

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This section, to conclude, compares the TMA system of the three creoles to show their similarities and dissimilarities (6.1.1.), suggesting that they cannot be regarded as a typologically distinct class of languages according to linguistic criteria. Next, in section 6.1.2., it shows the parallels that exist between creole formation and the history of English. Finally, in section 6.2., I consider the role that processes of language acquisition have played in the making of creoles and suggest how the TMA systems of Haitian, Jamaican and Papiamentu have been acquired and re-created.

### 6.1. HC, JC and PC: anti-prototypical creoles

#### 6.1.1. Revising the prototypical creole TMA system

We find in creole languages pre-verbal particle systems that apparently resemble each other closely in the expression of tense, mood and aspect. Some scholars (Thompson 1961, Taylor 1971) have noted some similarities among them. In particular, as summarized by Muysken (1981a:183), two facts about the particles have been observed:

- (1) each creole has three of them: a past tense marker, an irrealis mood marker and a durative aspect marker.
- (2) the particles follow a fixed order (TMA) where more than one particle accompanying the verb is found.

Creole genesis hypotheses (see section 1.5.) have seriously considered the shared properties among creole languages. In particular, TMA systems have been considered a 'creole feature' different from the verbal systems of other natural languages, and some theories with regard to the origin of creoles have been proposed to account for this 'creole feature'. These are monogenesis theories and universalists theories.

Thompson (1961) and Taylor (1971), cited in Muysken (1981a:184), have appealed to the existence of a Portuguese-based pidgin used during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The TMA markers would have been derived from that pidgin through a relexification process. Therefore, the similarities of the TMA systems would be explained going back to the Portuguese-based pidgin.

Bickerton (1984) has also used the similarities in TMA as evidence for a linguistic-universals explanation of creole genesis, positing the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis. Bickerton (1984:183) compares TMA in six creoles: Saramaccan, Sranan, Haitian, Guyanese, Hawaiian and Lesser Antilles Creole. He claims that the prototypical ordering of the creole pre-verbal markers is TMA (1. anterior, 2. irrealis, 3. non-punctual), and explains why creoles have made these distinctions and follow TMA order as follows:

In order to operate it, a speaker needs to be able (a) to know the order in which past events occurred (b) to distinguish between sensory input and the product of his imagination (c) to tell whether something happened once only, or was either repeated or protracted in some way (d) to distinguish states from actions. The first three capacities underlie the anterior, irrealis and nonpunctual categories respectively (Bickerton 1975:19).

The creole languages studied in this research do not conform to the prototypical creole TMA system argued for by universalist and monogenetic theories. Theoretically, monogenetic explanations are inadequate on three counts. First, HC and JC have never been demonstrated to have had historical relation with the Portuguese-based pidgin. Historical research and linguistic data offered in sections three and four in this research contradict the monogenetic position. Second, the TMA system of the Portuguese-based pidgin remains to be described. Third, the creoles might have not inherited the system in its entirety, PC might have been related to the alleged pidgin but shows aspects of superstrate and substrate grammar. Personally, I do not believe that a contact language could have been disseminated around the entire Caribbean to peoples and among peoples of very different origin and still preserve its grammatical structure, despite considerable changes in its lexicon.

HC, JC and PC, besides, do not entirely conform to Bickerton's system. First of all, the particles do not always follow the TMA order suggested by Bickerton; for instance, JC is MTA. Secondly, some irrealis mood markers may well be analysed as future markers, for example *wi* in JC; and anterior tense markers in all three creole languages convey past simple actions apart from pluperfect (Bickerton's anterior) actions. Thirdly, perfective or completive or punctual aspect markers can be found instead of non-punctual markers, as HC *fin* or JC *don*. Lastly, Bickerton distinguishes states from actions in order to determine the time interpretation assigned to the verb in bare sentences. For HC and JC, time reference has had to be assigned considering the nature of the object (specific or generic) as well.

Overall, the systems encoding TMA in HC, JC and PC do not evidence a prototypical creole feature. For the three creoles the particles are the following:

*Table 6.1. Pre-verbal particles in HC, JC and PC*

	Tense	Mood	Aspect
<b>HC</b>	te	ap, a-va, pou	konn, ap, fin
<b>JC</b>	ben	wi, mos(-a/-i), mait(-a), mie, kya(a)n, kud(-a), wud(-a), shud(-a), hafi, fi	a, a go, don
<b>PC</b>	tabata	lo, por, ø	ta, a

These particles may only be treated as a class for two reasons. First, the markers do generally not occur as main verbs but as auxiliary verbs. Second, all markers can occur in the position preceding main verbs in matrix clauses or tensed subordinate clauses. This is exemplified with past tense markers under [1], [2] and [3] for HC, JC and PC, respectively, in main clauses. Examples for HC, JC and PC are from DeGraff (2005:320), Patrick (2004:6) and Munteanu (1996:350), respectively.

- [1] HC Li *te* (deja) ale 'he had already gone'      French *était* 'être'  
 [2] JC Mi *ben* lov mi 'I loved her'      English *been* 'to be'  
 [3] PC E *tabata* canta tur dia 'he used to sing every day'      Spanish *estaba* 'estar'

The above considerations may, however, be explained taking into account the role of the source languages together with linguistic universals. The markers do not generally occur as main verbs although some of them are etymologically related to main verbs of the European languages. Yet, most superstrate main verbs can also function as auxiliary verbs. Regarding the position of the markers, they occur between the subject and the main verb, just like in many other natural languages, such as English or Fongbe.

In conclusion, this section has shown that the notion of a prototypical creole TMA system evaporates as well as the notion of creoles as a different class of languages. As Muysken (1988:300) asserts, 'the very notion of a "creole" language from the linguistic point of view tends to disappear if one looks closely: what we have is just a language'.

#### 6.1.2. Verbal morphosyntax in the diachrony of creole and non-creole languages

I have written in the preface of this study that creoles have been typically viewed as different, simple and irregular varieties that have arisen through developmental processes with no counterpart in the history of non-creole languages. Several scholars (see section 1.6.) have argued that creoles evidence some developmental discrepancies that are not manifested in non-creole languages. In the case of HC, JC and PC, their verbal morphosyntax may apparently seem the outcome of a break in transmission: their superstrate languages are richly inflected (at least French, Spanish and Portuguese), but the verbal morphology found in the superstrates has not been transmitted into the creole languages.

Nevertheless, the kind of discrepancies found in creole languages can be observed in the history of non-creole languages, for instance, in English. Early Modern English verbs are inflected. For the present tense, the first person singular and plural may appear with final *-e*, the second person singular may take the ending *-st*, and the third person singular takes the ending *-es* or *-th* (Fernández, Fuster and Calvo 2001:68). This is shown in the following examples from *The Historie of Henrie the Fourth* (1598), Part One, Act 1, Scene 3 (text in Fernández, Fuster and Calvo 2001:45-46).

- [4] I *thinke* it be two a clocke
- [5] Why they will *allowe* vs neure a Iorsane
- [6] I when *canst* tell? Lend me thy lanterne  
(*quoth* he) marry ile fee thee handd firft.
- [7] ... and your chamber-lie *breedes* fleas like a loach

The inflectional paradigm undergoes erosion in the seventeenth century and in late Modern English the verbal inflection is the one usual in Present-day English: the third person singular ending *-eth* is definitively replaced by *-es*, the first person singular and plural *-e* endings are lost as well as the ending *-st* for the second person singular.

Following Chomsky (1991), Emonds (1979), Pollock (1989) and Roberts (2001), among others, it seems that rich verbal inflections force the verb to undergo movement, for example, to the left of certain adverbs. In [5] the lexical verb is fronted before the adverb *never*, instead of *they will never allow us a jordan*. This type of verb movement may be found in later periods, after erosion of verbal inflection has taken place. Consider the examples in [8] and [9] from Shelley's *Frankenstein*, first published in 1816.

[8] I closed not my eyes that night (1965:47)

[9] Yet I seek not a fellow feeling in my misery (1965:208)

These examples probably evidence residual verb movement forced by the absence of the auxiliary *do*. Overall, the history of English shows that within a century the verbal morphosyntax develops from a relatively inflected system with verb movement into a system poorly inflected without verb movement<sup>i</sup>. Thus, the kind of 'discrepancies' found in HC, JC and PC are manifested in English as well and are no more and no less than a developmental pattern attested in ordinary language change.<sup>ii</sup>

## 6.2. The re-creation of the TMA system in HC, JC and PC

In the previous subsection it has been noted that early Modern English has a relatively inflected system and verb movement (V-to-I) whereas Present-day English has not. It may also be noted that early Modern English behaves in this respect very much like French whereas HC, JC and PC behave like Present-day English. These facts can be deduced from the structure of UG and one well-known parameter: the one that governs verb movement.

Several scholars (Chomsky 1991, Emonds 1978, Pollock 1989, Roberts 2001) have made use of this parameter to account for the differences between French and English. It has been originally argued by Emonds (1978:45-54) that French has a rule moving finite verbs out of the VP whereas English has not. Roberts (2001:278) summarizes Emonds' observations as follows: 'there is a class of elements X that can be plausibly regarded as positioned on the left of the VP. These elements include VP adverbs, clausal negation, and floating quantifiers'. French finite verbs precede X but English main verbs follow X.

As Pollock (1989:366) notes, French and English share the D-structure<sup>iii</sup>, as is illustrated in [10].

[10] [<sub>IP</sub> NP I ([<sub>NEG</sub> not/pas]) [<sub>VP</sub> (Adv) V...]]

Yet the surface structure evidences syntactic differences, the respective scope of verb movement in the two languages, as for example in [11].

[11] John often kisses Mary  
 Jean embrasse souvent Marie  
 \* John kisses often Mary  
 • Jean souvent embrasse Marie

As shown in the above structures, French has V-to-I movement whereas English has not, except for auxiliaries. In both languages (in all languages) the verb is generated within the VP. In French, verbal affixes are listed separately in the lexicon and function as syntactically affixal heads that force the verb to undergo movement and raise outside the VP. In English and in other languages with poor verbal inflection (HC, JC and PC), affixes (if any) do not behave as independent syntactic elements that force verb raising, so the verb checks its inflectional features without movement.

HC, JC and PC are different from French with regard to V-to-I movement, they are verb-in-situ. The structure of IP in these languages is shown in [12] and the surface structure in [13], [14] and [15].

[12] [<sub>IP</sub> NP [<sub>I'</sub> INFL [<sub>VP</sub> V...]]]<sup>iv</sup>

[13] HC Mari ap manje krab la  
 'Mary is eating the crab'  
 (Lefebvre 1998:120)

[14] JC Mi don taak  
 'I have finished talking'  
 (Mufwene 1984:208)

[15] PC E ta ben ku bus  
'he takes the bus'  
(Andersen 1980:68)

Lack of verb movement is particularly interesting in creoles whose superstrate languages have verb movement, as HC and PC. What has triggered the loss of verbal inflection and the setting of the verb parameter? In the following subsections I attempt to answer this question considering the role that the source languages together with processes of language acquisition have played in the re-creation of the creoles.

### 6.2.1. Evidence from the source languages

This section argues that the verb-in-situ option has been roughly derived from the source languages. Section 3.3.3. has shown that the markers encoding TMA in Haitian are etymologically related to French verbal periphrases and that the properties of the markers are to a great degree derived from the superstrate and the substrate languages. Section 4.3.3. has shown that the markers encoding TMA in Jamaican are etymologically related to English auxiliary verbs and that the properties of the markers come from the superstrate and the substrate languages, in varying degrees. Section 5.3.3. has shown that the markers encoding TMA in Papiamentu are etymologically related to Spanish and/or Portuguese periphrastic expressions and that the properties of the markers are to a great degree derived from the superstrate and the substrate languages.

Therefore, the source languages must have influenced the setting of the V-in-situ parameter. I begin with Haitian Creole. French verbal periphrases are built around in situ infinitival and participle forms (nonfinite forms), as in *Je suis pour me marier la semaine prochaine* 'I am going to get married next week' or *Tu vas aller demain* 'you will go tomorrow' (DeGraff 2005:321), these forms lack verbal affixes and might have triggered the V-in-situ parameter (section 6.2.) in HC, although this is not to say that verbal affixes (and only verbal affixes) determine verb placement in adult or child grammars. Yet the parallels between Haitian and French suggest that the nonfinite verbal forms have been an important trigger for the making of the verbal morphosyntax in Haitian; compare the following examples with the above French verbal periphrases: *Mwen pou marye semèn pwochèn* 'I am going to get married next week' or *To va allé demain* (18<sup>th</sup> century HC)/*W ava ale demen* (HC) 'you will go tomorrow' (DeGraff 2005:321), the striking similarities suggest that the

French verbal periphrases must have guided the learner toward the V-in-situ parameter. With regard to the substrates, Fongbe auxiliary verbs (like HC verbs) are not inflected for TMA and are nonaffixal morphemes placed to the left of the main verb. Thus, Haitian is like Fongbe in this regard, as the following examples illustrate: *Mari kò tòn Jan* 'Mary knew John' (Lefebvre 1998:117) or *Mari ná-wá dǎ wǎ* 'Mary will prepare dough' (Lefebvre 1998:131). This must surely have influenced the setting of the V-in-situ parameter in Haitian, identical to the Gbe parameter. It thus follows that adult creole creators have adapted the French system to their native Gbe languages, by the congruence principle<sup>v</sup>.

Jamaican TMA markers have been derived from English auxiliary verbs, all the markers have been simplified and grammaticalized, and the placement of the verb-in-situ parameter has been adopted from the superstrate, which is being established in English at the time Jamaican Creole develops. Thus, JC markers are very much like English auxiliary verbs, as is shown in the following examples: *Mi ben ron* 'I had run' (Patrick 2004:6) or *sins az yu lob mi, mi wi gi yu som* 'since you love me, I will give you some' (Winford 1993:58). With regard to the substrates, the more influential languages have not been the most widely spoken. Speakers of Akan and Bantu languages are always more than a half of the slave population at the time Jamaican Creole develops, yet these languages are typologically different from JC (richly inflected) and cannot have triggered the paradigm and placement of the Jamaican verb phrase. Conversely, Gbe languages are very much like JC. In Fongbe, TMA is encoded by nonaffixal morphemes placed to the left of the main verb, as in the following examples: *Sikà kó da wo* 'Sika had prepared dough' (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002:90) or *É ná-wá kù* 'S/he will die' (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002:92). It thus follows that Fongbe and related languages are the only substrate languages that have triggered the verb-in-situ parameter, by the congruence principle, and that the paradigm and placement of the verb phrase in Jamaican has been to a great extent derived from English.

Papiamentu TMA particles have been derived from Spanish and/or Portuguese periphrastic expressions built around infinitival or participle (nonfinite) forms, as in *Ellos están llorando/Eles estão chorando/Eles estão a chorar* or *se ha ido* or *ele havia marchado*, these forms lack verbal affixes and might have triggered the V-in-situ parameter (section 6.2.) in JC. The parallels between Papiamentu and Spanish or Portuguese suggest that the nonfinite verbal forms have been an important trigger for the making of the verbal morphosyntax in Papiamentu; compare the following examples in PC with the above Spanish and Portuguese verbal periphrases, *nan ta yora* 'they are crying' and *el a bai* 'he has gone', the similarities

suggest that the Spanish/Portuguese periphrastic expressions must have guided the learner toward the V-in-situ parameter. With regard to the substrates (Gbe languages have been the most spoken), Fongbe auxiliary verbs (like PC verbs) are not inflected and encode TMA by nonaffixal particles placed to the left of the main verb. Thus, Papiamentu is like Fongbe in this regard, as the following examples illustrate: *Mari kò tòn Jan* 'Mary knew John' (Lefebvre 1998:117) or *É ná-wá kù* 'she will die' (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002:92). This must surely have influenced the setting of the V-in-situ parameter in Papiamentu, identical to the Gbe parameter. It thus follows that adult creole creators have adapted the Spanish/Portuguese system to their native Gbe languages, by the congruence principle.

After comparing the source contributions to the TMA system in the three creole languages there are evidences to believe that the verb-in-situ parameter has not been entirely triggered by the source languages for two reasons. First, French and Spanish/Portuguese have been less influential to the setting of the verb-in-situ parameter in HC and PC, respectively, than English to JC. Second, the substrate languages with the given parameter established (Gbe languages exclusively) are important in the formation of HC, substantial in the formation of PC, and possibly irrelevant in the formation of JC. Altogether, this suggests that the verbal morphosyntax of the creole languages has been triggered by other factors as well, specifically, by processes of child and adult language acquisition.

#### 6.2.2. Evidence from language acquisition

This section argues that the verb-in-situ parameter setting is the outcome of a process of first and second language acquisition. Studies on FLA (section 2.2.) suggest that children's syntactic constructions are highly concrete, i.e., organized around individual lexical items or phrases, and even allow the possibility of grammatical invention (section 2.2.3.), 'the trying out of various UG options not adopted in the target system' (Rizzi 2001:463). These two factors account for the setting of the verb-in-situ parameter in creole formation.

The acquisition of this parameter is particularly interesting in children whose target language is richly inflected and undergoes movement. Wexler (1994:305-350) has shown that children go through a developmental phase (between approximately 20 and 30 months) where they produce root infinitives (alongside some instances of verb movement). Root infinitives are unmoved verbs in a form homophonous with the the infinitive, as for instance in *pas manger la soupe* (Pierce 1989,1992, quoted from Roberts 2001:295); as there are no tense and agreement parameters the verb does not undergo movement. It thus follows that

children acquiring HC, JC and PC have selected the unmarked parameter (verb-in-situ) and have stabilized the system ruling out other options.

Studies on SLA (section 2.1.) suggest that inflectional morphology is hard to acquire in the initial stages of SLA (a well-known casualty in several studies). The Basic Variety (section 2.2.1.) has investigated the learning of five European languages by 40 adults speakers of different first languages, and as Klein and Perdue (1997:332) point out, morphemes with purely grammatical function are absent from the BV. Note that the BV also shows that learners have difficulties with the overt realization of morphology independently of the inflectional patterns of their native languages. Then, if inflectional paradigms are reduced in processes of SLA, the reduction will be greater in a situation of language contact such as the formation of a creole language. In consequence, adult learners must have chosen an alternative to the system of the superstrate. This also corroborates that the verb-in-situ parameter is the unmarked option: if rich verbal inflections were unambiguous, the initial interlanguages would have resembled the superstrates (in HC and PC). In conclusion, both children and adults have selected the unmarked option in the making of the TMA system in HC, JC and PC.

### 6.2.3. In conclusion: the re-creation of the TMA system in HC, JC and PC

The general conclusion is that children and adults recreate the TMA system of HC, JC and PC with a variety of superstrate and substrate input and that the process is guided by UG. The first to arrive in the colonies are adults speakers of European and African languages. At the onset of contact, European speakers might have simplified the language to facilitate communication (section 1.5.), and adults have systematically failed to acquire the paradigms of bound inflectional morphology of the superstrate languages (in HC and PC). Apart from that, speakers of Gbe languages must have preferred to target, reanalyze and grammaticalize the system closer to their system, the unmarked option, and in turn, their native varieties have contributed to the recreation of the HC, JC and PC systems.

The I-languages of adults constitute the output that becomes the system that children target and stabilize. In early stages of FLA, children prefer in situ infinitivals, the unmarked option, even in contexts where the language requires verb movement, though in this case the target is already unmarked. Thus, children build a system (grammar) constrained by the mentioned markedness factors within the moulds of UG. The children's output is the first stable creole system which, in subsequent generations, must have been influenced by the

substrate and/or superstrate languages of the newly arrived peoples, on the other hand, language development has also guided the evolution of parametric change by gradually reducing the range of triggers for certain parameter settings.

The conclusion is akin to DeGraff's (2001a:526-527) conclusion in the epilogue of *Language Creation and Language Change*:

In the (pre)creolization milieu, it is adults with their various native tongues who would, owing to language transfer strategies and/or various cognitive constraints, introduce overwhelming variation and instability into the linguistic ecology (qua triggering experience), giving rise at some point to inconsistent and somewhat reduced pidgins. These pidgins would (variably) incorporate certain candidate properties from potentially *all* the source languages. But it is children who — with their specific cognitive makeup, unimpeded access to UG and its markedness hierarchies — would force the pidgins underlying tendencies (as influenced by the various languages in contact) to crystallize into stable, fully UG-consistent creoles.

- i As summarized in Roberts (2001:294), three factors have led to the parameter change (loss of movement) in Modern English. First, the loss of agreement morphology has removed the morphological trigger for the strong feature (movement). Second, constructions involving auxiliaries (in the input component) are compatible with grammars lacking verb movement. Third, strong feature values involving overt movement are dispreferred to weak features.
- ii It has been argued somewhere that Middle English develops by creolization out of the contact of Old English with French. This is basically incorrect for three reasons:

First, it is French which would have 'creolized' in England, not English; second, most English speakers did not shift to French [...] third, the Normans who shifted to English could certainly acquire English very competently [...] and their children must have spoken English as natively as the English children (Mufwene 2001:113).

Anyway, it is blindingly obvious that Norman French has not had anything to do with the loss of verbal inflection and verb movement during the Modern English period.

- iii D-structure is related to the underlying form of the sentence before movement whereas S-structure is related to the form of the sentence after movement has been described, including the traces of the original position of the moved items.
- iv I have adopted Pollock's (1989) 'split-I' version of clause structure. Throughout this section I have used *I* and *IP* as cover terms associated with the functional system of the verb, although as Pollock shows, it hides a much more complex reality. Nevertheless, the structure of HC, JC and PC is compatible with the 'split-I' hypothesis assuming that TP (Tense Projection) is absent in HC, JC and PC since the creole markers are VP heads.
- v As explained in Mufwene (2001:23), congruence of features of (some) substrate languages with variants available in the lexifier has often favoured the selection of some features that could have been omitted.