
'You have given me him/it.'

2.4. Predicate cleft

A very common construction in creoles is the **predicate cleft**, although the specific grammatical properties may differ from language to language. Typically, the verb focused on is repeated at the beginning of the clause, preceded by a focus particle which may be related to a copula. Here is an example from Papiamentu:

- (27) ta traha e ta traha
be work s/he ASP work
'S/he is really working.'

What may occur in the fronted position is strictly limited. Starting from a simple case such as (28), it is impossible to make the fronted verb past as in (29a), add an object pronoun (even a phonological clitic) to it as in (29b), or make the focus marker past, as in (29c). However, the focus marker can be negated, as in (29d).

- (28) ta duna m'a dunabo e buki
be give 1SG-PA give-2SG DET book
'I have really given you the book.'
(29) a. * ta a duna m'a
be PA give 1SG-PA
dunabo e buki
give-2SG DET book

- b. * ta dunabo m'a dunabo
 be give-2SG 1SG-PA give-2SG
 e buki
 DET book
- c. * tabata duna mitabata dunabo
 be-PA give 1SG-PA give-2SG
 e buki
 DET book
- d. no ta duna m'a
 NEG be give 1SG-PA
 dunabo e buki
 give-2SG DET book

Creole languages exhibit a range of variations in the predicate cleft construction. Haitian shows the unbounded dependency typical of *wh*-movement (Chomsky, 1977), which is also observed in the West African language Fongbe, a substrate language of Haitian (Law & Lefebvre, 1995):

- (30) a. vini Jan vini.
 come Jan come
 'Jan is coming.'
- b. vini moun di Jan vini.
 come people say Jan come
 'They said Jan is coming.'

Sranan and Saramaccan allow the dependency between the focused verb and the position which the repeated verb occupies in the base-position to span exactly one clause, and Papiamentu is the most restricted in that the dependency is clause-bound.

2.5. Extraction

Individual creoles also show different patterns of extraction. While Jamaican creole allows **preposition stranding**, a process in which a preposition is stranded as a result of its complement having moved away, others like Saramaccan, Sranan and Haitian do not; (31) is an example from Sranan.

- (31) * a nefi san a koti
 DET knife that 3SG cut
 a brede nanga ____
 DET bread with
 'The knife that he cut the bread with....'

In Papiamentu, when the object of a preposition is extracted, e.g. in relative clauses, a special form appears, which consists of the preposition and a morpheme that does not seem to occur elsewhere:

- (32) a. e kuchu ku e-l-a
 DET knife that 3SG
 korta e pan kuné/*ku ____
 cut DET bread with
 'The knife that he cut the bread with....'
- b. e kuchunan ku e-l-a
 DET knife-PL that 3SG-EU-PA
 korta e pan kuné/*ku/kunan
 cut DET bread with
 'The knives that he cut the bread with....'

One might take the morpheme *né* as the spell-out of the trace left behind by the extracted phrase.

In Haitian, a morpheme *ki* may appear just when a subject is extracted under *wh*-movement. As illustrated in (33), when a subject is questioned, a morpheme *ki* appears obligatorily:

- (33) a. Kimoun *(ki) wè Jan?
 who that see Jan
 'Who saw Jan?'
- b. Kimoun (*ki) Jan wè (*ki)?
 who (that) Jan see (that)
 'Who did Jan see?'
- c. Kimoun Jan di ou *(ki)
 who Jan say 2SG (that)
 ale nan mache?
 go LOC market
 'Who did Jan tell you is going to the market?'

The example in (34) shows very clearly that the morpheme *ki* appears just when the extracted *wh*-phrase is interpreted as the subject of the embedded verb.

- (34) a. Kimoun Jan di *(ki) ale nan mache?
 who Jan say (that) go LOC market
 'Whom did Jan say is going to the market?'
 NOT: 'Who did Jan tell to go to the market?'
- b. Kimoun Jan di (*ki) ale nan mache?
 who Jan say (that) go LOC market
 'Who did Jan tell to go to the market?'
 NOT: 'Who did Jan say is going to the market.'

The grammatical properties of the morpheme *ki* are also interesting for the debates on the relation between it and superstrate languages. Obviously, the Haitian *ki* is phonetically identical to the French *qui*, and the latter also appears in contexts of extraction. However, the two do not quite have the same distribution. Whereas the Haitian *ki* occurs whenever a subject is extracted, whether it is a matrix or embedded subject, the French *qui* only occurs when an embedded subject is extracted, as shown in (35):

- (35) a. Quel homme (*qui) a vu Jean?
 which man (who) have seen Jean
 'Which man saw Jean?'
- b. Quel homme as-tu vu (*qui)?
 which man have-you seen (who)
 'Which man did you see?'
- c. Quel homme as-tu dit *(qui)
 which man have-you said (who)
 a vu Jean?
 have seen Jean
 'Who did you say saw Jean?'

From a theoretical point of view, the Haitian *ki* is arguably in subject position (Koopman, 1982; Law, 1995), while the French *qui* is a variant of the complementizer *que* (Kayne, 1976). The difference is independently observed in the fact that whereas the complementizer *que* is obligatory in French in many contexts, for most Haitian speakers, there is simply no counterpart of the French *que* (a morpheme *ke* just before the embedded subject in (36b) is possible for

some Haitian speakers, especially those that are French-educated):

- (36) a. Jean dit que Marie est partie.
 Jean says that Marie has left
 'Jean says that Marie left.'
 b. Jan di Mari pati.
 Jan say Mari leave
 'Jan says that Mari left.'

The distributional differences between the Haitian *ki* and the French *qui* and *que* thus show that a creole does not necessarily adopt the grammatical properties of the superstrate language.

2.6. Null subjects and related properties

One of the most complicated issues in creole typology is whether or not they are null-subject languages. On the one hand, it is clear that Papiamentu is not like Spanish or Portuguese in several respects. It does not, for instance, freely allow **null subjects** in simple main clauses, nor does it freely permit **postverbal subjects** in simple sentences:

- (37) a. e ta kome
 3SG ASP eat
 'He is eating.'
 b. * ta kome
 ASP eat (cf. Spanish *está comiendo*)
 c. * ta kome Maria
 ASP eat Maria (cf. Spanish *está comiendo Maria*)

In addition, NP movement is obligatory in **passives**:

- (38) a. * ta wordu komi e karne
 ASP become eat DET meat
 b. E karne ta wordu komi.
 DET meat ASP become eat
 'The meat is being eaten.'

However, in some other cases, Papiamentu patterns with Spanish. For example, **null expletive subjects** are possible, just as in Spanish:

- (39) Parse ku Maria ta kanta.
 seem that Mary ASP sing
 'It seems that Mary sings.'

Similarly there is **predicate-subject inversion** in case of an indefinite/generic subject and a locative:

- (40) a. Riba e isla aki un
 on DET island here a
 million people ASP live
 million hende ta biba.
 'On this island there are a million people.'
 b. Riba e isla aki ta
 On DET island here ASP
 biba un million hende.
 live a million people
 c.? Ta biba un million hende
 ASP live a million people
 riba e isla aki.
 on DET island here.

The same holds for temporal phrases:

- (41) Den Januari ta bai hopi hende Korsow.
 in January ASP go much people Curacao.
 'In January many people go to Curacao.'

Postposing a definite subject is impossible as seen in (42):

- (42) *Riba e isla aki ta
 On DET island here ASP
 biba e homber.
 live DET man

Empty subjects may also occur in a number of other contexts. First of all, indefinite subjects can remain null:

- (43) a. Ta bende flor.
 ASP sell flower
 'Flowers are sold (here) [lit. they sell flowers here].'
 b. Tabata toka bon musika.
 ASP-PA play good music
 'They played good music.'

That this possibility is limited to strictly generic contexts is shown by the ungrammaticality or unacceptability of (44a,b):

- (44) a. * Ta bende e flor.
 ASP sell DET flower
 'The flowers are sold (here).'
 b.? Tabata toka e musika
 ASP-PA play DET music
 di Edgar Palm.
 of Edgar Palm
 'They played the music of Edgar Palm.'

The occurrence of this type of pattern is limited to signs, announcements, etc. (Muller, 1983). We take this empty subject to be a third person null pronoun, the interpretation of which is contextually determined.

A second context for empty subjects is constituted by weather verbs. Here, no subject is possible:

- (45) a. Tabata jobe.
 ASP-PA rain
 'It rained.'
 b. * E tabata jobe.
 3SG ASP-PA rain
 (46) a. Ta hasi kalor.
 ASP make heat
 'It is hot.'
 b. * E ta hasi kalor.

Third, as mentioned above (see (39)), nonargumental, expletive subjects are null; here are two more examples.

- (47) a. Tin baliamentu.
 have dance
 'There is a dance.'
 b. No ta importa-mi ni un bledu.
 NEG ASP matter-me not one bit
 'It does not matter a bit to me.'

The three classes of null subjects can occur in subordinate contexts as well, as shown in the following examples:

- (48) a. Mi ta kere ku ta
1SG ASP believe that ASP
bende sapatu ei.
sell shoe there
'I believe they sell shoes there.'
- b. Mi ta hañá (ku) ta
1SG ASP find (that) COP
muchu laat pa nos bai.
much late for 1 PL go
'I think it is too late for us to go.'
- c. Wancho ta kere (ku) ta possibel.
Wancho ASP believe (that) COP possible
'Wancho believes it is possible.'

Most theories relate null subjects to three other grammatical properties: (a) postverbal subjects (b) rich inflectional agreement and (c) the lack of the *that-t* effect. On this view, then, it is not surprising that in Papiamentu the limited occurrence of null subjects corresponds not only to the limited occurrence of postverbal subjects, but also to the lack of morphological marking for person and number in the verbal paradigm (cf. section 2.2). Here the forms are given for the verb *kome* 'eat':

- (49) mi ta kome
bo ta kome
e ta kome
nos ta kome
boso(nan) ta kome
nan ta kome

What is unexpected, however, is that the *that-t* effect is absent in Papiamentu, like in Spanish:

- (50) Ken b'a bisa k(u)' ___ a
who you-PA say that PA
bai fiesta? (compare (52a))
go party
'Who did you say that ___ went to the party?'

There is a clear pattern in Papiamentu involving the absence of the *that-t* effect. The contrast in (51) shows that the verb *parse* needs a phonetically realized subject when it means 'resemble':

- (51) a. E ta parse mi tata.
3SG ASP resemble 1SG father
'(S)he resembles my father.'
- b. * ta parse mi tata

When its subject is extracted out of an embedded complement clause of a verb such as *kere* 'believe', the subject position is null:

- (52) a. Ken bo ta kere (ku) ___
who 2SG ASP believe that
ta parse mi tata?
ASP resemble 1SG father
'Who do you believe (that) ___ resembles my father?'

- b. * Ken bo ta kere ku e
who 2SG ASP believe that 3SG
ta parse mi tata
ASP resemble 1SG father

While this sentence is only grammatical in English when *that* is absent (due to the *that-t* effect), in Papiamentu *ku* is entirely optional. As shown in (52b), the embedded subject position may not be filled by a lexical pronoun. Further examples of this sort are given in (53) and (54):

- (53) a. E-l-a bai fiesta.
3SG-EU-PA go party
'(S)he went to the party.'
- b. * a bai fiesta
- (54) a. Ken b'a bisa (ku) ___
who 2SG-PA say (that)
a bai fiesta?
PA go party
'Who did you say (that) ___ went to the party?'
- b. * ken b'a bisa ku
who 2SG-PA say (that)
e-l-a bai fiesta
3SG-EU-PA go party

The original formulation of the null subject parameter links the lack of the *that-t* effect to postverbal subjects in that an embedded subject is first postposed to a postverbal position, and is then extracted from there (Rizzi, 1982). However, this account would not work for the absence of the *that-t* effect in Papiamentu since in fully grammatical examples as those in (55) the embedded *wh*-phrase subject may not be postposed:

- (55) a. Ken b'a bisa k' ___
who 2SG-PA say that
a pasa eksamen?
PA pass exam
'Who did you say that ___ passed their exams?'
- b. Ken b'a bisa k' ___
who 2SG-PA say that
PA celebrate party
a selebra fiesta?
'Who did you say that celebrated their party?'

In the ungrammatical (56) the *wh*-phrase subject occurs postverbally, while in (68) it occurs at the end of the verb phrase:

- (56) a. * a bisa k'a pasa ken eksamen?
2SG-PA say that-PA pass who exam
- b. * a bisa k'a pasa eksamen ken?
2SG-PA say that-PA pass exam who

Moreover, since null subjects are limited to generic contexts, as shown by the grammaticality contrast in (43)–(46), which the embedded clauses in (55) are not, there is little reason to suppose that the embedded empty subject position governed by the complementizer is really a pronominal coindexed with a postverbal trace.

Thus the position of Papiamentu remains somewhat problematic. The best we can say is that probably an analysis of the facts will have to rely on the distinction between licensing and identifying introduced by Rizzi (1986): the post-Romance tense/mood/aspect system is apparently strong enough to license empty subjects in the language, but the absence of agreement leads to the impossibility of empty subjects when their person and number features are not identified in another manner.

3. Directions for future research

Of course it is difficult to see where new research will lead us (cf. also Arends *et al.*, 1995b). We can only briefly point to a few current trends: first and second language acquisition, lexical semantics, layered functional projections.

3.1. First and second language acquisition

For a field where considerations of markedness and development play such an important role it is natural that serious work be undertaken on the acquisition of creoles as a first and second language: are their supposedly unmarked structural characteristics reflected in the ease with which these languages are acquired as L1 or L2. With the exception of Adone (1994) on Mauritian little has been done on the acquisition of creole syntax, and Meade (2001) on Jamaican is the first in-depth phonological study of creole L1 development. Both studies yield interesting results, which, however, need further interpretation in a comparative perspective.

3.2. Lexical semantics

In the work of Lefebvre (1999) the idea is taken up again that creole lexical semantic structures reflect

West-African patterns. This suggestion is worked out through the comparison of Haitian and Fongbe lexical items, but can and should be elaborated in subsequent work through the rigorous study of the lexicon of both creole and potential substrate languages using various models elaborated in the theoretical study of the lexicon.

3.3. Layered functional projections

Recently work has been appearing (e.g. Damonte, 2000 and Dürrleman *et al.*, 2000) in which the work of Rizzi (1997), Cinque (1999) and colleagues on layered functional projections has been applied to creole languages. This has yielded, and will continue to yield, new insights into the complex sets of phenomena surrounding TMA markers and complementizers mentioned in the previous sections. Functional elements have played an important role in the discussion about creole genesis for a long time; however, their analysis within a formal framework will contribute to the depth of the explanations in this area.

List of abbreviations

3SG/PL: third person singular/plural pronoun or marker; AG: agentive; ANT: anterior tense; ASP: (progressive) aspect; COP: copula; DET: determiner; DUR: durative aspect; EU: euphonic element; LOC: locative; MD: (potential) mood; NEG: negation; PA: past tense; POSS: possessive; REDUP: reduplication.

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