**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AFRICAN HERITAGE IN THE GUADELOUPEAN CREOLE'S VERBAL SYSTEM: FOCUS ON TENSE, ASPECT, NEGATION, AND SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS**

**BY**

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# DECLARATION

This research paper is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other university.

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# DEDICATION

To El Elyon, the Most High God!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

# LIST OF TABLES

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1PL | First person plural |
| 1SG | First person singular |
| ADJ | Adjective |
| ANT | Anterior |
| ASP | Aspect |
| AUX | Auxiliary |
| FUT | Future |
| GC | Guadeloupean Creole |
| HAB | Habitual |
| IMPV/IPF | Imperfective |
| INF | Inflection |
| NC | Negative concord |
| NEG | Negator |
| NP | Noun phrase |
| OBJ | Object |
| PF/PRFV | Perfective |
| POS | Positive |
| PRES | Present |
| PST | Past |
| S | Subject |
| SVC | Serial Verb Construction |
| TAM | Tense Aspect Mode |
| VB | Verb |

**ABSTRACT**

Guadeloupean Creole (GC) is a French-based creole which emerged in a context where the linguistic contribution of the enslaved Africans cannot be ignored nor denied, as attempted by some scholars. This research project investigated the traces of the African heritage in GC. It focused on the verbal system of the language and more precisely on tense, aspect, negation, and serial verb constructions (SVCs), hence challenging French supposed hegemony in the formation of GC in this domain. For that purpose, Dixon's Basic Linguistic Theory was used to analyse and compare GC, French, and four West African languages, namely Bambara, Ewe, Tuwuli, and Yoruba. The result of the analysis of sentences in these different languages demonstrated that, though most of the lexicon in GC came from French, the superstrate language, elements in the verbal system of GC contained traces from the African languages under study, namely the preverbal markers found in tense and aspect in GC and Bambara and Ewe to which it was compared, the distribution of the negator and strict negative concord found in negation in GC and Ewe and Tuwuli to which it was compared, and SVCs existing in GC and Tuwuli and Yoruba to which it was compared. The foregoing were all evidence that pointed to traces of Africanisms in GC, as such could not be found in French. Furthermore, the analysis of the origins of these elements in the verbal system of GC suggested plausible African origins which overshadowed all the other suggestions put forward. Therefore, this study could contribute to tilting the balance in favour of the substrate origin of tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs in the verbal system of GC. Hopefully, the study may trigger the interest of Guadeloupean scholars to do further research in this domain and beyond to ensure that the African heritage is not forgotten but is restored to its rightful place in GC.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

This study deals with Guadeloupean Creole (GC)—a French-based creole—and more precisely, it seeks to assess Africanisms in GC's verbal system. According to Trudgill (2000:53), the word *creole* refers to the language spoken by the native community issued from pidgin speakers. He added that contrary to pidgin, which underwent a process of reduction, creole "expanded again, and acquired all the functions and characteristics of a full natural language." However, Holm (2004:6, 7) noted that, "a pidgin can be expanded without being nativized." Moreover, for him, besides emerging from a pidgin and being natively spoken, creole is the language of those people, "whose ancestors were displaced geographically so that their ties with their original language and sociocultural identity were partly broken." So, his definition adds some precision to Trudgill's (2000) brief definition above. Larousse (1869), as cited by Meijer & Muysken (1977:22), referred to *the creole spoken by the slaves* (my emphasis) in Louisiana and Haiti, as, "a corrupted French in which several Spanish and gallicized words are mixed. This language, often unintelligible in the mouth of an old African, is extremely sweet in the mouth of white creole speakers." Elsewhere, Taylor (1963:800) reported the assumption about *West Indian Creoles* (my emphasis) being the result of "*the slaves'* (my emphasis) faulty imitation of their masters' English, Dutch, French or Portuguese speech; … whose phonologies, grammars and lexicons they have simplified, reduced and corrupted, but not superseded." Thus, one understands that creole is spoken by the slaves' descendants and that the way nineteenth-century people generally viewed creoles was "shaped by the same racism that characterized slavery" (Meijer & Muysken, 1977:21).

Concerning the origins of creoles, two opposite theories exist: the universalist theory, championed by Coelho, and the substratist theory, defended by Adam (Holm, 2004:27). (1) Coelho's universalist theory deals with the fundamentals of language learning; he stated that creole dialects and the like "represent the first stage or stages in the acquisition of a foreign language by a people that speaks or spoke another." He added that the origins of these languages are governed by universal "psychological or physiological laws" and not in any way by their substrate languages (Coelho, 1880, as cited in Holm, 2004:27). (2) On the extreme opposite, Adam's substratist view emerged from his comparison of various creoles and West African languages, which led him to the conclusion that "the Guinea Negroes, transported to those [Caribbean] colonies, took words from French but retained as far as possible the phonology and grammar of their mother tongues" (Adam, 1883, as cited in Holm, 2004:28).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there are theories to explain the similarities that obtain among pidgins and creoles. This overview is also useful to understand the account on the development of GC that follows. According to Wardhaugh (2010:69, 70), (1) the theory of "*polygenesis*" advocates that pidgins and creoles have multiple origins and that "any similarities among them arise from the shared circumstances of their origins." He opined that among all the explanations that were given to account for these similarities, the "most plausible of all [is] a shared *substratum*." For him, this should explain the presence of characteristics pertaining to ancestral African languages in Atlantic (i.e. Caribbean) pidgins and creoles. (2) Another theory, the "*monogenetic*" view, opposes the previous one. McWhorter (1995, 2000), as cited in Wardhaugh (2010:69, 70), hypothesised the existence of French and English slave forts in West Africa where contact languages developed, which account for the similarities in these pidgins and creoles. Therefore, one source would explain the similarities between the multiple pidgins and creoles. A variant of this monogenetic view traces back the source of these similarities in the language of sailors. Wardhaugh (2010:70) promptly disqualified it though, as it "is weak, consisting of a few sea-based terms in different pidgins." As a matter of fact, it does not explain why pidgins and creoles have these structural resemblances. Then, (3) the theory of "*relexification*" steps in so as to account for these similarities. According to this theory, "a lingua franca called Sabir used in the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages" would be at the origin of all creoles and pidgins derived from European languages. Then Portuguese relexified this lingua franca, which was later relexified by the French, English, and Spanish into pidginised versions of their respective languages (Wardhaugh, 2010:70). I skip all the objections and answers to objections this theory received, except for the fiercest condemnation that came from Bickerton (1977:62), as cited in Wardhaugh (2010:72), and also because of the alternative theory that he suggested instead. (4) Bickerton believed that the relexification theory demanded people to credit too much; that it was improbable that a contact language spoken by people with various respective languages and taken to various locations could maintain an unchanged grammatical structure "despite considerable changes in its phonology and virtually complete changes in its lexicon." Owing to that, he came up with his "Language Bioprogram hypothesis" which he thought was the best explanation regarding the similarities among creoles (Bickerton, 1981, as cited in Wardhaugh, 2010:72). This theory is based upon the "universal principles of first language acquisition." Bickerton argued that all children are born with a bioprogram capable of developing a full language and that, wherever they are, they use this bioprogram in a similar manner. Now, children who are born in a pidgin-speaking environment are constrained

to develop this bioprogram because of the linguistic situation they are born in and, as a result, "'the grammatical structures of creoles are more similar to one another than they are to the structures of any other language" '(Bickerton, 1983, as cited in Wardhaugh, 2010:72). With this background in mind, I expatiate below on the development of GC.

As regards the development of GC, Cérol (1992), a Guadeloupean linguist, invited creolists to look for reliable answers in history even though this may be a challenging undertaking. At the end of her survey on "What History Tells Us about the Development of Creole in Guadeloupe," she dismissed Chaudenson's (1979) polygenetic's view, which pushed for a "'very constraining process' of deculturation/acculturation" of the slaves. This process meant that the slaves were chosen young on purpose; that those from the same ethnic group were separated to avoid rebellion, and that this separation prevented linguistic transmission at the same time; finally, that they would soon "forget even their native languages" and had to learn Creole and their new culture (Chaudenson, 1979:54, 5, as cited in Cérol, 1992:61, 2). In the end, this process also meant that the substrate languages had no role—if so, an insignificant one— to play in the development of Creole, whereas the superstrate ones—apart from "some 'simplification' process"—would play the whole part (Cérol, 1992:62). Furthermore, Cérol (1992:62) also opposed Bickerton, "the strongest defender of the universalist position," and his bioprogram. Bickerton's arguments (1979), as cited in Cérol (1992:62), were also based on the multiple origins of the slaves and their separation to avoid uprisings. For him, the sudden break of transmission that resulted in a "degenerate" pidgin compelled the children born in that linguistic chaos to use their innate bioprogram to remedy this problem. This also implied that creolisation took place early in the history of these creoles, and that the bioprogram—and not the substrate nor superstrate languages—engendered creole structures. I could not cite all of Cérol's arguments (1992) to prove that African languages played a prolonged role in the lives of the slaves, but I cited a few that contradict Chaudenson's and Bickerton's points of view. She stated, (1) that both authors' arguments relied on weak historical evidence (Cérol, 1992:63); (2) that the slaves were not separated based on their ethnic groups as proved by a letter from Sainte-Marie (1792:48), an old planter, who insisted "on the necessity of lodging the slaves of the same ethnic origin together," or by the examination of revolts (Debien, 1974:394; Lucien-René Abénon , 1983:63; and more), which mentioned distinct African groups; (3) that the children were never in large numbers in the population, as the mortality rate was high at all ages (Debien, 1974:343, 44; Gautier, 1985:98), and as the "population was [then] never able to increase naturally" so it increased through the introduction of more African slaves (Fallope, 1983:3;

Abénon, 1978:52; Vanony-Frisch, 1985:65). Therefore, this minimises the children's role in the pidgin's expansion; (4) that the slaves could speak their languages, as one of them taught Labat "the Arada language (Ewe)," as the missionaries translated in their African languages some parts of the Bible to teach them the Gospel (Labat, 1742:46; Pelleprat 1655:58, 9); (5) and so on (cf. Cérol, 1992:63, 67, 68, 69). Finally, based on the above arguments, neither Chaudenson's polygenetic view, nor Bickerton's Language Bioprogram hypothesis have any ground to stand on to refute evidence for the role of African languages in the development of GC. Cérol (1992) managed to prove, then, that the slaves' languages played a prolonged role in their lives.

## 1.2. Background to the Study

There are two major divisions in creolised varieties of French: the New World group which comprises of creoles spoken in the Caribbean area and the Isle de France group with creoles spoken on the islands in the Indian Ocean (Holm, 2004: 85). Guadeloupean Creole, spoken in the Guadeloupean archipelago,[1] belongs to the first group. It is widely spoken by the 387,629 people[2] along with French, which is the official language. This situation of diglossia has relegated GC into the background with French being the dominant and prestigious language. Bébel-Gisler (1983:34), a Guadeloupean sociologist and ethnologist, underlined the debate existing around the use or not of GC in official places of power like the school, the church, the court, or the mass media. She concluded that what is at stake is power because, "To defend a language boils down to defending an economic and symbolic market. Power cannot be dissociated from language: both depend upon each other (my translation)." Furthermore, this power struggle is also reflected in the recognition of the roles the substrate and superstrate languages played in the formation of GC.

Nobody can deny that French provided most of the lexicon of French-based creoles. Lexicostatistics lists by Swadesh's (1952), as cited in G. Hazaël-Massieux (1993:109), have proved so. However, looking beyond the surface of the language, allows different views. The first creole scholar to establish a link between the New World group creoles and their African roots was Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain (1936), a Haitian anthropologist who stated, as cited in G. Hazaël-Massieux (1993:109), that Haitian Creole was "an Ewe language with a French

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[1] The Guadeloupean archipelago comprises of five islands : Basse-Terre, Grande-Terre, Marie-Galante, Les Saintes, and La Désirade.

[2] These figures are provided by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies as of 1st January 2018, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5006477

lexicon." However, G. Hazaël-Massieux (1993:121) reproached the fact that she presented no evidence "to support the suggestive syntactic kinship." He also mentioned that Lefebvre (1986:109) had preserved Comhaire-Sylvain's view and claimed that, "Haitian grammar is essentially African, especially Fon." G. Hazaël-Massieux (1993:110), for his part, when discussing about the relationship between GC and African languages, remained cautious by suggesting another approach; he stated that, as being "less informed about African languages and peoples than about French ones at the time of the slave trade, I propose to begin by studying more systematically the available French data." He opined that, "it seems more appropriate to examine the role of the linguistic filter of the African slaves in the makeup of the present creole than to speculate, without any precedent or model, about the deep structures which could be common to creole and African languages." However, Cérol [Mazama] (2017:27) recalled that she had already broadly discussed in a previous book (1991) the many ways in which GC was related to African languages. This willingness of some scholars to acknowledge the role played by African languages in the formation of GC concurs with Adam's substratist view (Adam, 1883, as cited in Holm, 2004:28) as mentioned earlier. More is said on the controversy surrounding the role the substrate languages played in the formation of GC in the next section.

## 1.3. Statement of the Research Problem

As Dixon (2010:20) rightly put it, "All over the world, speakers conceive of a language as consisting of its vocabulary, with little regard paid to grammar." Likewise, being a French-based creole, GC was described essentially against French by early scholars. However, many of them failed to bear in mind that the main actors in the development of the language, i.e. the enslaved Africans—from West and Central Africa mainly—were not vacuum recipients; they spoke their respective African languages, as has been demonstrated earlier. Their impact on the language, though, was ignored. Meillet (1921; 1965; 1982:85) stated that, the little grammar found in creole[3] came from French grammar and even mentioned that the conjugation had been sacrificed and that its remains—the verb in the infinitive—were French and had no element of African origin at all (my translation). However, he only focused on what he perceived as French in the surface structure (the verb in the infinitive), neglecting the construction of the verbal system. So, his rejection of Africanisms in Creole is not grounded. On the other hand, subsequent creolist researchers like Cérol [Mazama] (2017), as stated earlier, have shown that African languages have left deep traces at many different levels in the language. She noted

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[3] The author only mentioned creoles from Réunion Island and Martinique, but his comment can be extended to all French-based creoles.

Africanisms in the nominal system, in the verbal system, in the lexicon, and so on. Still, another look at the question comes from M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:11, 3) who put forward the argument of cautiousness, explaining that a linguist must be careful when it comes to evaluate the role of a language or languages in linguistic evolution, as the presence of a population in a place does not necessarily mean that their language will survive, or not even traces of that language will do; that linguistic domination is linked to diverse factors of supremacy that can outweigh number;[4] that quick rapprochements should be avoided in attributing creole grammar (morphology and/or syntax) to African origins just because they deviate from 17th and 18th century-French, which was a predictable evolution (my translation). These precautionary measures could not help me, though, to assess the role of Africanisms in GC. However, she attributed the origins of elements in the verbal system such as the preverbal tense, mode and aspect markers, or the negation to French, which is questionable and is discussed later.

The above overview shows that different views concerning the African heritage in GC coexist. I focused on the verbal system, as the verb is commonly said to be the heart of the sentence (DeCapua, 2017:119). Thus, this study sought to verify or refute evidence of the African heritage in the verbal system of GC and, thereby, questioned French alleged exclusive contribution to the formation of GC in this domain.

Depending on the languages, verbs provide information of various kinds. A few of them were picked for consideration: Tense, aspect, and negation were studied because of their universality (all languages have a way to express tense and aspect, and all of them assert or deny statements), and serial verb constructions (SVCs) were studied because they are peculiar to African languages and creoles.

### 1.4. Research Questions
Looking at GC's verbal system, the following questions were raised:

1. How do tense and aspect[5] markers in GC reveal traces of African origins in the language?
2. How does negation in GC reflect traces of African origins in the language?

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[4] The author meant that, though the slaves outnumbered their masters, their larger number could not compete with French hegemony.

[5] Moods are not studied. However, for the reader's information, the examples are circumscribed to the indicative mood, unless otherwise specified.

3. What influence have SVCs in the African languages under study had on the use of SVCs in GC?[6]

## 1.5. Objectives of the Study

I focused on GC's verbal system and explored, based on comparisons with French and selected African languages, the extent to which GC still bears African features in its verbal system. To do so, I relied on my corresponding research questions,

1. To show the traces of African features in the expression of tense and aspect in GC.
2. To find out the traces of African features in the formation of negation in GC.
3. To investigate the influence of SVCs in a selection of African languages on the use of SVCs in GC.

## 1.6. Justification of the Study

Available literature on the study of GC for itself is rather scarce compared to other creoles and even more when it comes to investigating African features in the language. In the previous sections, I have expounded the different views on the presence of Africanisms in GC and found only one GC scholar, Cérol [Mazama] (2017), who clearly advocated traces of African languages in GC. As for me, I wanted to focus on just one aspect of the language, GC's verbal system in particular, and investigated the three areas specified to do a close-up study on this subject. Thus, I believe that this effort will contribute to the debate on the African heritage in GC with a larger spectrum of evidence for GC's verbal system and hope, then, that it will help the Guadeloupean people to reclaim with more strength their African linguistic legacy.

## 1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study

As my endeavour is to question French alleged exclusive contribution to the formation of GC's verbal system by focusing on the latter to verify or refute any traces of African heritage in it, I expatiated in relevant detail on GC's verbal system in the three areas specified, i.e. tense and aspect markers in GC, negation in GC, and SVCs in GC. However, for reasons pertaining to the length limit of this exercise, I did not make an extensive presentation of French and the African languages I selected for each area of study. I merely relied on findings in grammar books and compared the patterns, either morphological or syntactical, that I presented and explained in GC with the ones I found in the literature in French and the selected African

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[6] This question is based on the statement that SVCs exist in African languages and in creoles, but not in European languages (cf. Aikhenvald & Dixon, 2006:xi, 1, 338; Syea, 2017:248). Therefore, what I only need to assess is the type(s) of SVCs GC has retained from my selection of African languages.

languages to draw my conclusions. Among other specific restrictions, I dealt only with tense and aspect, thus not mood; I described GC tense and aspect markers, but focused rather on their distributional properties in French—which I think is the crux of the controversy about the origins of GC preverbal markers—and the African languages under study. Furthermore, based on the supposed origins of the slaves found in Debien (1974:39-68), I chose to focus my study on Bambara, Ewe, Tuwuli and Yoruba, which are all West African languages.[7] This choice was made, due to the availability of materials—either reliable, or written in a familiar language. Thus, Central African languages—though of prime interest, too—are not represented, as they did not meet the foregoing conditions. Finally, in the study on negation in GC, I did not deal with negative adjectives, nor with semi-negatives, i.e. these "verbs or prepositions that have a negative connotation and that can be paraphrased with a true negative sentence"[8] (Zeijlstra, 2004:39). I also left out special sentence constructions and dealt mainly with negative declarative sentences. Furthermore, I studied only negative concord in the array of multiple negations. Regarding SVCs, I focused on the composition of SVCs essentially. I am aware that all these restrictions reduce the possibilities of my scope of potential findings, but time constraints and availability of resources prevailed.

## 1.8. Definition of Concepts

**Africanism**: "a characteristic feature of an African language occurring in a non-African language" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Africanism).

**Creole**: "[3]a language formed when a mixture of a European language with a local language (especially an African language spoken by slaves in the West Indies) is spoken as a first language" (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/creole?q=creole).

**Pidgin**: "[1]a simple form of a language, especially English, Portuguese or Dutch, with a limited number of words, that are used together with words from a local language. It is used when people who do not speak the same language need to talk to each other" (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/pidgin?q=pidgin).

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[7] I described these languages in the Sample of Data.

[8] Example: *Few* girls like John.
FEW(GIRL)(LIKE_JOHN) $\leftrightarrow \neg$MANY(GIRL)(LIKE_JOHN)

**Relexify: "**to replace the vocabulary of (a language, esp. a pidgin) with words drawn from another language, without changing the grammatical structure" (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/relexify).

**Substrate language**: "an indigenous language that contributes features to the language of an invading people who impose their language on the indigenous population" (https://www.freethesaurus.com/substrate).

**Superstrate language**: "the language of a later invading people that is imposed on an indigenous population and contributes features to their language" (https://www.freethesaurus.com/superstrate)[9]

### 1.9. Literature Review

Studies focusing on GC for its own sake are infrequent. Resources among the foregoing which helped to flesh out this study are from Cérol (1991, 1992, 2017) who provided a grammatical description and analysis of the language, a socio-historical account of its development, and an Afrocentric perspective of the whole; from Delumeau (2006) who described the language in the perspective of natural language generation; from Bernini-Montbrand, Ludwig, Poullet, & Telchid (2012) whose dictionary of the language, followed by a concise grammar of the same, gave a broad overview of its structure; and from M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013b) who provided, as well, a grammatical description and analysis of the language. However, one often finds literature that compares different creole languages, or associate the description of GC with Martinican Creole, as they are closely related in many respects. Therefore, I used these sources indiscriminately, as needed. I also mentioned general works on the areas of study, as I needed typological descriptions to classify the languages—GC, French, and the African languages selected—to compare them, and to assess Africanisms in GC. Thus, various scholars' views about tense and aspect markers, negation, and SVCs in general and on GC in particular helped to put this study into focus.

### 1.9.1. Tense and Aspect Markers

In Syea (2017:254, 56), tense is described as what allows people to express in grammatical terms the concept of time. Present, past, and future are three absolute tenses. As for aspect, it concerns the development of an event, indicating "whether the situation is in progress

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[9] "Usually those with less power (speakers of substrate languages) are more accommodating and use words from the language of those with more power (the superstrate), although the meaning, form and use of these words may be influenced by the substrate languages" (Holm, 2004:5).

(incomplete) or completed." As for Comrie (1998:5), he opined that tense and aspect are both related to time though not in the same manner. Put in his words, "one could state the difference as one between situation-internal time (aspect) and situation-external time (tense)." Furthermore, the author prefers to use the terms *perfective/imperfective*. Comrie (1998:18) said that the term *completed* "puts too much emphasis on the termination of the situation," which is not the case with the word *perfective*. He added that with the latter, "all parts of the situation are presented as a single whole" and that grammatical tense/aspects such as perfective future show that the term *completed* is not adequate.

M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013c) noted in her website article about tense and aspect in creole that grammarians for a long time tended to oppose "tensed languages" and "aspectual languages." Thereby, they set "European languages" against African languages, which would be centered on aspect (my translation). She believed that this was due to habit rather than an either/or opposition. She underlined that all languages have various ways to express tense and aspects. She then discussed the many ways French uses to express aspect and highlighted the periphrastic constructions to which she attributed the origins of tense and aspect markers and particles in use in GC. This controversial theory about the origins of GC's aspect markers and particles is debated later in the study. I picked up one important point about her analysis when she mentioned that these markers were used to "conjugate" the verb which remains "invariable" only for those who saw variations in inflectional suffixes. In this regard, I concur with her, as these different markers obviously indicate the tense and aspect of the event expressed by the verb in creole. McWhorter (2005:4) also pointed out to this "misimpression throughout history and among laymen that inflectional morphology is the essence of "grammar" and structural sophistication."

On languages whose verbs are not inflected for tense and aspect—and GC is one of them— Brachin (1985:34), as cited in Holm (2004), commented, "Is not inflection the mark of a civilized language and its loss a sign of decadence?" Nevertheless, it must be noticed that these tense and aspect markers in GC cannot be used independently just as the inflections in languages that use them cannot be used as such either. The truth is those in power must use even language to maintain their power. Therefore, they need to define their language as the norm and despise the languages that cannot be cast in their mold. As Condé (2017:102), a Guadeloupean novelist, put it, "Language is a site of power: who names, controls." What Brachin (1985) failed to perceive is that languages have different ways of expressing tense and aspect. To put it in McWhorter's words (2005:87), "creoles have replaced what was expressed

inflectionally in the lexifier with a free form in the same function." This seems to me a reappropriation of the language, and I will add that it could be used as an argument against the then "many white speakers of the lexical source languages" who, according to Holm (2004:22, 3), judged what they heard as being divergent in the creoles "as proof of the blacks' incapacity to learn languages properly."

To express tense and aspect, creole languages use preverbal markers, which are "particles indicating tense (the time of an action's occurrence) or aspect (referring to its duration, recurrence, completion, etc.)" (Holm, 2004:174). He held the same view as M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013c) and other scholars on the superstrate origin of these markers, "[They] have the outer form of auxiliary verbs from the lexical source language." Likewise, Syea (2017: 261, 62) concurred that they "historically derive from [French] lexical prepositions and verbs." Their views on the origins of these markers are discussed in the data analysis.

Colot and Ludwig (2013) described GC's four main markers to express tense and aspect: the zero marker (Ø), *ka*, *té*, and *ké*. This description has not much changed since the first grammar on French-based creoles by Thomas (1869:50, 54, 60). As regards GC, his work attested of the use of *ka* (written *ca* then), of *té* and of the zero marker (Ø), which he referred to as conjugation without *ca*. What is otherwise expressed with the marker *ké*, he then reported as being expressed by the following forms of the verb *aller* (go): *c'allé* (i.e. *ca allé*), *câer*,[10] and *va* (*'a*).[11] However, if I rely on Goux (1842), an apostolic missionary, who—in a short grammar essay—wrote more specifically on the creole spoken in Guadeloupe and Martinique, *ké* (written *qué*) was already in use, as well as the other forms. This grammar essay was destined to help to give catechism classes to the slaves in their language in use in the French colonies. While it is not a scientific description of the language, it gives precious information on the form of the language spoken then. This research also mentioned other particles that describe tense and aspect in GC.

**1.9.2. Negation**

Given the nature of negation which is to allow human beings "to deny, to contradict, to misrepresent, to lie, and to convey irony" (Horn, 2010:1), I concur with Dahl (1979:79) that "one universal of negation" is that it is a "universal category." So, obviously, nobody can deny this particularity common to all languages, even the ones under study.

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[10] Today's *kalé* (*ka alé*) and *kay*.

[11] This last form is no longer in use.

Zeijlstra (2004:51) noted that languages fall into three different categories when it comes to express sentential negation: (1) those using special verbs to deny the sentence; (2) those using negative verbs followed by an entire clause as complement; (3) and those using "negative particles or negative affixes (either prefixes, suffixes or infixes)."

Dahl's (1979:81, 84-89) study led on 240 languages—i.e. about one third of the world's family languages—is quite different and more detailed than Zeijlstra's. He makes a division between two ways of expressing negation: morphological negation and syntactical negation. Then, each category can be subdivided into subsections. Thus, morphological negation can be expressed "almost exclusively" through prefixation or suffixation, and syntactic negation can be constructed in the following ways, "uninflected Neg particles," "neg auxiliaries," "'dummy auxiliary' construction," "'periphrastic' constructions," and "double particle construction." This typology was more convenient when dealing with our data analysis, as it is a multilevel structure that can accommodate more languages in minute details. It would not have been good to have all the languages grouped under type #3 in Zeijlstra's model, when they can be dispatched into various categories in Dahl's model.

As for the position of the negative morpheme, Jespersen (1917:4, 5) observed that it is naturally placed first, or at least as soon as possible, and "very often immediately before the particular word to be negatived" which is the verb in general. He also noticed what he called a "curious fluctuation" in the history of negation, which concerns the double particle construction,

> the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in its turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word.

Dahl (1979:88) called this phenomenon the "Jespersen's Cycle." A good example of this phenomena concerns French negation, which is of the type, "double particle construction." However, he also opined that the lack of data may not allow to say that this affects all cases of double particle construction.

In GC, sentential negation is formed by employing the morpheme *pa*, or one of its allomorphs (*pé* and *pòkò*[12]), in front of the verb or the explicit tense and aspect markers, in short, in front of the verb phrase. Based on Dahl's study (1979:84), it means that GC belongs to the category

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[12] Contraction of *pa + enko* (neg+enko) from French *pas encore*—not yet.

of languages that express negation by syntactical means. Furthermore, GC belongs to the subcategory of "uninflected Neg particles" which is the most common, and according to Dahl (1979), "The straightforwardness of this way of forming negative sentences is matched by the lack of interesting things to say about it."

Colot and Ludwig (2013) did not mention anything about the formation of negation, except that in verb focusing constructions, the focusing particle *a* must precede the negator *pa* "when the focused element is negated." There are some historical facts, though, that I thought were worth mentioning below.

Thomas (1869:77, 8), apart from the basic definition of the use of the negator *pa* (written *pas* then like in French), described the use of two supplements—*jamain* and *pièce*[13]—to strengthen the negator. This study mentioned more supplements to strengthen the negator *pa*. Furthermore, Goux (1842), writing about the same time, though not with the same rigor, as his work is just a short grammar essay, also noticed more or less the same. However, the mention of the allomorphs of *pa* is missing in these two old pieces of work. This is understandable for *pé* in Thomas (1869), as the marker which triggers this transformation is not acknowledged (instead, he uses the form *c'allé*, etc.), but not in Goux (1842) who mentioned it, i.e. *qué*.[14] Conversely, the absence of *pòkò* is understandable in Goux (1842), who did not mention the particle that triggers it, i.e. *ja*, which changes completely to *pòkò*. The particle is present, though, in Thomas (1869) and yet this allomorph is not mentioned. An explanation to the absence of these allomorphs in the preceding works may be found in M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:121, 201, 305, 329), who published a collection and analysis of old texts in Caribbean French-based creoles. A search of these texts allowed me to discover that the particle *pé*, which is triggered by *ké*, is mentioned for the first time only in 1849, i.e. seven years after Goux's grammar essay. As for *pòkò*, the first mention of this form appears in texts towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, i.e. about two to three decades after Thomas's grammar book.[15] It is also worth noticing for further study that the forms *pas encore* (like the French expression) was attested in 1793, and *pancor'* was attested in 1928, hence, coexisting with *pòkò* towards the beginning of the 20th century.

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[13] Nowadays, these words are written, *janmen* and *pyès* in GC.

[14] Cf. Literature Review on tense and aspect markers above.

[15] However, this does not mean that these forms (*pé* and *pòkò*) were not used in the meantime. It is just that there are no written texts in that lapse of time to prove so.

Notwithstanding the foregoing mention on the 'dullness' found in GC's type of negation, I believe that the co-occurrence of *pa* with other negative words, and its resulting in grammatical negative concord constructions—i.e. the two negative elements "participate in expressing a single negative meaning" (Syea, 2017:312)—made it a valuable study enough, all the more as I compared it with its superstrate and substrate languages.

The following classification shows where the feature I studied in GC belongs in the tree of multiple negations: Van der Wouden (1994a), as cited in Zeijlstra (2004:57, 8), distinguished among four different classes of multiple negation, namely (1) double negation whereby the presence of two negative elements produce an affirmative; (2) weakening negation whereby a negative element lessens another one, resulting in a mixture of positive and negative; (3) negative concord whereby two or more negative elements result in one negative meaning; and (4) emphatic negation whereby a negative element strengthens another one, yielding a stronger result than if the second element were used alone. What Thomas (1869) identified earlier as supplements to strengthen the negator *pa*, or Goux (1842) described as part of the negation expression, form altogether a subtype of negative concord in GC. Additionally, more subsections of negative concord were presented in the study. They proved useful for distinguishing among the different languages under study.

### 1.9.3. Serial Verb Constructions

Serial verb constructions are not found in French and other European languages (Dixon, 2006:338; Syea, 2017:248), but they are in West African languages and in most of European-based creoles (Aikhenvald, 2006:1; Syea, 2017:248).

Documents, as early as mid-nineteenth century, provided descriptions of SVCs in creoles, though not under this label. Goux (1842) described them briefly in his essay of grammar as, "Verbs composed of two words: **porter-vini**, [French] apporter [*Literally* (*Lit.*), carry-come; *Meaning*, bring], **porter-allé**, [French] emporter [*Lit.*, carry-go; *Meaning*, take away]; **porter-monté** [No French translation is given; *Lit.*, carry-come up or carry-go up; *Meaning*, bring up or take up], **porter-descendd** [No French translation is given either; *Lit.*, carry-come down or carry-go down; *Meaning*, bring down or take down" (my translation and my emphasis).[16] However, Thomas (1869:116) simply classified them as idiomatic expressions along with other

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[16] "Verbes composés de deux mots : porter-vini, apporter, porter-allé, emporter ; porter-monté, porter-descendd" (Original quotation).

idioms of the language without any further explanations than, "owing to the extreme fancifulness of many of" these idioms, they are "most difficult of interpretation."

More recently, the cross-linguistics properties that characterize SVCs have been summarized in Aikhenvald (2006:1). Thus, SVCs are first recognisable by this stacking of two or more verbs in a single verb phrase. However, there are more constraints added to that, namely they cannot be coordinated, neither subordinated, nor receive any mark of syntactic dependency; they must describe a single event; they must consist in a single clause; their intonation pattern must be the same as a monoverbal clause (that is the case in most languages); they must share the same tense, aspect, and polarity value, but they may share arguments; one must be able to use each verb independently; and each verb may or may not share transitivity values.

Then, four parameters are given to classify SVCs, namely "Composition," "Contiguity versus non-contiguity of components," "Wordhood of components," and "Marking of grammatical categories in a serial verb construction." This well-defined frame helped me to analyse SVCs in GC and compare them to my selection of African languages.

Syea (2017:252) relying upon Lefebvre (1998) and DeGraff (2007) reported that SVCs in Haitian and the other Atlantic creoles, whose GC is part of, originate from SVCs of West African languages. This also constituted a criterion in my selection of African languages.

## 1.10. Theoretical Framework

Dixon's Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) was used to achieve the aims of this study. Dixon (2010) described his theory in a three-volume series. In the preliminary pages of the first volume, he depicted his theory as providing "a new and fundamental characterization of the nature of human languages and a comprehensive guide to their description and analysis." He added that this volume gives instructions on how to deal with the methodology for recording and, what is most important in the case of this study, how to analyse and compare languages.

Put in Dryer's terms (2006:211), the difference between BLT and many other theoretical frameworks is that it "takes as much as possible from earlier traditions and only as much as necessary from new traditions" while the others do the exact opposite, as they "assume previous ideas only to a limited extent and freely assume many novel concepts." Thus, BLT has borrowed from structuralism—inspired by the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)—the ability to describe languages for what they are. Therefore, BLT does not try to map

the description of any language onto the models offered by European languages. Thus, this is exactly what was needed here, as GC has to be described for what it is.

The concept of linguistic typology will be particularly useful in this study, as it is about classifying languages on criteria pertaining to their general structure "rather than according to their historical or geographical relationship" (Bazell, 1958:3, as cited in Dixon, 2010:243). Following this concept, I looked at tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs in GC, French and the African languages I selected and tried to underline the similarities and dissimilarities that characterise the structures of these languages to uncover Africanisms in GC's verbal system.

Moreover, Dixon (2010:247) distinguished between intra-language typology and extra-language typology. The intra-language typology compares features that are the same or very similar in languages based on "an agreed set of theoretical parameters" and that is why it suits the study of construction types, therefore, SVCs; I used the set of parameters provided by Aikhenvald (2006) to investigate the influence of SVCs in a selection of African languages on the use of SVCs in GC. But beforehand, I used the extra-language typology to see how SVCs are coded in GC, using the description of SVCs found in the same book. The extra-language typology concerns what is in the real world and how it is grammaticalised. It helped me to analyse how references to tense, aspect, and negation are coded in GC, French, and the African languages I selected, in other words, what means they employ to do so. The typology of tense and aspect, Dahl's (1979) typology of sentence negation and Van der Wouden's (1994a), as cited in Zeijlstra (2004), typology of negative concord were used in my analysis. Then, I applied the intra-language typology to compare them.

## 1.11. Methodology

The four subsections below (1) lay out the research design, (2) present the sample of data, (3) explain the data collection procedure, and (4) expound the data analysis procedure.

### 1.11.1. Research Design

This is a qualitative study that aimed at assessing the African heritage in GC's verbal system, focusing on tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs constructions. This was done through searching, collecting, and analysing of data found in books, articles, and grammar books and dictionaries of the languages under study, i.e. GC, French, Bambara, Ewe, Tuwuli, and Yoruba.

The BLT was adopted to conduct this research throughout the data analysis. I applied the concept of linguistic typology, which comprises of two steps: the extra-language typology

followed by the intra-language typology. The former consisted in analysing how a notion is coded in a language in particular and, the latter, in comparing the realisation of this coding across languages. Then, the reading of the results helped me to assess the presence of Africanisms in GC. The diverse typological classifications I identified in the different areas of study in the literature review served as templates.

### 1.11.2. The Sample of Data

In all the three areas of study, I selected the African languages which are mentioned below, based on the supposed origins of the slaves found in Debien (1974:39-68). They are all West African languages. Furthermore, I chose them based on the availability of grammar books in these languages or dictionaries with at least a basic overview of the grammar of the same. Another language from the same area was mentioned in the course of the study but not studied.

Our sample data consists of:

Instances of eight tense and aspect markers of the indicative mood in GC along with their equivalent in French, and of at least three tense and aspect markers in Ewe and Bambara. Ewe is a Niger-Congo language spoken in Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Bambara is a Mande language of the Niger-Congo language family, too, and is spoken in Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ghana.[17]

Ten examples of negative sentences in GC along with their French counterparts, followed by examples in Ewe and Tuwuli. Tuwuli is a Kwa language which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family, as well. It is spoken in the Volta Region of Ghana.[18] Among these ten examples, some were used to explore negative concord in GC.

Finally, instances of four SVCs in GC, followed by examples of SVCs in Tuwuli and Yoruba, to attest the influence of these African languages on GC. Yoruba belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and is spoken in Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.

### 1.11.3. Data Collection Procedure

Owing to geographical constraints,[19] secondary data were used, comprising of a selection of books and articles, dictionaries and grammar books on French-based creoles, French and

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[17] Data on Ewe and Bambara come from Omniglot (https://omniglot.com/writing/bambara.htm).

[18] Data on Tuwuli and Yoruba come from Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowili_language).

[19] I cannot travel from Kenya to Guadeloupe, mainland France, or West African countries where it would have been easier for me to collect data.

diverse West African languages, namely Bambara, Ewe, Tuwuli, and Yoruba at least. Old documents were chosen, as well as more recent ones, to look at this subject from a diachronic perspective. As for the examples, I provided the ones used to analyse GC and French—which I speak fluently— unless otherwise specified, and the ones used to analyse the African languages under study were borrowed from the literature, as I do not speak any of them.

### 1.11.4. Data Analysis Procedure

This section expounds on how the collected data were analysed. In the data analysis, I described how tense and aspect markers are used in GC and how they can be combined. Then I compared their pattern of conjugation to that of French, Ewe, and Bambara to reveal the similitudes and differences between the languages. Moreover, I discussed the various theories about the origins of the tense and aspect markers in GC, which is an object of controversy: Did they come from the substrate or superstrate languages? Relying upon historical facts presented in the early sections and the arguments advanced by authors with contrastive approaches, I tried to draw impartial and appropriate conclusions.

In the literature review on negation, I identified GC—according to Dahl's classification (1979)—as belonging to the "uninflected Neg particles" subcategory of languages which express sentential negation by the means of syntax. I also mentioned that it is a negative concord language. In my data analysis, I illustrated how sentential negation and negative concord are expressed in GC, and I expounded the subtypes of negative concord. I also discussed the position of the morpheme(s) of negation in the sentence. Then, based on the analysis of the examples, I classified French, Ewe, and Tuwuli in their respective categories. Finally, I compared GC, French, Ewe, and Tuwuli to examine in what ways the expression of negation is the same or differ in these languages. Furthermore, in this section, I discussed the origins of the negator *pa*, leaning on historical facts and the arguments of all parties to make a balanced critical judgement of the findings.

In the literature review on SVCs, I mentioned a four-parameter list to classify SVCs. In my data analysis, I started by identifying examples of SVCs in GC and checked them against Aikhenvald's typological definition (2006:1, 3), then in the four-parameter list to classify SVCs, focus was laid specifically on the composition of these SVCs. Then, I identified examples in Tuwuli and Yoruba in the literature for comparison with GC. This helped me to point out the overlaps between GC, Tuwuli, and Yoruba when their patterns were compared, and thus assess traces of the type(s) of SVCs GC retained from Tuwuli and Yoruba.

## 1.12. Conclusion

In the above sections, I presented the background to the study and unfolded the statement of the research problem: The influence of the substrate languages in GC's verbal system has been completely denied by some scholars. This was followed by the research questions and objectives of the study, which focused on the answer I wished to provide as a result of this study: an assessment of the African heritage in GC's verbal system. I also clearly stated the value of this study and specified its delineations. Then, the literature review discussed scholarly work on the topic to help to put this work into focus. Finally, two other main milestones were the theoretical framework and the methodology. I selected Dixon's BLT to guide me in the analysis of the data, which would consist in showing how tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs are coded in GC and comparing the realisation of the same in French, Bambara, Ewe, Tuwuli, and Yoruba to draw appropriate conclusions. Moreover, the methodology also described the research design, the sample of data and their collection procedure in detail.

# CHAPTER TWO: TENSE AND ASPECT IN GUADELOUPEAN CREOLE

## 2.1. Introduction

Verbs in GC are made of two parts: an invariable part, which corresponds to the lexical base, the verb root, and preverbal markers, which indicate time and aspect (M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux, 2013b; my translation). Ideally, the markers cannot be used independently; so the verbal predicate cannot be reduced to the invariable parts only. Furthermore, when dealing with verbs in GC, it is important to distinguish between dynamic verbs and stative verbs because the use or the non-use of tense and aspect markers will not necessarily yield the same results for these two categories of verbs. There are four main preverbal markers (the morphemes Ø, *ka*, *té*, and *ké*) which inform on tense and aspect of the verbs.

I examine below a few ways in which these preverbal markers are used with supporting examples that are translated into French and English. In section two, I present the perfective aspect followed by the imperfective aspect, showing respectively their combinations with past, present, and future tenses. As Dahl (1985:24) put it, "aspect cannot be taken in isolation from time." In section three, I show how tense and aspect markers are used in French, Ewe, and Bambara, and compare their uses with GC to point out the similitudes and differences between them. I used tables to analyse and compare these uses. Finally, the last section deals with the controversy about the origins of GC main preverbal markers.

## 2.2. Perfective Marker and Imperfective Marker in Guadeloupean Creole

Table 1[20] below exemplifies the use of the perfective aspect in GC. It can be unmarked, using the zero marker (Ø), but the past marker, *té*, and the future marker, *ké*,[21] can also be used to express it.[22]

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[20] All the tables and the examples contained herein are mine unless otherwise indicated. The grammatical content (text and tables) to describe GC tense and aspect was gathered from Bernini-Montbrand et al. (2012:549-52); Cérol (1991:74-6); Colot and Ludwig (2013), Damoiseau (2014); Delumeau (2006:115-22); M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013b); and Mather (2007:420, 21). Their presentation is not uniform, but I will not discuss their views here, as it is not the focus of the study.

[21] Some authors (e.g. Mather, 2007: 420- 21; Jeannot-Fourcaud, 2003, and Bernabé, 1987:124, as cited in Delumeau, 2006:123) described *ké* as a mode marker. However, I concur with De Swart and Verkuyl (1999:50) who distinguish future from modal constructions as such: "The future makes a clear prediction about some future state of affairs [It will rain tomorrow] and is in this way distinct from modal constructions that make reference to alternative worlds [It may rain tomorrow]." Owing to that, I will treat *ké* as a future marker.

[22] The literature (e.g. Colot and Ludwig, 2013; Bernini-Montbrand et al., 2012; Damoiseau, 2014) reads that the marker *té* is added to the aspectual value of the predicate, either Ø or *ka* (*té* + Ø, *té* + *ka*). I extended this to the marker *ké* following the comment in the previous footnote.

*Table 1*. Guadeloupean Creole Perfective Aspect with Zero Marker (Ø) Alone, Then Combined with *Té*, and *Ké*

| Ø | |
|---|---|
| An    **Ø**    travay. <br> 1SG        work | French: Je travaill**ai**; J'**ai** travaill**é**. <br> English: I worked; I have worked. |
| Té + Ø | |
| An **té Ø** travay. | J'av**ais** travaillé. <br> I had worked. |
| Ké + Ø | |
| An **ké Ø** travay. | Je travaille**rai**. <br> I will work. |

The perfective aspect envisages the activity as bounded (Dahl 1985:75), i.e. the beginning and the end of the action are encompassed. Owing to that, this aspect concerns dynamic verbs and not stative verbs. By not marking the verb, the speaker indicates that the action is anterior to the moment of speech and that it is complete in the present, as in *An Ø travay*; with the past marker, *té*, the speaker indicates that the action is anterior to another action and that it is complete in the past, as in *An té Ø travay*; and with the use of the future marker, *ké*, the speaker envisages the completeness of the action in the future, as in *An ké Ø travay*.

Tables 2 and 3 below illustrate the use of the imperfective aspect in GC. Table 2 shows the use of the imperfective aspect with stative verbs. To do so, GC uses the zero marker (Ø), whose aspectual value can be added to the past marker, *té*, and the future marker, *ké*, as well.

*Table 2*. Guadeloupean Creole Imperfective Aspect with Zero Marker (Ø) Alone, Then Combined with *Té*, and *ké*

| Ø | |
|---|---|
| I    **Ø**    jalou/jalouz. <br> 3SG        ADJ[23] | Il **est** jaloux/Elle **est** jalouse (Il/Elle **est** jaloux/se). <br> He/She is jealous. |
| Té + Ø | |
| I **té Ø** jalou/jalouz. | Il/Elle **était** jaloux/se. <br> He/She was jealous. |
| Ké + Ø | |
| I **ké Ø** jalou/jalouz. | Il/Elle **sera** jaloux/se. <br> He/She will be jealous. |

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[23] Creoles demonstrate high plasticity. Owing to that, a verbal predicate can have at its head a verb—just like in French—but also a noun, an adjective, an adverb, etc. Therefore, this means that Meillet (1921/1965/1982:85) ignored that specificity in Creoles and reduced the verbal predicate in Creoles to only what sounds like the verb in the infinitive in French. And yet, this high plasticity had long been attested by early literature describing this part of speech (cf. Thomas, 1869:44, 5).

Contrary to the perfective aspect which sees the event as a whole, the imperfective aspect "pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation" (Comrie, 1998:16). By not marking the verb, the speaker indicates an ongoing state at the moment of speech. With the past marker, *té*, the speaker sees an ongoing state in the past, and with the future marker, *ké*, he/she envisages an ongoing state in the future.

It is to be noted that with the use of the unmarked marker (Ø), the past marker, *té*, or the future marker, *ké*, aspects change values depending on the nature of the verb. Tables 1 and 2 show that dynamic verbs yield a perfective aspect (Table 1), while stative verbs yield an imperfective aspect (Table 2). Tenses, as well, may change values. Unmarked dynamic verbs corresponds to the past, whereas unmarked stative verbs correspond to the present. The past marker, *té*, roots the situation in the simple past with stative verbs, while it does so in the past before past with dynamic verbs. With the future marker *ké*, the tense remains the same in both cases.

In Table 3 below, I illustrate how the imperfective aspect is used with *ka*, which can be combined with the past marker *té*, and the future marker *ké*. These uses apply to both dynamic and stative verbs.

*Table 3*. Guadeloupean Creole Imperfective Aspect with *Ka* Alone, Then Combined with *Té* and *Ké*

| Dynamic verbs | Stative verbs |
|---|---|
| Ka | |
| An **ka** travay. <br> Je travaill**e**. / Je **suis en train de** travailler. <br> - I am working. <br> Je travaill**e**. <br> - I have a job. <br> An **ka** travay Nairobi. <br> Je travaill**e** à Nairobi. <br> I work in Nairobi. | I **ka** jalou/z lè ou ka gadé dòt moun. <br> Il/Elle **est** jaloux/se quand tu regardes les autres. <br> He/She is jealous when you look at others. |
| Té ka | |
| An **té ka** travay lè ou rivé. <br> Je travaill**ais** lorsque tu es arrivé(e). / J'ét**ais en train de** travailler lorsque tu es arrivé(e). <br> I was working when you arrived. <br> An **té ka** travay lopital. <br> Je travaill**ais** à l'hôpital. <br> I was working at the hospital. | I **té ka** jalou lè ou té ka gadé dòt moun. <br> Il/Elle **était** jaloux/se quand tu regardais les autres. <br> He/She was jealous when you looked at others. |
| Ké ka | |
| An **ké ka** travay lè ou ké rivé. <br> Je **serai en train de** travailler lorsque tu arriveras. <br> I will be working when you arrive. | I **ké ka** jalou chaklè ou ké ka gadé dòt moun. <br> Il/Elle **sera** jaloux/se quand tu regarderas les autres. <br> He/She will be jealous whenever you look at others. |

The imperfective aspect marker *ka* used with dynamic verbs can take on different interpretations as illustrated in Table 3 above, and they are not limited to those. Using *ka* alone, the speaker can refer to an ongoing activity (*An ka travay*), or to the habitual, (*An ka travay Nairobi*). Combined with the past marker, *té*, he/she can refer to an ongoing activity in the past that is anterior to another event (*An té ka travay lè ou rivé*), or to the habitual in the past (*An té ka travay lopital*), and combined with the future marker, *ké*, he/she envisages an ongoing activity in the future prior to another event (*An ké ka travay lè ou ké rivé*). Regarding the use of the imperfective aspect marker *ka* with stative verbs, either used alone, with the past marker, *té*, or with the future marker, *ké*, the interpretation depicted is iterative: iterative in the present with the use of *ka* alone (*I ka jalou/z lè ou ka gadé dòt moun*); iterative in the past when combined with the past marker, *té* (*I té ka jalou lè ou té ka gadé dòt moun*); and envisaged as iterative in the future with the future marker, *ké* (*I ké ka jalou chaklè ou ké ka gadé dòt moun*).

To conclude this section, the following three points are to be noted: (1) Other combinations are possible with tense and aspect markers, such as *té ké, té ké ka*—expressing the irrealis mode—which go beyond the scope of our study. The study of tense and aspect constitutes enough material for our investigation. Then, (2) Damoiseau (2014) mentioned in a study about diverse Atlantic Creoles, including GC, that the priority is not the information about tense but rather the aspectual information carried by *Ø* or *ka* on which tense markers *té* (for the past) or *ké* (for the future) are grafted. This concurs with Trudgill's statement (2000:56) that Caribbean Creoles tend to favor verb aspect over tense. Finally, (3) Tense markers in GC appear before the aspect markers in the discourse.

**2.3. Guadeloupean Creole Compared to French, Bambara, and Ewe**

The subsections below provide a brief description of French, the superstrate language, then Bambara and Ewe, the substrate languages, to which GC is compared. Then the similarities and differences observed between GC and these languages are pointed out.

**2.3.1. Guadeloupean Creole Compared to French**

As a reminder, I did not describe below tense and aspect markers in French in detail, but rather focused on their distribution in the verbal system. Tense and aspect in French are expressed mainly through inflection (written in bold letters in the tables), which is totally different from GC—as has been said earlier, then illustrated in Tables 1-3—where the verb always appears in an invariant form preceded by tense and aspect markers. In the preceding section, I intentionally translated the GC examples in French to start drawing the attention of the reader to this fact. In Tables 4 and 5 below, I reproduce a few examples from Tables 1-3 and add a few more for comparison and discussion.

*Table 4*. Samples of Guadeloupean Creole Tense and Aspect Markers Compared to French Tense and Aspect Inflections

| Guadeloupean Creole | French |
|---|---|
| I     Ø     jalou/jalouz.<br>3SG        jealous | Il/Elle **est** jaloux/se.<br>He/She is jealous. |
| Nou     Ø     swaf.<br>1PL         thirst | Nous **avons** soif. (Literally, We have thirsty.)<br>We are thirsty. |
| Yo     Ø     enmé.<br>3PL        love | Ils/Elles aim**ent**.<br>They love. |
| I **té Ø** jalou/jalouz. | Il/Elle **était** jaloux/se.<br>He/She was jealous. |
| I **té Ø** swaf. | Il/Elle **avait** soif.<br>He/She was thirsty. |
| Yo **té Ø** enmé. | Ils/Elles aim**aient**.<br>They loved. |
| An Ø travay. | Je travaill**ai**; J'**ai** travaill**é**.<br>I worked; I have worked. |
| An **té Ø** travay. | J'**avais** travaillé.<br>I had worked. |
| I Ø pati. | Il/Elle part**it**.<br>Il **est** part**i**. / Elle **est** part**ie**. |
| I **té Ø** pati. | Il **était** part**i**. / Elle **était** part**ie**. |

The first thing that immediately strikes the attention is the distribution of the elements carrying tense and aspect, written in bold characters hereafter. A few examples : In *I Ø jalou/jalouz = Il/Elle est jaloux/se*, the French copula *est* (*être* in 3SG PRES) is omitted. The corresponding absence of marker (Ø) in GC indicates the imperfective aspect at the moment of speech with this type of verbal predicate, and the indication of third person singular, contained in the conjugation, is revealed by the pronoun *i* (*il/elle*). In *I té Ø jalou/jalouz = Il/Elle était jaloux/se*, the French copula *était* (*être* in 3SG PST) is omitted except for the past reference contained in the ending *-ait* and expressed in GC by the past marker *té*. Thus, this time, the zero marker (Ø) in GC indicates the imperfective aspect in the past,[24] and the indication of third person singular contained in the form of the ending, as well, is revealed by the pronoun *i* (*il/elle*). In *Nou Ø swaf = Nous avons soif*, the French copula *avons* (*avoir* in 1PL PRES) is omitted, except for the ending *-ons*. The corresponding absence of marker (Ø) in GC indicates the imperfective aspect at the moment of speech with this type of verbal predicate, and the indication of first

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[24] Interestingly, it is to be noticed that because tense and aspect are combined in the French endings they are not as easily visible as it is the case for the GC preverbal markers which are distinct here.

person plural, contained in the ending *-ons*, is revealed by the pronoun *nou* (*nous*). In *An Ø travay = Je travaillai*, (the formal French translation of the verb *travailler* in 1SG PST PF), the zero marker (Ø) in GC with this type of verb indicates that the action is anterior to the moment of speech and that it is complete in the present, which corresponds to the verb ending *-ai*, and the indication of first person singular, contained in the ending *-ai*, as well, is revealed by the pronoun *an* (*je*). Finally, in *An té Ø travay = J'avais travaillé*, (the spoken French translation of the verb *travailler* in 1SG PST bef PST PF) the zero marker (Ø) in GC with this type of verb indicates that the action is anterior to another action and that it is complete in the past, which corresponds to the verb ending *-ais* (the auxiliary verb *avoir*, conjugated *avais*, is omitted except for the ending as just mentioned), and the indication of first person singular, contained in the ending *-ais*, as well, is revealed by the pronoun *an* (*je*). So, apart from tense and aspect which are expressed differently in French and GC, it is also worth mentioning that in French, the subject agrees with the verb in person and number (e.g. **nous avons soif**—we are thirsty), whereas in GC the expression of person and number is left to the subject (**nou Ø swaf**).

The next thing to notice is that French does not have that plasticity encountered in GC whereby an adjective or a noun, as in our examples (*I Ø jalou/jalouz*, *Nou Ø swaf*), can be head of the predicate to express certain states just like the verb. In French, the verbs *be* (être) or *have* (avoir) must be overtly expressed.

If there were no objections, one could say that GC did not borrow from French without a chance of being contradicted. Nevertheless, Bernabé (1983) as cited in Delumeau (2006:115) opined that the zero marker (Ø) of the imperfective (in our examples, *An Ø travay*, *I Ø pati*) is inherited from deletion of the verbs *be* (être) or *have* (avoir) in spoken French (written in bold in our examples, *J'ai travaillé*, *Il/Elle est parti(e)*—The formal corresponding forms being, *Je travaillai*, *Il/Elle partit*). Then, several scholars, mentioned in the literature review said that the past marker *té* is derived from the forms *était* or *été* of the verb *être* (be). Furthermore, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013c) opined that French tense and aspect periphrastic constructions are at the origin of GC preverbal markers, which I think is too generalising.[25] All these controversial views are discussed later in a separate section. Meanwhile, I reproduce in Table 5 below two

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[25] At a later stage, though, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:425, 26) had commented that the slaves certainly reinterpreted and reanalysed these periphrastic constructions based on their own languages. This is somehow at variance with her arguments I evoked in my Statement of the Problem (p. 6), and with her statement here (M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux, 2013c).

examples of GC tense and aspect marker *ka* from Table 3 and include new particles[26] with their corresponding periphrastic constructions in French[27] for comparison and discussion. I sought to show the extent to which it is possible to say that they derive from French by comparing their constructions with the French ones.

*Table 5*. Samples of Guadeloupean Creole Tense and Aspect Markers Compared to French Tense and Aspect Periphrastic Constructions

| Guadeloupean Creole | French |
|---|---|
| An **ka** travay. | Je **suis en train de** travailler. (suis en train de = *être en train de*—*be in the process of* in 1SG PRES)<br>I am working. |
| An **té ka** travay lè i rivé. | J'**étais en train de** travailler lorsqu'il/elle est arrivé(e). (étais en train de = *être en train de*—*be in the process of* in 1SG PST)<br>I was working when he/she arrived. |
| I **sòti Ø** pati.<br>I **fin Ø** pati.<br>*Sòti* and *fin* → immediate past | Il/Elle v**ient de** partir. (vient de = *venir de*—*come from* in 3SG PRES)<br>He/She has just left. |
| Lapli **kay**[28] tonbé.<br>Rain ASP FALL<br>*Kay* → immediate future | Il **va** pleuvoir. (va = *aller*—*go* in 3SG PRES + *pleuvoir*—rain)<br>It is about to rain. |
| An **ja**[29] **Ø** nétwayé.<br>*Ja* → alone, indicates anteriority between a past event and the moment of speech | J'**ai**[30] **déjà** nettoyé.<br>I have already cleaned. |
| An **té ja Ø** nétwayé lè zò rivé.<br>*Ja* → with *té* or *ké*, indicates anteriority between two events both situated either in the past or in the future respectively | J'**avais déjà** nettoyé quand vous êtes arrivé(e)s.<br>I had already cleaned when you (PLU) arrived. |
| An **ké ja ka** nétwayé lè zò ké rivé. | Je **serai déjà en train de** nettoyer quand vous arriverez.<br>I will already be cleaning when you (PLU) arrive. |

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[26] All the possible combinations were not presented.

[27] As usual, all examples in GC and French are mine, except the ones into brackets.

[28] *Kay* is used with dynamic verbs.

[29] I come back to this particle in the section dealing with negation because of its unique allomorphic realisation when it is negated.

[30] Reminder: Neither *ai*, nor *avais* below (conjugations of *avoir*—have), nor *serai* below (conjugation of *être*—be) are overtly expressed in the corresponding sentences in GC.

Table 5 above rightly shows that, apart from the newly introduced verbal (*sòti*, *fin*, and *kay*) and adverbial (*ja*) particles, the monosyllabic aspectual marker *ka* can hardly be said to derive from its wordy corresponding French *être en train de* (*faire quelque chose*), meaning *to be busy* (*doing something*). Other suggested origins for *ka* are discussed later, as well. The origins of the particles *sòti*, *fin*, *kay*, and *ja* can be said to derive from French, but does this mean that they kept their French basic meaning? I provide my analysis below.

The verbal particles *sòti* and *fin* do not derive from the French verb *venir de* (come from)—as in the translation—but they derive from the French verbs *sortir* (*sòti*), meaning *to leave*, and *finir* (*fin*), meaning *to finish*. Neither *sortir* nor *finir* have grammatical functions in French; they are lexical items. This led some scholars such as Mufwene (2001:54), as cited in Winford (2006:14), to speak of preverbal markers as ongoing a process of "grammaticalization." Detgers (2000:145), still according to Winford (2006: 14-5), made a distinction between strict grammaticalisation whereby lexical words are reinterpreted as "grammatical elements" like the above, and cases of "reanalysis" dealing with "markers that are etymological continuations of forms that already had grammatical or quasi-grammatical functions in the superstrate." Winford (2006:15) applied this last principle to markers such as *té* cited above and discussed later. Then, as for *sortir* (to leave) and *finir* (to finish), according to the above explanation, they are grammaticalised and reinterpreted as marking immediate past. How does it work? The sentence reads *sòti* or *fin* + the perfective aspect marker zero (Ø) + the verbal root. The perfective aspect marker zero (Ø) describes the verbal predicate that follows as bounded, then the markers *sòti* or *fin* describes the event expressed by the bounded verbal predicate as belonging to the immediate past. The French correspondence *venir de* (*faire quelque chose*) means *to come from* (*doing something*). Though GC translates the periphrase *venir de* (*faire quelque chose*) as *sòti* or *fin* (+ verbal predicate) and borrows, in passing, *sortir* and *finir* from the superstrate, the reinterpretation is not French. In other words, the lexeme is French, but the function of marking immediate past is not. Indeed, French *Il a fini de manger* (He has finished eating) does not indicate immediate past but mere perfective aspect, and *Il a sorti de manger* is gibberish. If more evidence be needed, it should be noted that *sòti* and *fin* can be used as verbs in GC and preceded by their homonymous markers, *sòti* and *fin*, in the same sentence. When *fin* (finir; finish) is used as a verb, it is preceded by the marker *sòti* (sortir; leave) to express immediate past. For example, *Je viens de finir mon devoir.* = *An sòti fin dèvwa an mwen*. (I have just

finished my assignment).[31] Likewise, when *sòti* (sortir; leave) is used as a verb, it is preceded by the marker *sòti* (sortir; leave) to express immediate past. For example: *Il/Elle **vient de** sortir.* = *I **sòti** sòti.* (He/She has just left.). Thus, the particles *sòti* and *fin* underwent a process of "grammaticalization" and reinterpretation in GC to express immediate past.

Regarding the verbal particle *kay* followed by a verbal predicate, it is supposed to derive from the French verb *aller* (go) + infinitive. Nevertheless, first, the French verb *aller* corresponds only to *ay* in the marker *kay*, which is a short form of *ka+ay*[32] (*ay* = aller; go). As a matter of fact, it is the association of *ka* with *ay* + verbal predicate which carries this aspect of immediate future. Without *ka*, the statement would yield a perfective aspect, e.g. *An Ø ay travay* (cf. Table 1 above), and without *ay*, it would yield an imperfective aspect, e.g. *An **ka** travay* (cf. Table 3 above). The latter result is due to the semantics of *ay*, which express a movement toward something. However, it cannot function alone because the zero marker (Ø) in GC nullifies this targeted goal. Owing to that, *ka* is necessary, and takes on this time a prospective value. However, it could be objected that it is possible to advance a "similar" analysis in French. In the French equivalent of the above GC example, *An kay travay = Je vais travailler*, the aspect marker *ka* in GC which indicates the imperfective aspect with a prospective value because of its association with *ay* corresponds to the conjugated form of *aller* in present tense (*vais*, 1SG) associated with an infinitive. Following the above pattern of showing that both are necessary, I obtain the following: If I remove *aller* (ay), the verb which follows would carry the tense and aspect inflections, yielding an imperfective aspect with either a habitual or progressive value (cf. Table 3); in our example, *Je travaille* (An **ka** travay). Yet, I cannot remove the imperfective aspect (present tense) and still get a meaningful sentence, as French has no zero marker (Ø). I would need to use other tense and aspect inflections. Thus, the similarity ends there, even though both are necessary in French, too. However, the result of the match (by removing *aller* in French and *ay* in GC) is masked because of the difference of constructions in the two languages (preverbal marker vs inflections).

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[31] However, if *fin* is followed directly by a verb it can be used alone. Then the context and the intonation permit to distinguish between *fin* (simple verb) and *fin* (aspect marker). For example, I added *fè = faire* (to do) to the sentence : *An fin fè dèvwa an mwen.* = *Je viens de finir de faire mon devoir.* (I have just finished to do my assignment.), or *J'ai fini de faire mon devoir* (I have finished to do my homework.).

[32] Other forms are *ka+alé* or *kalé*. If I rely on M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:435), *kay* could be a development from *kalé* (*kalé > kaé > kayé > kay*). Indeed, Thomas (1869:50) attested the form *kay*—which he noted *câër*—coexisting with *kalé*—noted *c'aller*.

Second, the meaning of *ka+ay* varies. There are sentences where the meaning of *kay* (*ka+ay*) coincides with the immediate future and the ongoing present. It goes without saying that the context guides the interpretation of the sentence. Consider, *An **kay** travay* : *Je **vais**[33] travailler.* It means either (1) the immediate future—*Je **suis sur le point d'aller** travailler* (*I **am about to go** to work*: I say so because I am getting ready to leave soon, or I am about to leave), or (2) the ongoing present—*Je **suis en train d'aller** travailler* (*I **am going** to work*: I am on my way to work).[34] So, both meanings are compatible with the implicit long form, *An **ka+ay** travay.*[35] However, reconsider the example in Table 5 above, *Lapli **kay** tonbé* : *Il **va**[36] pleuvoir.* Here, *kay* is not compatible with the long form *ka+ay* (go) even though *kay* translates the French *va* (go), and it can only mean the immediate future—*Il **est sur le point de** pleuvoir* (It **is about to** rain). It cannot mean the ongoing present \**going to go to rain*. This, rightly so, because it is not possible to say \**Lapli **ka+ay** tonbé* as it is the case with *An **ka+ay** travay*. One logical interpretation would be to say that it all depends on the subject, whether it is animate or inanimate. However, more restrictions are needed because if I swapped the subjects of these two sentences—if it is possible to say, imagining that it has the will to do so, that *Lapli **ka+ay** travay* : *La pluie **va** travailler* (The rain **is about to go** to work. / The rain **is going** to work.)— I still cannot say, *An **ka+ay** tonbé*.[37] (?I **am about to go to** fall.). This means that it also depends on the type of the verb. It seems to me that not all verbs are compatible with *ay* : *aller* (go), whereby it can be said that the subject is about to go to do something, then described as being on its way to do that thing. However, the event itself can be described as ongoing, e.g. *Lapli ka tonbé*: *Il pleut / Il est en train de pleuvoir* (It is raining). Thus, it appears that there are two uses of *kay*,[38] marker of an immediate future: (1) The type of *Lapli kay tonbé*, which cannot be replaced by the long form, \**Lapli **ka+ay** tonbé* and (2) The type of *An kay travay*, which can be replaced by the long form, *An **ka+ay** travay*. All in all, I understand that this particle corresponds partly to a case of "reanalysis" according to Detgers' definition (2000: 145) as cited in Winford (2006:15). This refers to "markers that are etymological continuations of forms

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[33] *vais* = aller—go in 1SG PRES.

[34] Somehow, though both sentences deal with an event that has not yet reached its endpoint, in (1), one is at the onset of the event, and in (2) one is at a moment following the onset and preceding the endpoint of the event.

[35] I also deduce that the interpretation of *ka* determines the aspect (immediate future or imperfective).

[36] *va* = aller—go in 3SG PRES.

[37] However, in a rational lunatic world, I guess that one can decide that he/she is on his way (going) to go to fall, *An ka ay tonbé*, which precedes *An kay tonbé* (I am about to fall). Notice then, that this order differs from the *An ka ay travay* (I am about to go to work) and *An ka ay travay* (I am on my way to work).

[38] I do not want to label them, as I believe that this draft thinking needs a more thorough analysis.

that already had grammatical or quasi-grammatical functions in the superstrate." I said partly because, once more, this French heritage is only a lexical loan, *ay>aller* (go), which associated with the infinitive has an inherent prospective value. Besides, the above analyses showed GC own characteristics, as well.

The adverbial particle *ja* is derived from the French adverb *déjà*. The latter lost its first syllable; This kind of elision is an apheresis, which is quite common in GC. So, *déjà* is no exception. In addition to this lexical borrowing, the uses of the particle *ja* and the French adverb *déjà* appear to be identical in both languages. They indicate anteriority between a past event and the moment of speech and between two events both situated either in the past or in the future, respectively. However, the similarities end there. According to the Littré dictionary (1874:1029), *déjà* can occupy different positions in the sentence. (1) It is placed after the verb conjugated in a simple tense, e.g. *Il <u>dort</u>*[39] *déjà*. (He is already sleeping) → GC: *I ja ka domi*. (2) It is placed between the auxiliary and the past participial in a compound tense, e.g. *Il <u>a</u> déjà <u>mangé</u>*. (He has already eaten) → GC: *I ja Ø manjé*. And (3) It can be placed at the beginning of the sentence, especially in the historical style, e.g. "***Déjà** l'ennemi avait pris la fuite*." (The enemy had already fled) → GC: *Lenmi té **ja** Ø fannkann*.[40] Conversely, GC consistently places *ja* along with the other markers in front of the verb. Furthermore, an interesting example found in Thomas (1869:102-3) read "*Li **ja** casser toutes zassiettes la* **déjà**, *qui lapeine boûgonnèn* ? [my emphasis] ''he has broken all the plates already, what is the use of grumbling ?" He commented "We are aware that *jà* does ordinarily mean the same as déjà ; but in the simultaneous use of them, as in the foregoing sentence, there is something deeper than the seeming tautology." This last comment is meaningful. In fact, as stated earlier, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013c) opined that French tense and aspect periphrastic constructions are at the origin of GC preverbal markers. Then, this particle at least, or at last, seemed an excellent candidate, but both (1) the non-identical distribution in GC and French and also (2) the repetition of *déjà* along the presence of *ja* in the example by Thomas (1869: 102) indicate that there is no intention of GC to directly replicate the French system.

### 2.3.2. Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Ewe and Bambara
In this section, I compare GC to Ewe, a language from the Niger-Congo family, and to Bambara, which is from the Mande language family. I look at how they express tense and aspect and at

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[39] *dort* = dormir—sleep in 3SG.

[40] *fannkann* = flee.

the distribution of the same in the verbal system. All the examples in Ewe and Bambara come from the literature and are presented as found in there.

### 2.3.2.1. Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Ewe

Rongier (2004:66) described Ewe as a tonal language, but tones hardly affect the verb root, which remains invariable. Moreover, tense, aspect, and mood markers are prefixed or suffixed to the verb. As of now, I can point out to two instances of similarities between GC and Ewe: the invariability of the verb and the use of tense, aspect, and mood markers. However, GC is not a tonal language, and the markers precede the verb in GC and are not attached to the verb. Another interesting element found in Dzablu-Kumah (2015:51) is that Ewe distinguishes between dynamic and stative verbs, which is the case in GC, as well.

I present in Table 6 below a few of the instances of conjugation in Ewe, as found in Rongier (2004) and Dzablu-Kumah (2015), and their counterparts in GC[41] for comparison.

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[41] Throughout this work, the translations of the African languages under study into GC are based on the French or English gloss found in the books.

*Table 6*. Samples of Tense and Aspect Markers in Ewe Compared to Guadeloupean Creole Tense and Aspect Markers

| Ewe | Guadeloupean Creole |
|---|---|
| The aorist | |
| Yàwò **wɔ̀ dɔ**.[42] <br> S　　VB | Yàwò **Ø travay**. <br> S　PF VB <br> Yàwò has worked. |
| **Mèyi.** <br> S-VB | An **Ø pati**. <br> S　PF VB <br> I went. |
| Kofí **kɔ́**. <br> S　STATIVE VERB | Kofi **Ø ho**. <br> S　IPF ADJ <br> Kofi is tall. |
| The future | |
| Yàwò **awɔ̀** dɔ. <br> S　ASP-VB | Yàwò **ké　Ø** travay. <br> S　FUT PF VB <br> Yawò will work. |
| The habitual present | |
| Yàwò **wɔ̀à** dɔ.[43] <br> S　VB-ASP | Yàwò **ka** travay. <br> S　IPF VB <br> Yàwò works. |
| The progressive present | |
| Yàwò **lè**　dɔ **wɔ̀m**.[44] <br> S　AUX　VB- SUFFIX | Yàwò **ka** travay. <br> S　IPF VB <br> Yàwò is working. |

In Ewe's aorist, the verbs—in the examples, **wɔ̀** dɔ, yi, and kɔ́—do not bear any particular mark. Dzablu-Kumah (2015:51) remarks that usually this tense is called "Aorist" when describing Ewe, and it describes a past event and, with stative verbs, it refers to the present "according to general opinion." Thus, these uses of the aorist in Ewe and the use of the perfective (for dynamic verbs) and imperfective (for stative verbs) with the zero marker (Ø) in GC match in many ways. GC differs in that other markers for past (*té*) and future (*ké*) can be associated with the zero

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[42] **wɔ̀** dɔ literally means *do work*.

[43] Add *-a* or *-na* to the verb.

[44] The formula is lè + N + V + -m : Yàwò is (lè) in (-m) doing (**wɔ̀**) work (dɔ). Rongier (2004) specifies though that *-m* does not mean *in*.

marker (Ø). The data I found did not permit me to conclude whether the future prefix *a-* in Ewe is associated to the aorist.[45]

Regarding the future tense, the prefix *a-*[46] is attached to the verb. In GC, too, the future marker precedes the verb, though not attached to it. There are other particular uses of the *a-* marker referring to the mode, which I did not present here, e.g. it is "also used in conditional sentences" (Dzablu-Kumah, 2015:137). Likewise, GC's future marker *ké*, along with (an)other marker(s), is used for the same.

The habitual aspect is formed by suffixing *-a* or *-na* to the verb, and the progressive aspect is formed by using the auxiliary *lè* (in the present here) and affixing *-m* on the main verb. These last two types of constructions are not found at all in GC.

To conclude with this comparison of GC and Ewe, it is worth remembering that both in GC and Ewe (1) the verb remains invariable whether the aspect and tense markers are prefixed or suffixed to it or simply precede it; (2) there exists a bare form of the verb that yields the same results in many ways.

### 2.3.2.2. Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Bambara

In this second part, I focus on the comparison of GC and Bambara. Like Ewe, Bambara is a tonal language and uses tense and aspect markers in its verbal system. Likewise, the verb in Bambara is invariable. However, Bambara distinguishes between transitive verbs (the object precedes the verbal predicate then; it is an SOV language) and intransitive verbs in its choice of markers sometimes (Maiga, 2001:45, 48). Table 7 below illustrates instances of conjugation in Bambara as found in Maiga (2001) with their counterparts in GC for comparison.

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[45] In answer to the objections concerning the aorist, in a blog post titled "The Aorist is so much more than a past tense," Mounce (n.d.) borrowed Con Campbell's illustration, saying that with the aorist "You are in a helicopter over the parade, looking at the parade as a whole." Fanning, as cited by Mounce (n.d.) too, said that the aorist sees "the action from the outside as a whole rather than from inside the action." He also mentioned the "proleptic (futuristic) use of the aorist." This concurs with Dahl's view (1985:82; cf. Figure 3.3) of matching the aorist with perfective. However, some languages can associate the aorist with the imperfective (Dahl, 1985:77).

[46] Written *á-* in Dzablu-Kumah (2015:136).

*Table 7*. Samples of Tense and Aspect Markers in Bambara Compared to Guadeloupean Creole Tense and Aspect Markers

| Bambara | Guadeloupean Creole |
|---|---|
| **Imperfective with bɛ́** | |
| n **bɛ́** bòli<br>1SG IPF POS[47] VB | An **ka** kouri.<br>1SG IPF HAB VB<br>I run. |
| n fà **bɛ́** kíni dún<br>S IPF POS OBJ VB | Papa an mwen **ka** manjé diri.<br>S IPF HAB VB OBJ<br>My father eats rice. |
| **Imperfective with bɛ́ ká** | |
| n **bɛ́** **ká** kàsi<br>1SG IPF POS PROG VB | An **ka** pléré.<br>1SG IPF PROG VB<br>I am crying. |
| **Imperfective with tùn bɛ́** | |
| n **tùn** **bɛ́** tága<br>1SG ANT IPF POS VB | An **té** **ka** pati.<br>1SG ANT IPF HAB VB<br>I would leave. |
| **Imperfective with tùn bɛ́ ká** | |
| n **tùn** **bɛ́** **ká** tága<br>1SG ANT IPF POS PROG VB | An **té** **ka** pati.<br>1SG ANT IPF PROG VB<br>I was leaving. |
| **Perfective with yé/VB-ra** | |
| n **yé** sògo fèere<br>1SG PF POS OBJ VB | An **Ø** vann viann-la.<br>1SG PF VB OBJ<br>I have sold/ I sold the meat. |
| N tága **-ra**[48]<br>1SG VB -PF POS | An **Ø** pati.<br>1SG PF VB<br>I have left./ I left. |
| **Perfective with tùn yé/tùn VB-ra** | |
| n **tùn** **yé** sògo fèere<br>1SG ANT PF OBJ VB | An **té** **Ø** vann viann-la.<br>1SG ANT PF VB OBJ<br>I had sold the meat. |
| n **tùn** tága **-ra**<br>1SG ANT VB -PF | An **té** **Ø** pati. (I had left.)<br>1SG ANT PF VB |

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[47] In Bambara, the markers change depending on whether the sentence is positive or negative. In these examples, I presented positive sentences only.

[48] Add -ra/ná/lá after the verb depending on the preceding consonant.

Intransitive verbs in Bambara triggers the suffixation of the perfective aspect marker (*-ra*, *-ná*, or *-lá*) to the verb. This distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs does not exist in GC, and tense or aspect markers are never placed after the verb. Having said that, I do not focus on them more than that in my comparison below between Bambara and GC.

Where GC uses the imperfective aspect with *ka* to express either the habitual or an ongoing event at the moment of speech, Bambara uses either *bɛ́*, or *bɛ́ ká*, respectively. Therefore, it is to be noted that they use the same marker (aside from tone) to express the progressive meaning. As a reminder, I did not reproduce all the uses of the imperfective in either language, so they may share more similarities. Regarding past reference, both anterior tense markers, *tùn* in Bambara, or *té* in GC, precede the aspect marker.

Concerning the perfective aspect, I focus on transitive verbs only and note that the zero marker (Ø) in GC corresponds to the *yé* marker in Bambara. Then *tùn* in Bambara, or *té* in GC, precede them, as well, when referring to the past.

Leaving aside the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, GC and Bambara both use preverbal markers. I also note two interesting similarities which consist in the anterior markers *tùn* and *té* respectively and the progressive aspect marker *ká* in both cases (*ka* without the tone in GC, as it is not a tonal language).

## 2.3.3. Summary on Comparisons between Guadeloupean Creole, French, Ewe, and Bambara

The preceding analyses revealed that the verbal systems of GC, Ewe, and Bambara share more similarities than those of GC and French. The verbal morphology of French (VB-INFL) is not reflected in GC which rather follows the general pattern found in the African languages (TMA markers + invariable VB). I also analysed a few French tense and aspect periphrastic constructions and showed the limits of M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux's claim (2013c) that they are at the origin of GC preverbal markers. Indeed, the loan is only lexical; the verbs in these French constructions are inflected and GC has grammaticalised and reinterpreted, or reanalysed these periphrastic constructions.[49]

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[49] See footnote #22, as well.

## 2.4. Controversy about the Origins of Guadeloupean Creole Main Preverbal Markers

The sections below present and discuss the different origins attributed to the main preverbal markers *Ø*, *té*, *ké* and *ka*. Each discussion is followed by a suggestion about the more plausible explanation.

### 2.4.1. The zero marker (Ø)

Previously, it has been shown that the absence of marker is significant in GC. So far, I have found only one author who referred to the origin of this marker. As mentioned earlier, Bernabé (1983) as cited in Delumeau (2006:115) opined that the zero marker (Ø) of the perfective (e.g. *An Ø travay. I Ø pati.*) is inherited from deletion of the verbs *être* (be) or *avoir* (have) in spoken French (written in bold in our examples, *J'ai travaillé*, *Il/Elle est parti*(*e*)[50] = *I have worked, He/She has left*).

My argument against this origin of the zero marker is in the form of three questions: (1) If deletion of the French auxiliary verbs explains the zero marker (Ø) of the perfective (e.g. *I Ø travay*, *Il/Elle a travaillé*, *He/She has worked*), what explains the zero marker (Ø) of the imperfective (e.g. *I jalou/jalouz*, *Il/Elle est jaloux/jalouse*, *He/She is jealous* ; *I swaf*. *Il/Elle a soif*, *He/She is thirsty*) which corresponds to the same French verbs (*être* and *avoir*)? (2) By that own logic, why is there no deletion in *J'avais travaillé*, *Il/Elle était parti*(*e*) = *An té[51] Ø travay*, *I té Ø pati* (*I had worked, He/She had left*)? I cannot answer these questions from the same perspective, as I disagree with the deletion explanation. I make my suggestion below. (3) Why is it that, in French, some conjugations are formed without these auxiliaries (*être* and *avoir*—*be* and *have*), and yet, the GC correspondences do use tense and aspect markers (e.g. *An ka travay*, *Je travaille*, *I work* ; *An té ka travay*, *Je travaillais*, *I was working*)? I believe that the slaves did not use the zero marker (Ø) and the others at random. Each of these serves its own purpose.

I suggest that the origin of the zero marker (Ø) be found in the verbal system of the African languages. In the section above it has been shown how the absence of overt marker both in GC and Ewe serve almost the same purpose. I consulted other West African languages such as

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[50] The formal corresponding forms are *Je travaillai. Il/Elle partit*.

[51] Many scholars attribute the origin of *té* to French, *était*. See section below for more details.

Soso,[52] or Tuwuli for example and found out that they also have in their verbal system this bare form of the verb whose uses overlap with GC in many ways, too.

### 2.4.2. Té

As a reminder, *té* is the past tense marker in GC (***I té pati***, *Il/Elle était parti(e)*, *He/She had left*; ***I té malad***, *Il/Elle était malade*, or *Il/Elle avait été malade*, *He/She was sick*, or *He/She had been sick*). Owing to the phonetic similarity between *té* and *était* or *été* and their apparent same position, many scholars concur that the origin of the past marker *té* is *était*[53]/*été*[54] (Thomas, 1869:50; Van Name, 1869-1870:143; Syea, 2017:261; to name a few). M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:426) cautiously said that it was generally attributed the same origins, though she provided no sources. Based on her collection of ancient texts in Caribbean French Creole, she noted that *té* had this past tense value from the start.

My argument against this origin of *té* is fourfold: (1) It is often omitted in the literature that the verb *être* (be) has different past forms endings in first and second persons plural, written in bold in the following examples (*Nou té malad*, *Nous ét**ions** malades*, *We were sick* ; *Zòt té malad*, *Vous ét**iez** maladies*, *You were sick*). Even though the translation into the compound past tense uses the past participial *été* (e.g. *Nou té malad*, *Nous avions **été** malades*, *We had been sick* ; *Zòt té malad*, *Vous aviez **été** malades*, *You had been sick*), I think that the ideal would have been to be transparent and present the whole picture even if it is to conclude that GC has retained the most frequent sound [te]. I am not of this opinion, though. Indeed, I do not believe that compound forms were used to speak to the slaves. (2) Something else that is not mentioned in the literature is that, in many instances, *té* corresponds to the verb *avoir* (have) in French (e.g. *I té mangé*, Il/elle **avait** mangé, He/She had eaten ; *I té fen*, Il/Elle **avait** faim, He/she was hungry; *I té vole*, Il/Elle **avait** volé, He/She had stolen). In that case, there is no corresponding [te] sound in the superstrate language. Furthermore, *té* being the realisation of the past tense marker in the French endings, in the case of *Yo té Ø enmé* (*Ils/Elles aimaient*) where you have a stative verb as verbal predicate, there is no corresponding [te] sound in the superstrate language either. (3) In her collection of ancient texts in Caribbean French Creole, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:426) remarked that there were different spellings besides "té," namely "t'ai,"

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[52] Soso (Touré, 2004:63-66); Tuwuli (Harley, 2005:197, 98). Soso is a Mande language of the Niger-Congo family spoken by people of Guinea and Sierra Leone.

[53] Forms of the verb *être* (be). The form *était* is 3SG. Other forms with the same sound include *étais* 1SG, or 2SG and *étaient* 3PL.

[54] The lost of the first syllable is explained through the deletion of the first syllable (apheresis); what Van Name (1869-1870:131) called "a dislike of an initial vowel" by the African slaves.

"tai," and even "thé," which are interferences with French. She interestingly opined that the use of the spelling *té* by the author of the Passion of Christ written in the 18th century reveals that the author certainly had some knowledge of the languages of the slaves and thereby was cautious not to attribute the origin of, what is more, a monosyllabic word to a language rather than another (I am not sure that this last bit was necessary.). (4) Finally, I concur with Holm[55] (2004 :174) that, "semantically and syntactically they [the preverbal markers] are much more like the preverbal tense and aspect markers in many of their substrate languages." That is a fact that many do not underline. I showed this in the above sections. I conclude that the scholars who believe in the superstrate origin of *té* considered only the surface phonetic realisation of this morpheme.

Finally, I suggest that the past marker *té* could come from Bambara *tùn*. Not only both start with the voiceless plosive alveolar /t/, but they also occupy the same place in the syntax—they are placed before the aspect marker or the verb—and have the same semantic value—they are both tense markers indicating a past action. Furthermore, in both verbal systems we also find another marker, namely *ka*, with the same semantic and syntactic properties in some uses.

### 2.4.3. Ké

The future marker *ké*[56] seems to have appeared suddenly in GC as insinuated by Poyen-Bellisle (1894:42), cited in M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:434). He noted the appearance of what he called a new auxiliary, *kę* [ke], to form the future. He opined that it could either be (1) the result of a merger of *ka* with the ending *ę* [ke] of the first person singular of the French future tense, or (2) a contraction of *ka + allé*, which is already *kalę*; he suggested that the development of the form would be kalę > kaę > kę. M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:435) concurred that this marker appeared suddenly toward the middle of the 19th century and also shared the belief that it could have derived from *kalé*. Furthermore, she ruled out the possibility that it could have derived from *kay*, another particle used to express the notion of future, which I described previously, arguing that *kay* appeared after *ké*. Finally, she pointed as well to the fact that *ké* could have developed from *kalé*, as a reanalysis that the slaves coming from Congo could have

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[55] I do not share his first part of the statement, though, saying that the preverbal markers "often have the outer form of auxiliary verbs from the lexical source language (which occupy a similar position and serve a similar function).

[56] There are other preverbal particles to form the future. Among them, the morpheme *kay* has been presented previously.

made of *kalé*. Likewise, Cérol (1991:88) had long ago pointed out to that same similarity in the use of *ké* between GC and Kituba, though not regarding it as a reanalysis.[57]

My arguments against some of the above are the following: (1) Poyen-Bellisle's (1894:42) suggestion of *ka* merging with the ending ę [ke] of the first person singular of the French future tense sounds quite improbable. If I rely on M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013c), the periphrastic constructions[58] being more present in spoken French even in the 17th century, this makes this suggestion quite weak. (2) The evolution from *kalé* to *ké* also sounds a bit weak, too, as there is not a single trace left in the literature. However, I must acknowledge that this lack of traces could be due to the massive arrival of Congo people and the form *kélé* in their language, abbreviated in *ké* (M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux, 2008:436), which may have led to a swift change. On the other hand, *ké* could just have entered the language as such and be handy to express other aspects of future reference not rendered by *kalé/kay*. In fact, they can be combined, e.g. *Fèmé pòt-la lè ou ké kay dòmi* (Close the door when you will go to sleep). So this last argument is a bit mitigated.

The suggestion of *ké* borrowed from Kituba is more plausible than *ké* being a merger of *ka* with the ending ę [ke] of the first person singular of the French future tense. Furthermore, the large number of Congo slaves and even of Congo "free workers" who arrived after the abolition of slavery in Guadeloupe in 1848 (M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux, 2008:436; Cérol [Mazama], 2017: 37) could account for this marker.

### 2.4.4. Ka

The morpheme *ka* is an aspectual marker of the imperfective. It is the marker which—except for a few "logical" explanations—has either left some scholars with no clue about its origins, or given rise to the most improbable explanations about the same.

Thomas (1869:50) stated, "Of all the Creoles Auxiliaries, the most important and commonly used is *ca* [ka]. With regards to the origin of this word, we have not been able to discover anything satisfactory." Bonnet (2008), in his glossary of creole terms, did not comment on the origins of *ka* (neither on the other markers), though he made it a point of honour to mention the

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[57] There are two mutually intelligible dialects: Kituba, or Kikongo, in the eastern areas; or Kikongo ya Leta, or Munukutuba, in the western areas (Swift & Zola, 1963:x).

[58] For example, *Je vais aller* (I am going to) instead of *J'irai* (I will go).

origin of the other entries. Syea (2017:261) admitted that "As far as ka itself is concerned, its historical source seems to be shrouded in mystery."

Talking about Thomas (1869), Van Name (1869-1870:144) recorded that he "did not venture an explanation of *ca*, but more recently, in Trübner's Record for Dec. 31, 1870, he has expressed the opinion that *ca* and *da*, which performs a similar office in the Negro English of the West Indies, are of African origin, and from the same root." But Van Name (1869-1870:144) immediately belittled this statement adding, what I prefer to quote to show the extent to which some scholars would not acknowledge substrate influences at the grammatical level,[59]

> It is however extremely improbable that while the African element, even in the Creole vocabulary, is so small, a word having such an important *grammatical* use should have been borrowed from this source. The Creole auxiliaries in general, Spanish and Dutch as well as French, from their less independent character, have suffered more than usual change, and the original form is not always easily recognizable.

Then, by his own admission, he went on to propose a most improbable origin,

> Sooner than abandon the attempt to explain *ca* from the French, we should be disposed to accept one of the following etymologies, no one of which we freely admit is very obvious, and which are offered simply as conjectures. They are, *quand*, or *comme* (Creole *con*), the use of which in clauses expressing contemporaneous action, as *comme il faisait ça* 'just as he was doing this', may possibly have furnished a starting point for the auxiliary.

He hypothesises this far stretched explanation with the argument that, "the conjunction *et puis* 'and then'" has been adopted in Creole as "an instrumental preposition 'with,'" which is debatable, as well. The fact is that his argument sounds like the confession of attributing the origin of *ka* to French at any cost.

M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013a) stated that it would be improper to emphasize one origin of *ka* rather than the other among the ones she evoked. In M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:428, 29), the author expounded two origins for *ka*: (1) The marker *ka* is suggested to have evolved from

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[59] Similarly, see Hazaël-Massieux's statement (2008:397), "Chercher l'Afrique dans les débuts des créoles n'est donc pas une démarche sans intérêt, mais il faut reconnaître que ce qu'on y trouve au mieux, c'est du lexique." In short, this literally means that only African lexicon, at best, can be found in the beginnings of creoles.

*qu'à* as found in "Vous n'a qua parler ma chere"[60] quoted from Jeannot et Thérèse, an 18th century play. (2) The marker *ka* is suggested to have originated from the corresponding progressive form in Bambara, as found in the example "n bé ká kàsi"[61] she quoted from Maiga (2003). (3) Apart from the above, she also suggested in M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2013a) a third origin which could derive from the Haitian Creole "ka" or "kap" originating from the French "capab'."[62] Bernabé (1983: 1053), as cited in Lefebvre (1998:139), had already proposed the same analysis, "Martinican creole has a habitual marker ka which derives its phonological form from a kapab>kap> reduced form of the French word capable 'capable' [ka]."

Putting aside, as of now, the theory of the Bambara origin of *ka*—because that is the approach I favour—I want to object against all the other suggestions first. I expound the improbability of each of these suggestions thereafter. So, how often do these suggested expressions (*comme*, *quand*, *n'a quà*, *capab'*) appear in the language to the point of generating the marker *ka*? Where are the clues showing their semantic evolutions? I did not find any in the literature. On the contrary, in the collection of ancient texts in Caribbean French Creole by M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:63, 64), these expressions coexist with *ka* (written qu'a in the earlier texts) always in their respective meanings. Furthermore, even if they were that frequent, none of the interpretations of *ka* are related to any connotations of these suggestions. Dealing with them one by one, (1) *quand* and *comme* in *quand/comme il faisait ça* (when/as he was doing that), are used as conjunctions indicating simultaneity between events; (2) "n'a qu'à" in "Vous n'a qua parler ma chere" (You only have to talk, dear) is a restrictive negation; and (3) The French word *capable* (capable) is an adjective indicating ability to do something.

In the face of the above suggestions, the Bambara interpretation is the more plausible. I expatiated on the comparison between GC and Bambara previously and this can serve as a reference in the matter.

### 2.5. Conclusion

Trying to explain GC preverbal markers from a French perspective can mostly bring confusion and contradictions as the above analyses revealed. And yet, any substrate influence is either overtly or subtly discarded in favour of the superstrate influence. However, if one thinks in terms of systems, it is clear that GC fits more into the African languages system of preverbal

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[60] FR : "Vous n'avez qu'à parler ma chère." (You only have to talk, dear.)

[61] FR : "Je suis en train de pleurer." (I am crying.)

[62] Reduced spoken form of the French adjective *capable* (capable).

markers and invariable verb stem than the French system of verb inflection to express tense and aspect, even though GC happens to borrow sometimes from the French lexicon. Obviously, I could not cover all aspects of the matter, but I believe that what I presented served to show that GC still bears African features in its verbal system regarding tense and aspect.

# CHAPTER THREE: NEGATION IN GUADELOUPEAN CREOLE

## 3.1. Introduction

This section aims at describing the basic pattern of negation found in GC first, followed by a description of its particularity for being a Negative Concord language. From there, discussions follow on how negation in GC differs from the patterns of negation presented for French, then for Ewe and Tuwuli, including a discussion on the controversy about the distribution of the negator in GC.

## 3.2. Basic Negation in Guadeloupean Creole

In the Literature Review, I mentioned that GC is one of these languages that express negation by syntactical means, and more specifically by using "uninflected Neg particles" (Dahl, 1979:84). In GC, generally,[63] sentential negation is formed by placing the morpheme *pa*, or one of its allomorphs (*pé* and *pòkò*[64]), in front of the verb phrase. Thus, *pa* precedes all the tense and aspect markers in the sentence. The negator *pa* signals to the hearer/reader that the content of the proposition is negated. This is the basic way of expressing sentential negation in GC. I provide below a few examples to illustrate its uses.[65]

(1) An    **pa**    ka     travay (I do not work).
     1SG    neg     IPF    work

(2) An    **pa**    Ø     travay (I have not worked).
     1SG    neg     PF    work

When the tense marker *ké* is used, *pa* is changed to *pé* through regressive assimilation.

(3) An    **pé**    ké     Ø     travay (I will not work).
     1SG    neg     FUT    PF    work

The same morphophonological rule applies when the adverbial particle *ja* is negated. Then, it becomes *pòkò* (*pò kò*: pas encore/not yet).

(4) An    **ja**        Ø     travay (I have already worked).
     1SG    already     PF    work

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[63] I did not deem necessary to examine the few exceptions to this rule in the context of this study.

[64] As a reminder, *pòkò* = *pas encore* (not yet); *kò* = short form of *ankò* (encore).

[65] I provided only one translation even when more than one is possible.

(5) → An **pò-kò** Ø travay (I have not worked yet).
     1SG neg-already PF work

Furthermore, all these negative forms can be reduced. So, we have,

(6) An **pa** **ka** travay → An **pa'a** travay.
    1SG neg IPF work 1SG neg'IPF work

(7) An **pé** **ké** Ø travay → An **pé'é** Ø travay.
    1SG neg FUT PF work 1SG neg'FUT PF work

(8) An **pò-kò** Ø travay → An **pò'ò** Ø travay.
    1SG neg-already PF work 1SG neg'already PF work

Finally, another negative word can be adjoined to the negator *pa*. In this case, there is more than one negator in the sentence, which I investigate in the following section.

### 3.3. Negative Concord in Guadeloupean Creole

If to example (1) above, *An pa ka travay*, I add *jan* (never), I would get *An **pa jan** ka travay* (Literally: *I do not never work → I never work.). The word *jan* somehow specifies the degree of the negation. It behaves like what Tesnière (1959) called the "forclusif" in his explanation of French negation given below. Anyway, this sentence is a perfectly grammatical sentence in GC. This is what is called Negative Concord (NC) in the literature. It is a form of multiple negation construction whereby two or more negative elements in the same sentence result in one negative meaning instead of cancelling each other out (Zeijlstra 2004:3). In their times, it was what Thomas (1869) identified as supplements to strengthen the negator *pa*, or what Goux (1842) described as part of the negation expression.

Giannakidou (1997, 2000), as cited in Zeijlstra (2004: 3), distinguishes between Strict and Non-Strict NC languages.[66] I reproduce the examples mentioned in this literature to identify thereafter the pattern found in GC.

(9) *Nichego ne* rabotaet Russian
    N-thing neg works (Strict NC)
    'Nothing works'

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[66] *Strict* NC languages allow the occurrence of negative words and negative particles in the same sentence, whereas *Non-Strict* NC languages do not allow such.

(10) *Ninguém* (\**não*) veio    Portuguese
    N-body neg came    (Non-Strict NC)
    'Nobody came'

The translation of the above in GC yields:

(11) *Ayen*   *pa*  ka    maché.
    N-thing   neg  IPF   works          (Strict NC)

(12) *Ponmoun*  *pa*     Ø    vini.
    N-body    neg    PF   came         (Strict NC)

This shows then that GC is a Strict NC language, as it allows the occurrence of the negative words (*ayen*, *ponmoun*) and the negative particle (*pa*) in the same sentence. I return to these sentences further in the section about the comparison with French.

**3.4. Guadeloupean Creole compared to French, Ewe, and Tuwuli**

In the following subsections, I describe negation in French, Ewe, and Tuwuli. Thereafter, I look at how they resemble to or differ from GC. This allowed me to measure the influence of these languages on GC.

**3.4.1. Guadeloupean Creole compared to French**

In the following sections, I consider GC and French from a typological perspective first. Then, I discuss the controversial origin of the distribution of GC negator in the sentence. Finally, as GC is a Strict NC language, I analyse the use of negation in French to find out whether the two languages share this particularity.

**3.4.1.1. Typological comparison**

Based on Dahl (1979: 88), French is a "double particle construction" type of language. [67] I follow Tesnière's explanation (1959: 217-37) and build my analysis upon his approach of negation in French. According to him, a distinction must be made between what he calls "négation nucléaire"[68] and "négation connexionnelle." Dahl's "double particle construction" (1979:88) corresponds to Tesnière's "négation connexionnelle." I deal with "négation nucléaire" at a more appropriate time.

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[67] For some insight into the history of negation in French and the Jespersen's Cycle see Jespersen (1917).

[68] This represents partial negation; it concerns one nucleus in the sentence. Tesnière's example (1959:217): "*Qui est venu?*" (Who has come?) is a question with an empty nucleus, *qui* (who). The nucleus can be filled with a person's name or with the negative word, *personne* (nobody), "*Personne n'est venu.*" (Nobody has come.).

The "négation connexionnelle" corresponds to sentential negation. It is formed with the discontinuous double particle *ne ... pas*. With his stemma 204, reproduced below, Tesnière (1959: 218) explained that, in this kind of negation, the nuclei are filled with positive meaning, but that their connection is negated with a marker impacting that connection, therefore, the whole sentence.



Stemma 204
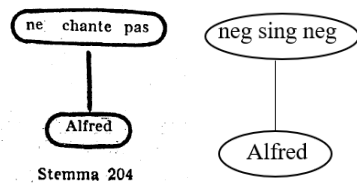
The author insisted that the particles *ne* and *pas* are independent and should not be considered as a fixed construction as is the case in many grammars (Tesnière, 1959:223, 24). Instead, he opined that because there are two words, each of them must perform distinct syntactic functions, and that it is the combination of both that constitute the negation. He concurred with Damourette and Pichon (1928:129) that the first negator, *ne*, is what is called the "discordantiel" and the second one, *pas*, is the "forclusif." The "discordantiel" alone does not constitute the negation, but only prepares it. Then, the "forclusif" realises it. Put in other terms, Tesnière (1959: 225) explained that the "discordantiel" *ne* helps to detach the thought from the positive meaning of the sentence, while the "forclusif" *pas* helps to attach it to the negative meaning.

Regarding the independency of these two particles, it is to be noted that the "discordantiel," *ne*, can be used alone in a few archaic phrases to express negation (e.g., "*Je ne sais*" I do not know; "*Je ne puis*" I cannot). As for the "forclusif," it has become common to use it alone to express negation in spoken French (e.g., "*Je sais pas*" I do not know). However, it is important to note that the correct usage remains the "double particle construction" (Tesnière, 1959:230).[69]

Finally, looking back at GC and French sentential negative constructions, the classification proposed by Dahl (1979) reveal that they belong to different categories. GC uses "uninflected Neg particles," while French uses a discontinuous "double particle construction." Therefore, their distribution in the sentence differs. Nevertheless, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:154) opined that the place of the negator in GC derives from French. I examine her view in the following section.

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[69] For other cases, see Tesnière, 1979: 226, 230, 31.

### 3.4.1.2. Controversy about the Distribution of the Negator in Guadeloupean Creole

In her collection of ancient texts in Caribbean French Creole, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:153, 54) noted the systematic position of GC negator *pa*, in front of the verb phrase. Nevertheless, she went on to point out to what she qualified herself as two cases of exception to justify the distribution of the negator *pa* in GC, as originating from French. These two cases are (1) *n'a pas* as in "*mal moi n'a pas pour rire*" ("*mon mal n'est pas une plaisanterie*"—my pain is not a joke) ; and (2) *faut pas* as in "*faut pas vous si chagrin*" ("*il ne vous faut pas avoir de la peine*"—you should not be [so] sad).

First, I reproduce below two of the GC examples above (1 & 2) with their translations in French to explain why M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:154) argued that the distribution of the negator in GC comes from French.

| (1) An | **pa** | ka | travay = Je | **ne** | travaille | **pas** (I do not work). |
|--------|--------|-----|-------------|--------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1SG | neg | IPF | work 1SG | neg | work | neg |

| (2) An | **pa** | Ø | travay = Je | **n'**ai[70] | | **pas** | travaillé (I have not worked). |
|--------|--------|-----|-------------|-------------|--|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1SG | neg | PF | work 1SG | neg'have | | neg | worked |

When the verb is in a simple tense (e.g. *Je **ne** travaille **pas***), the "forclusif", *pas*, follows the verb. However, in case of a compound tense (auxiliary + past participle), the "forclusif," *pas*, is inserted between the auxiliary and the verb in the past participial form (e.g. *Je **n'ai pas** travaillé*, or *Je **ne** suis **pas** allé à l'hôpital* = I did not work, I did not go to the hospital).[71] Therefore, *pas* finds itself in front of the verb in the past participial form. Owing to that, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:154) argued that the auxiliary is the base of the evolution of the distribution of GC negator, *pa*, in front of the verb. However, in this collection of texts, *n'a pas*[72] appears as the negative form of *c'est* (it is), and corresponds then to *it is not*. Furthermore, it is used exclusively in these instances (cf. for other examples, pp. 76, 81, 189). Apart from the second exception described in the next section, everywhere else, *pa* precedes the verbal phrase without exception. There is no alternance of the negator *pa* following or preceding other verbs.

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[70] The "discordantiel" *ne* becomes *n'* when it precedes a vowel.

[71] There are two auxiliary verbs, *avoir* (have) and *être* (be). In the examples, *ai* corresponds to *avoir* in 1SG PRES and *suis* corresponds to *être* in 1SG PRES.

[72] The *a* in *n'a* is not to be confused with the *avoir* (have) auxiliary. This is a distortion of *ce n'est pas* (it is not).

On the other hand, *c'est pa* alternates with *n'apas*[73] with the same meaning (cf. examples pp. 76, 79-82), and this alternance still exists in GC.

Second, M.-C. Hazaël-Massieux (2008:154) mentioned *faut pas* as in *faut pas vous si chagrin*[74] as the other exception to justify the distribution of the negator *pa* in GC, as originating from French, but she did so without any further explanation. My sole objection is that in French and in GC, as well, the negator *pas/pa* negates the modal auxiliary, *faut* (*falloir*[75] in 3SG), and not the verb that follows in this instance. Another example,

(13) *Il faut travailler—Fò*[76] *travay* (One should work).

(14) → *Il ne faut pas travailler—Fò pa travay* (One should not work).

The position of the "discordantiel," *ne*, and the "forclusif," *pas*, indicates that it is the modal auxiliary that is negated. In other instances, when it is the verb that is negated, the "forclusif," *pas*, precedes the verb.[77] In this latter case, the intonation is different in GC with an intonation break between *fò* and *pa*. For example,

(15) *Il faut ne pas travailler—Fò pa travay* (One should not work).

This second case of exception only means that if there is a French origin to claim, it is rather the normal order of the negator *pas* after *faut* and not the position of *pas* before the verb that follows it. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are other cases where *pa* follows modal auxiliaries (e.g. *An vé pa atann*, Je ne veux pas attendre, I do not want to wait; *An pé pa atann*, Je ne peux pas attendre, I cannot wait). This shows that this position of the negator is about auxiliary verbs.

Finally, I believe then that these two expressions should be considered as fixed loans from French in GC. These two cases of exception, as they were rightly called, cannot be taken to mean that the position of *pa* in GC derived from French. Evidence of a gradual development involving other verbs is needed to support this theory. It cannot be taken for granted.

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[73] Nowadays, *sé pa* (for *c'est pa*) and *apa* (for *n'apas*).

[74] FR : "*il ne vous faut pas avoir de la peine*"—you should not be [so] sad.

[75] *Falloir* (should, must) is a defective verb.

[76] Today's spelling is *fo* or *fò*.

[77] For example, *Il faut ne pas travailler*. This is not analysed in depth here, as it is not fundamental for the study.

### 3.4.1.3. Investigation of Negative Concord in French

Tesnière's (1959) distinction between the "discordantiel" and the "forclusif" is a good starting point to deal with negative concord in French. In fact, the capital point in his description of negation in French is that the "forclusif" can combine in different ways with the "discordantiel" and that it is the combination of both that constitutes negation in French. Tesnière (1959:227, 34) explained that the "forclusif" can be either "nucléaire" or "connexionnel." Previously, I dealt with the "forclusif connexionnel." As for the "forclusif nucléaire," it can vary, depending on the nature of the nucleus it refers to; it corresponds to the general negative words such as *nobody*, *nothing*, *nowhere*, *never*, *by no means*, or *no* for example, and it can be placed before or after the "discordantiel," *ne* (e.g. ***Rien ne** marche*—Nothing works. *Je **ne** vois **rien***—I cannot see anything. ***Personne n'est venu***—Nobody came. *Je **ne** vois **personne***—I cannot see anyone). Furthermore, a sentence can contain more than one "forclusif nucléaire," (e.g. **Rien n'**est **jamais** facile—Nothing is ever easy. ***Personne ne va nulle part***—Nobody is going anywhere). Therefore, the different "forclusifs nucléaires" do not exclude each other but combine with the same "discordantiel." This is possible because each "forclusif nucléaire" applies to a particular nucleus (e.g. To the question with an empty nucleus, ***Qu'est-ce qui marche**?*—What works?, a possible answer with a negative meaning is ***Rien ne** marche*—Nothing works). However, the presence of the "forclusif connexionnel," *pa*, is incompatible with the "forclusif nucléaire," as *pas* negates the whole negation constituted by the "discordantiel" and the "forclusif nucléaire" (e.g. *****Rien ne** marche **pas***—*N-thing neg works neg). Owing to that, the "discordantiel" cannot combine both with a "forclusif nucléaire" and a "forclusif connexionnel" at the same time.

Zeijlstra (2004:253) concluded that French "is both a Strict NC language (as the negative subject can be followed by the preverbal negative marker ne) [e.g. ***Rien ne** marche*—N-thing neg works] and a Non-Strict NC language (since the negative subject cannot yield an NC reading if it is followed by *pas*) [*****Rien ne** marche **pas***—*N-thing neg works neg]." Nevertheless, it appears that contrary to Tesnière (1959), Zeijlstra (2004) did not consider that the continuous double particle to form negation in French constitutes a whole.[78]

Leaving aside the questions Zeijlstra's above statement (2004) raise and taking it as is, it is to note that GC and French differ all the same in the expression of negation as regards NC. I

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[78] Therefore, this questions the status of French as an NC language and requires further research.

reproduce below the examples (11 & 12) I had translated to test the kind of NC language GC is.

(11) *Ayen pa* ka maché.
　　N-thing neg works (Strict NC)
　　Nothing works.

(12) *Ponmoun pa* Ø vini.
　　 N-body neg came (Strict NC)
　　Nobody came.

Translated literally into French, these examples read,

(16) *\*Rien ne* marche *pas*.
　　\*N-thing neg works neg
　　\*Nothing does not work.

(17) *\*Personne n'*est *pas* venu.
　　\*N-body neg has neg come
　　\*Nobody has not come.

These examples reveal that where GC can use the negator *pa* along with negative words, this is not possible in French. Contrary to French which, in the words of Tesnière (1959:225), uses one negator—the "discordantiel"—to detach the thought from the positive meaning of the sentence and another one—the "forclusif"—to attach it to the negative meaning, GC uses just one negator to perform both phases. Owing to that, the negator, *pa*, and the negative words can coexist in GC.

### 3.4.2. Guadeloupean Creole compared to Ewe, and Tuwuli

In this section, I look at sentential negation in Ewe and Tuwuli and more particularly at the distribution of the negator markers and compare them to the position of the negator *pa* in GC. Then, I look at negative concord in these African languages. However, the data found in Tuwuli do not allow me to take as close a look at this particularity in this language as I did for French, so I draw my own conclusion.

### 3.4.2.1. Guadeloupean Creole compared to Ewe

From a typological point of view, Ewe is—like French—a "double particle construction" type of language (Dahl 1979:88). Therefore, at this level, GC and Ewe are constructed differently. [79]

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[79] Interestingly, after reading how negation is constructed in Ewe, it reminded me of how sometimes we add a similar sound at the end of a negated proposition in GC. I believe that, because it is not systematic, it has never

In Ewe, sentence negation is formed by placing the negator *me-* in front of the predicate and *ò* at the end of the proposition that is negated (Rongier, 2004:89, 105), as illustrated hereafter:

(18) Mè- nya                   An Ø sav.
       I     know
       I know.

(19) Nyè- **me**nya      **ò**             An **pa** Ø sav.
       I      neg-know neg
       I do not know.

However, in other respects, GC and Ewe are similar. The negator *me-* precedes tense or aspect marker in the sentence. For example,

(22) Nyè- **m**[80] **-a**     -va     **ò**            An **pé**[81] **ké** Ø vini.
       I      neg -will -come neg
       I will not come.

Furthermore, according to Agbedor (1994:57), Ewe is an NC language. Therefore, more than one negative element in a sentence result in one negative meaning. The examples provided below are found in the literature by the foregoing author.

(23) Ama **me**ɸle      **naneke**    **o**               Ama **pa** Ø achté **ayen.**
       Ama    NEG-buy    nothing    NEG
       'Ama did not buy anything.'

It is to be noted that just like in GC, the presence of the negator does not exclude the presence of negative words, so it is a strict NC language. Furthermore, it is not possible in GC or Ewe to use the negative word without the negator, as shown in the examples below. However, in spoken French, it has become common to use the "forclusif" alone to express negation even though the correct usage remains the "double particle construction."

(24) *Ama ɸle **naneke**       *Ama Ø achté **ayen**       Ama a **rien** acheté.
       Ama    buy    nothing

Finally, GC and Ewe share more similarities than differences in the expression of negation.

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been considered meaningful in the description of negation in GC. I opine that this is an area that deserves to be investigated. Meanwhile, I stuck to the traditional description of negation in GC.

[80] The negator *me-* is reduced to *m-*, which precedes the future marker *a-*.

[81] Reminder: The negator *pa* is changed into *pé* before the future marker *ké*.

### 3.4.2.2. Guadeloupean Creole compared to Tuwuli

Tuwuli falls into the category of morphological Neg constructions languages according to Dahl's (1979: 81, 2) typology of sentence negation. According to Harley (2005: 225-28), sentential negation in Tuwuli can be formed in at least six different ways. It all depends on "both TAM marking and subject marking." Furthermore, he stated that sentential "negation may be carried by tonal distinctions alone." Obviously, this last feature is not found in GC, as it is not a tonal language. I do not reproduce below all the six different ways previously mentioned, as in all cases the negator precedes TAM markers like in GC. The examples are presented in a table, as Harley (2005:226) did for convenience.

| Tense-Aspect-Mood | + Pronominal clitic | +Independent subject NP | Meaning ('he/Kofi...') |
|---|---|---|---|
| PRFV | ɛ́-$^{\uparrow}$yá | Kòfí yá | … came |
| | ɛ́-**tɛ̃́**-yá | Kòfí **tá**-yá | … didn't come |
| IMPV | ɛ́-$^{\uparrow}$ká[82]-yá | Kòfí ká-yá | … was coming |
| | ɛ́-**tɛ̃́**-ká-yá | Kòfí **tá**-ká-yá | … was not coming |
| FUT | y-áà[83]-yà | Kòfí áà-yá | … will come |
| | ɛ́-**l**-*ɛ̃́á*-yá | Kòfí **lɛ́-l**-*ɛ̃́á* -yá | …will not come |

As Harley (2005:225-28) indicated, the form of the negation changes depending on the TAM markers (-***tɛ̃́***- or *tá*- for the perfective and imperfective and -*l*- or *lɛ́-l*- for the future), but also depending on the form of the subject (the first set of negative markers given for the TAM markers applies to pronominal clitics and the second set applies to independent subject NPs). However, as stated before, these prefixes always precede the TAM markers just like in GC. Translated in GC, the above examples in the negative read: (PRFV) *I/Kofi **pa** Ø vin*. (IMPV) *I/Kofi **pa** té ka vin*. (FUT) *I/Kofi **pé** ké Ø vin*.

Regarding whether Tuwuli is a strict NC language or not as GC, I had to draw conclusions based on some examples found in Harley (2005:165, 66), as he does not mention this fact explicitly. He stated concerning negative quantifiers (NQ, what was referred to earlier as negative word) that they are "only possible in the context of clausal negation." This implies that Tuwuli is a strict NC language, as well, just like GC. I reproduced below an example in Tuwuli and its translation in GC.

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[82] Marker of the progressive aspect.

[83] Marker of the future.

(25) **letsa- mano ta-** ketia ye **Ayen pa** Ø rivé-y.
     thing- NegQ NEG- do him
     'nothing happened to him.'

Based on Harley's statement above (2005: 165, 66), I removed the negator in the foregoing sentence in Tuwuli to derive the following wrong sentence. Using the same principle, it is also wrong in the translation of the same in GC.

(26) *****letsa- mano** ketia ye *****Ayen** Ø rivé-y.
     thing- NegQ do him

From the above description, it comes out that Tuwuli, as well, has more in common with GC than the contrary.

### 3.5. Conclusion

The investigation of negation in GC and its comparison to French, Ewe, and Tuwuli revealed that, though they almost all belong to different typological groups, they follow Jespersen's observation (1917:5) that, generally, the negative is placed first before the word negated, often the verb.

As concerns our main interest for this study, it has been shown that attempts to attribute a French origin to the distribution of the negator in GC were not strong. The only thing that derived from French without a doubt is the lexical loan of the French negator, *pas*. Indeed, in the French expression of negation, the "forclusif" *pas* was more likely to be picked alone by the slaves to indicate negation in GC, as it never changes pronunciation.[84] That being said, GC reanalysed the "forclusif" *pa* alone as the negator and placed it in front of the TMA markers as it is usually the case in African languages.

Finally, GC, except from its lexical loan from French to express negation, is closer to Ewe and Tuwuli in that (1) the negator in these languages precedes the TAM markers, thus the verb; (2) they are all strict NC languages. These common grounds cannot be denied.

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[84] Conversely, the sound /ə/ in the "discordantiel" ne /nə/ is elided in front of a verb starting with a vowel and the sound of that vowel in question is heard instead (e.g. **n'a**vale pas /**na**/; **n'é**lève pas /**ne**/; **n'i**ra pas /**ni**/; **n'o**sera pas /**no**/; **n'u**se /**ny**/ pas).

# CHAPTER FOUR: SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS IN GUADELOUPEAN CREOLE

## 4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters showed traces of West African languages in GC's verbal system in the areas of tense and aspect, as well as of negation. This chapter on SVCs constitutes the final area in which I seek to investigate the influence of African languages in GC.

To search the influence of SVCs in Tuwuli and Yoruba—the two West African languages under study—on SVCs in GC, the definition of SVCs is recalled, and a description of the different existing types of SVCs is given to start with. Next, examples of SVCs in GC are described and classified, then they are compared to SVCs presented in the foregoing African languages, as found in the literature. Finally, arguments to relate the origin of SVCs in GC to the lexifier language are discussed.

## 4.2. Types of Serial Verb Constructions

As a brief reminder, based on Aikhenvald's typological definition (2006:1, 3), SVCs are made of at least two verbs, but they describe a single event[85] in a single clause and have the intonation pattern of a monoverbal clause in most languages. The verbs in SVCs are not linked by coordination nor subordination, but they share the same tense, aspect, and polarity value, and they may share arguments. Yet, one must be able to use each verb independently, and each verb may or may not share transitivity values. She concluded that "In an individual language, SVCs are expected to have most, but not necessarily all, of these properties."

Aikhenvald (2006:3, 4) also described four parameters to classify SVCs, namely "Composition," "Contiguity versus non-contiguity of components," "Wordhood of components," and "Marking of grammatical categories." In order, (1) "Composition" means that SVCs can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. In symmetrical SVCs, the verbs are "chosen from a semantically and grammatically unrestricted class" and asymmetrical SVCs "include a verb from a grammatically or semantically restricted class (e.g. a motion, or a posture verb)." (2) "Contiguity versus non-contiguity of components" refers to the fact that the verbs either "have to be next to each other," or may allow another constituent "to intervene between them." (3) "Wordhood of components" indicates that the content of an SVC does not necessarily

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[85] "An SVC can sometimes, but not always, be analysed into subevents, each of which relates to one verb" Dixon (2006:339).

constitutes "independent grammatical or phonological words." Finally, (4) "Marking of grammatical categories" can be single—meaning that verbal categories, such as "person of the subject and object(s); tense, aspect, modality; negation; or valency changing," are "marked just once per construction"—or concordant—meaning that verbal categories are "marked on every component" in the construction.

Constraints pertaining to this work do not allow to look into all of the above items. Focus is laid specifically on the composition, either symmetric or asymmetric, of SVCs. This distinction corresponds to what Bamgbose (1982), as cited in Harley (2005:437), called coordinate/linking SVCs versus subordinate/modifying SVCs. To expound on this distinction, it can be added in Aikhenvald's terms (2006:21, 2) that in symmetrical (coordinate/linking) SVCs, "the order of components tends to be iconic" in that it corresponds to the time sequence in which the subevents occur. Furthermore, no component is greater than the other, meaning that none "determines the semantic or syntactic properties of the construction as a whole." In other words, each component is added to the other to represent the overall event. Then, in asymmetrical (subordinate/modifying) SVCs, "The verb from a closed class provides a modificational specification: it is often a motion or posture verb expressing direction, or imparting a tense–aspect meaning to the whole construction." The author concluded that this modifying verb "can then be considered the head of the construction, on both semantic and syntactic grounds." Harley (2005:438) specifies that the division between these two types of SVCs is purely semantic and that most of the time, "there is no syntactic difference" between them.

### 4.3. Examples of Serial Verb Constructions in Guadeloupean Creole

Cases of SVCs were reported early in GC, as mentioned in the Literature Review. Goux (1842) gave examples of such a few that he called verbs made of two words, "porter-vini, porter-alé, porter-monté, porter-descendd."[86] Although he provided no examples, the naming, the hyphenated verbs, and the gloss did convey the idea that these were a special class of verbs.

Below are a few examples of SVCs in GC, followed by an analysis based on Aikhenvald's definition and classification of SVCs (2006:1, 3, 4).

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[86] **porter-vini**, [French] apporter [Literally (Lit.), carry-come; Meaning, bring], **porter-allé**, [French] emporter [Lit., carry-go; Meaning, take away]; **porter-monté** [No French translation is given; Lit., carry-come up or carry-go up; Meaning, bring up or take up], **porter-descendd** [No French translation is given either; Lit., carry-come down or carry-go down; Meaning, bring down or take down" (my translation).

(1) *Pòl    ké    **viré-    désann**    plita.*
Paul    FUT    come/go back    come/go down    later
Paul will come back down later, or Paul will go back down later.

(2) *Timoun-la    ka    **touné- viré- valsé**    lè    i    pa    kontan .*
Child-the    HAB    see the fume flare[87]    when    he/she    not    is-happy
The child grows mad when he/she is not happy.

(3) *Léyon    Ø    **achté**    pen    **ba**    timoun-la.*
Leon    PF    buy    bread    give    child-the
Leon bought the child bread.

(4) *Pòl    Ø    **wòs    pasé**    milé.[88]*
Paul    IPF    is-stubborn    surpass    mule
Paul is more stubborn than a mule.

### 4.3.1. Analysis Based on Aikhenvald and Dixon's Definition

When the above verbal constructions in GC are checked against Aikhenvald's definition (2006:1), they meet the fundamental requirements for SVCs. Therefore, the following requirements are verified:

(a) There is a string of at least two verbs either contiguous (*viré-désann*, *touné-viré-valsé*, *wòs pasé*), or non-contiguous (*achté ... ba*).

(b) The verbs describe a single event, and if they express subevents, the latter are seen as an overall event, as shown below:

In (1), *viré-désann* describes a single event: the subject, *Pòl*, is moving (come/go) from one point to another, and this moving is downhill.

In (2), *touné-viré-valsé* is made of three subevents. Each illustrates some kind of gradual change in the attitude of the subject. However, these subevents describe an overall event: the fact that the subject is being fussy.

In (3), *achté ... ba* is made of two subevents, but describes the overall event of gifting. The second subevent *ba* (give) is the direct reason which triggered the first subevent *achté* (buy).

In (4), *wòs pasé* describes a single event: the subject, *Pòl*, is identified as having a quality that surpasses the same quality seen in another subject.

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[87] I tried to find English "equivalents" to reproduce the escalation in the attitude of a child who wants to have it his/her own way. That is why I also chose the verb *grow* to express this progression in the free English translation. (In GC, there is an image of movement like in *twirl-swirl-whirl*.)

[88] Nowadays, the expression *pli/plis ... ki* (more … than) is more common than sentence (4): *Pòl **pli** wòs **ki** mile.*

(c) The verbs are not coordinated nor subordinated. None of the sentences contain any overt conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, etc.) or complementizers (that, if, to, because, although, etc.).

(d) The verbs share the same tense and aspect,

In (1), *Pòl **ké** viré-désann plita*—**future perfective** (*viré*, *désann*)

In (2), *Timoun-la **ka** touné-viré-valsé lè manman-y la*—**habitual** (*touné*, *viré*, *valsé*)

In (3), *Léyon **∅** achté pen ba timoun-la*—**perfective** (*achté*, *ba*)

In (4), *Pòl **∅** wòs pasé milé*—**imperfective** (*wòs*, *pasé*)

(e) The verbs share the same polarity value; the negation below, written in bold, applies to the whole underlined event:

In (1), *Pòl **pé** ké <u>viré-désann</u> plita*.

In (2), *Timoun-la **pa** ka <u>touné-viré-valsé</u> lè manman-y la*.

In (3), *Léyon **pa** <u>achté</u> pen <u>ba</u> timoun-la*.

In (4), *Pòl **pa** <u>wòs pasé</u> milé*.

(f) The SVCs are made of one intonation group. There is no intonation break.

(g) Each verb can be used independently. For example,

In (1), *viré-désann*: ***Viré** a kaz aw*!—**Go back** to your house; ***Desann** si tab-la*—**Get off** the table.

In (2), *touné*; *viré*; *valsé*: *Gidon a vwati-la pa ka **touné***—The handwheel does not **rotate**; ***Viré** a kaz aw*!—**Go back** to your house; *Léyon pa sa **valsé***—Leon cannot **waltz**.

In (3), *achté ... ba*: *achté*; *Léya **achté** on chapo nèf*—Lea **bought** a brand new hat*; Pòl **ba** chyen-la on zo*—Paul **gave** the dog a bone.

In (4), *wòs pasé*: *Pòl **wòs** menm*—Paul **is** very **stubborn**; *Léyon **pasé** bomaten-la*—Leon **passed by** this morning.

Furthermore, Jansen, Koopman, and Muysken (1978:125) mentioned the following that constraints the formation of SVCs, as well:

(h) Auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries do not qualify to form SVCs.[89] The following examples, then, are excluded from SVCs in GC: *Pòl **sòti** pati*— Pòl finish leave = Paul has just left. *Pòl **pé** pran kaw-la tou sèl*— Pòl can take bus-the all alone = Paul

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[89] Boretzky (1983:164), as cited in Holm (2004:205) refuted this point on the ground that "these categories are not always appropriate for creole and African languages." I did not discuss his statement, as this does not hold back the discussion.

can take the bus all alone. *Pòl **sa** konté*—Pòl can count = Paul can count. *Pòl **vlé** vini*—Pòl want come = Paul wants to come.

Having described the presence of SVCs in GC, I proceed below to examine the composition of the examples (1-4).

### 4.3.2. Composition

Serial verb constructions can be either symmetric or asymmetric, as stated above. Using the same examples (1-4), I explain how they fit in either category and expound on the fact that they express an overall event, as this is a distinctive constant in SVCs.

Sentence (2) corresponds to a symmetric SVC. The series of verbs *touné-viré-valsé* is composed of verbs that stand as equal, in that none of them gives a particular orientation to the meaning of the construction. Also, they appear in chronological order (Aikhenvald, 2006:22). This example in GC also illustrates the fact that these verbs do not have to be taken literally. In this instance, they are a projection of how the speaker thinks the subject is behaving. The verbs in the series represent the stages of that behaviour, and each stage of that behaviour represents some sort of evolution from the previous one, growing continuously. Hence, the subevents are linked and represent an overall construction, a symmetric SVC. One just needs to compare the foregoing with when the speaker juxtaposes the verbs in a sequence as in (5) below.

(5) *Pòl     ka     touné,    viré,    é    valsé    lè    i    pa    kontan.*
    Paul  HAB   seethe    fume    and    flare    when    he/she    not    is-happy
    Paul seethes, fumes, and flares when he is not happy.

Though time and aspect and polarity value are the same as in (2), the event is no longer seen as a whole. Also, there is still a progression in the stages of the subject's behaviour, but the series of verbs to express that is discontinuous, as shown by the presence of commas and the conjunction of coordination *é* (and). Time may even have elapsed between each action.

Sentences (1, 3, 4) correspond to asymmetric SVCs. In this type of construction, the verbs do not have equal status: There is a minor verb from a "grammatically restricted class" which modifies a major verb from an "open class." This minor verb can be considered the head of the construction, as it "determines the semantic or syntactic properties of the construction." It provides specification to the SVC (Aikhenvald, 2006:21, 2). Looking at sentences 1, 3, & 4, this is how the foregoing applies:

In (1) *viré-désann* (come/go back - come/go down): *viré* is the major verb and *désann*, the minor verb. The verb *désann* specifies the direction in which the verb *viré* is implemented. Owing to that specification provided by the minor verb *désann*, the association of both the major verb *viré* and the minor verb *désann* corresponds to an overall event: the *coming* or *going* is *downhill*.[90] These two verbs are so closely knit that when they are stated in coordinated clauses, though time and aspect and polarity value are kept, that combination yields four possible meanings—including one that does not make sense—none of which express a whole event due to the fact that *désann* regains its lexical status, and the conjunction of coordination is needed. This is illustrated in (6) below:

(6) *Pòl    ké    viré              é        désann          plita*.
   Paul   FUT   come/go back   and   come/go down   later
  *Paul will come back and come down later.
   Paul will come back and go down later.
   Paul will go back and come down later.
   Paul will go back and go down later.

Furthermore, a few more examples permit to see how the minor verb specifies the major verb for direction, as shown in (7-9):

(7) *Pòl ké **viré-monté** plita*.

This is the opposite of (1). The minor verb *monté* (come/go up) indicates that the speaker perceives that the trajectory of the subject is uphill (Paul will come/go back up later).

(8) *Pòl    Ø    **menné**    sé timoun-la      **vini***.
   Paul   PF   carry       PLU-child-the     come
   Paul brought the children.

The minor verb *vini* (come) indicates that the speaker perceives that the trajectory of the subject is toward himself.

(9) *Pòl **menné** sé timoun-la **alé***.

This is the opposite of (8). The minor verb *alé* (go) indicates that the speaker perceives that the trajectory of the subject is away from himself (Paul took the children away.).

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[90] The word *désann*—apart from meaning *to come/go down*—indicates that the speaker perceives that the trajectory of the hearer is downhill—irrespective of the speaker's location.

In (3) *achté ... ba*: *achté* (buy) is the major verb and *ba* (give), the minor verb.[91] The verb *ba* specifies what happens to the major verb: The action expressed by the major verb *achté* benefits a recipient. It is the intention of the subject that the recipient benefits from the action performed by the major verb *achté*. That is how the two verbs are linked and form an overall event. Evidence is that when the two are coordinated, as in (10) for example, and once again though tense and aspect and polarity value are the same as the SVC in (3), they represent two separate events, as *ba* regains its lexical meaning. Therefore, the subject does not perform the action *buy* to intentionally benefit the recipient.

(10) *Léyon    Ø    achté    pen    é    ba    timoun-la    li.*
      Leon    PF    buy    bread    and    give    child-the    it
      Leon bought bread and gave it to the child.

Some might argue that if the complementizer *to* is used instead, as in (11), then the sentence would mean the same as in (3). So,

(11) *Léyon    Ø    achté    pen    pou    ba    timoun-la.*
      Leon    PF    buy    bread    to    give    child-the
      Leon bought bread to give to the child.

However, there is still a slight difference with (3) in that the intention loaded in *to* in (11) does not mean that the goal of giving has been reached, or is visualised as such. Meanwhile, the subject may have changed his/her mind, or the gift may have been stolen, for instance.

Below are a few examples illustrating other actions performed with the major verbs *volé* (steal), *pòté* (bring), and *gadé* (keep) in GC.

(12) *Léyon Ø **volé** pen **ba** timoun-la.* (Leon stole bread for the child.)

(13) *Léyon Ø **pòté** pen **ba** timoun-la.* (Leon brought bread for the child.)

(14) *Léyon Ø **gadé** pen **ba** timoun-la.* (Leon kept bread for the child.)

In these examples (12-14), the intention of the subject is that the recipient benefits from the action performed by the major verbs.

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[91] There is a debate opposing those who think that *ba* (give) is a preposition and those who view it as a verb. Thereon, Parkvall (2000:72) noted that "Holm (1988:185) takes an intermediate position, seeing dative *give* as a serial verb, while considering its benefactive (near-)homonym a preposition." I left it at that, concurring with Parkvall (2000:72) that even the grammaticalisation of *give* into a preposition must have emerged from an SVC.

In (4) *wòs*[92] *pasé*: *wòs* (be stubborn) stands for the major verb and *pasé* (surpass) is the minor verb. The verb *pasé* specifies the degree of the situation indicated by the major verb in a comparative environment. The association of both the major adjectival predicate *wòs* and the minor verb *pasé* corresponds to an overall "event": the being more stubborn than. When (4) is paraphrased in two clauses, as shown in (15) below, the meaning is simply different but, still, time and aspect and polarity value are unchanged.

(15) *Pòl*  Ø  ***wòs***  *é*  *i*  *ka*  ***pasé***  *milé*.
     Paul  IPF  is-stubborn  and  he  IPF  surpass  mule
     Paul is stubborn and he surpasses a mule.

In this case, two unrelated statements are made about the subject. So, it is no longer an SVC, expressing an overall event.

Finally, this brief analysis of the composition of SVCs in GC allowed me to show that both symmetric and asymmetric SVCs exist in GC. In view of the paraphrases of examples 1-4, one might argue that they would necessarily yield two events. However, they only demonstrated that the "one event" criteria is proper to SVCs. Indeed, it is noteworthy to recall that, in an SVC, a series of subevents will always represent an overall event.

## 4.4. Serial Verb Constructions in Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Serial Verb Constructions in Tuwuli and Yoruba

Serial verb constructions are found in most of West African languages. Tuwuli and Yoruba are part of them and serve to investigate below how these constructions influence GC.

## 4.4.1. Serial Verb Constructions in Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Serial Verb Constructions in Tuwuli

The following examples found in Harley (2005:438-41)[93] helped to illustrate SVCs in Tuwuli.[94]

(16) "*b-a-sinya*           *ka-tɔ*       *ka-ku*
     3PL-PRES. IMPV-turn:round   IMPV-fall   IMPV-die
     'they turn round, fall and die'"

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[92] As a reminder, *wòs* is an adjectival predicate.

[93] Not all two adjacent clauses in Tuwuli with the same subject referent are SVCs (cf. Harley, 2005:433, 34). Also, for more examples, refer to the same.

[94] As I do not speak Tuwuli and have no informant, I did not manipulate any of the examples below. I only looked at how GC relates to this language.

Sentence (2) in GC is based on the same pattern as the above example, in that (16) is composed of a series of verbs that have equal status: this is a symmetric SVC, or a coordinate SVC in Harley's terms (2005:438). There is a progression from one subevent to the other. The overall event expressed here is how the subject dies.

Sentences 17-19 below correspond to asymmetric SVCs in that they contain a major verb that is modified by a minor verb. The minor verbs are written in bold characters.

(17) "*ɛ-ka-bɔa*        *lisĩ*        *ka-kpa*        *Nana*
     3SG-IMPV-beat     yam         IMPV-give      Nana
     'he used to grow yams for Nana'"

Sentence (3) in GC is based on the same pattern as the above in Tuwuli. The minor verb *kpa* (give) is the purpose for the major verb *bɔa* (beat): The action expressed by the major verb *bɔa* benefits a recipient. The sum of these subevents is the overall event of gifting.

(18) "*kɔnyokpa*        *la-mɔ*      *fukpo*     *ka-vɛlɛ*       *ka-naa-mla*
     old:men          be-with      chairs      NOM-pull        NOM-go-with
     'old men are pulling chairs away'"

Sentence (9) in GC is based on the same pattern as (18). The minor verb *naa* (go) indicates the direction of the action expressed by the major verb *vɛlɛ* (pull). These two represent one event: the pulling of the chairs in a certain direction; they cannot be separated.

(19) "*n-ta*         *bakpokũ*     *m-ba*        *ye*
     1sg-shoot      monkeys       1sg-surpass   him
     'I shot more monkeys than him'"

Sentence (4) in GC corresponds to the expression of the comparative in the above in Tuwuli. Likewise, the minor verb *ba* specifies the degree of the situation indicated by the major verb *ta* in a comparative environment. The two need to be put together to represent this event.

Finally, this short comparison helped to find out that SVCs in GC are built in many ways on the same pattern as SVCs in Tuwuli, both in symmetric and asymmetric ways (three equivalent minor verbs have been identified in both languages). I did not dwell on the differences, such as the repetition of the aspect marker on each verb for example, as there would be more to say about SVCs in GC,[95] and these differences do not lessen the findings.

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[95] There is scant information on the use of SVCs in GC. However, an example such as, *Pòl té Ø sisé ka gadé vwati ka pasé* (Pòl PST IMP sisé IMP gadé vwati IMP pasé—Paul was sitting and watching the cars passing by) seems

## 4.4.2. Serial Verb Constructions in Guadeloupean Creole Compared to Serial Verb Constructions in Yoruba

The examples below are borrowed from Stahlke (1970) and Mbamalu (2000) to illustrate SVCs in Yoruba.[96]

(20) "Taye    <u>ra</u>       ounjẹ    <u>jẹ</u>
     Taye    buy      food     eat
     Taye bought food and ate."

In GC, sentence (2) corresponds to the above in Yoruba. This is a symmetric SVC. There is no need to recall that no verb in this case gives meaning to the whole event. They are related, though, in that there is some kind of evolution from each previous verb. In this instance, *ra* (buy) – *je* (eat): The food is bought to be eaten.

Sentences 21-23 below correspond to asymmetric SVCs in Yoruba. The minor verbs are written in bold characters.

(21) "*Mo*    <u>*mú*</u>     *ìwé*     <u>*wá*</u>    **fún**    *ẹ*
     I       <u>took</u>    book      <u>came</u>   gave     you
     I brought you a book."

Sentence (3) illustrates the use of the above SVC in GC. The minor verb *fún* (gave) is the purpose for the major verbs *mú* (took) and *wá* (came): The actions expressed by these major verbs benefit a recipient.[97] All three contribute to represent the whole event of giving.[98]

(22) "*Mo*    <u>*mú*</u>     *gbogbo*    *àwọn*      *ọmọdé*      **lọ**       *Èkó*
     I       <u>took</u>    all         PLURAL      children     <u>went</u>   Lagos
     I took all the children to Lagos."

Sentence (9) in GC corresponds to sentence (22) above in Yoruba. The minor verb *lọ* specifies the direction in which the major verb *mú* is implemented. Both merge, verb of action and verb of direction, to represent the whole event of moving in a certain direction.

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to indicate that the aspect marker can be repeated in certain cases. This necessitates further study that time does not permit.

[96] As I do not speak Yoruba and have no informant, I did not manipulate any of the examples below. I only looked at how GC relates to this language.

[97] In GC, more than one verb can also precede *ba* (give). For example, *An vin pòté on liv ba-w* (I came brought a book gave-you = I brought you a book).

[98] The debate opposing those who think that *ba* (give) is a preposition and those who view it as a verb is not important in Yoruba, as two distinct verbs are used (cf. Stahlke, 1970:63).

(23) "*Ay      ní      ọgbọ̀n      jù      mí      lọ*
       Ayọ     has     cleverness  surpass  me      go
       Ayọ is cleverer than I am."

Sentence (4) in GC translates the kind of SVC illustrated in (23) above. The particularity of Yoruba is that its minor verb is made of two verbs, *jù* (surpass) and *lọ* (go). They specify the degree of the situation indicated by the major verb *ní* in a comparative environment.

Finally, the same concluding remarks made for the comparison between GC and Tuwuli can also be made for the comparison between GC and Yoruba, that is, they are built in many ways on the same pattern, both in symmetric and asymmetric ways (three equivalent minor verbs have been identified in both languages).

## 4.5. Controversy about the Origin of Serial Verb Constructions in Guadeloupean Creole

Creole languages being at a crossroad between superstrate and substrate languages, the studies about them cannot generate unanimous debates. Parkvall (2000:70) stated that SVCs have been used by "both substratists and universalists to argue in favour of their respective positions." As for him who studied Atlantic Creoles, he considered the presence of SVCs in "those Creoles with serialising substrates as strong support for a substrate derivation." He mentioned that "most SVCs of the Atlantic Creoles, often together with others, can be found in African languages, spoken, as it happens, in the very areas from which most slaves were exported to the plantation colonies." Likewise, Jansen, Koopman, and Muysken (1978:127) concluded about a study on serial verbs in the Creole languages that, "only those languages with a direct Kwa substratum evidence serialization."[99]

Chaudenson (e.g. 1979, 1992, 1995), Mufwene (1996) and Wittmann & Fournier (1983:194), as cited in Parkvall (2000:23), opined that SVCs did not derive from African languages, but that they are "rather overgeneralisations of European prototypes." They believed that constructions such as "*go get a doctor* or *allez chercher un médecin,*" which are imperative constructions, must have been at the origin of SVCs in those Creoles.[100] Nevertheless, Parkvall (2000:23) refuted this, saying that "the SVC-like constructions in European languages are

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[99] There are no SVCs in Sénégal Portuguese Creole, for example, as it "shows a Fula and Wolof substratum, not a Kwa substratum" (Jansen, Koopman, and Muysken, 1978:127).

[100] Syea (2013), as cited in Syea (2017:252) and dealing with French Creoles, argued the same and added that they were the result of internal linguistic changes.

limited to lative[101] heads," whereas those Creoles account for at least three other more important types of SVCs which cannot be found in the lexifier languages. This can be seen in his presentation (Parkvall, 2000:70-75) and this turned out to be the case also for GC as shown in the analyses presented in the above sections. Furthermore, two important arguments against such constructions are found in Aikhenval (2006:45, 6):[102] First, "they are usually restricted in their mood, polarity, tense, and aspect choices" (you can say, *let's go eat*, but you cannot say, *\*we went ate*); Second, "A conjunction or a dependency marker can be inserted between the components with no change in meaning" (*go get your jumper* means the same as *go and get your jumper*). In the sections above, it was seen that these were distinctive features of SVCs (an SVC has same tense and aspect throughout; an SVC represents one event and when manipulated, it yields two events.)

Hazaël-Massieux (2008:445), apart from evoking some of the above explanations, suggested that SVCs could simply be due to the disappearance of the French prepositions at the time of creolisation. However, this argument is not solid for two reasons: First, in many cases, the series of verbs in the SVC in GC is not found in French with or without a preposition to express the corresponding GC examples (e.g. [1] *viré-désann* = \*revenir descendre (\*come back come down); [8] *menné-vini* = \*apporter venir (\*bring come); etc.); Second, when there seems to be deletion, the result is not the same as seen in (11): *Léyon aché pen **pou** ba timoun-la*—Léon a acheté du pain **pour** en donner à l'enfant (Leon bought bread to give to the child) ≠ *Léyon aché pen Ø ba timoun-la*—Léon a acheté du pain pour l'enfant (Leon bought the child bread). As there is that discussion about *ba* (verb, or preposition), another illustration below from Delumeau (2006:142) with my emphasis and analysis helps to make this point clear: Considering the French sentence, *Il allait et revenait dans le couloir* (He was going to and fro in the corridor), it is clear that in GC, *I pa té ka las **touné-viré** an koulwa-la* (*Il **s'agitait** dans le couloir*—He was fussing in the corridor) is different from *I pa té ka las **touné é viré** an koulwa-la* (*Il **allait et revenait** dans le couloir*—He was going to and fro in the corridor). The disappearance of the French preposition (*et*—and) in GC does not translate the original meaning of the French sentence, whereas its presence does. The absence of preposition expresses the

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[101] Parkvall's use (2000 :71) of this term corresponds to what was analysed as DIRECTION type in this chapter. He stated, "lative serialisation involves a verb of movement which specifies the direction of the action expressed by the other verb."

[102] Refer to the same for more arguments.

idea of one event (*touné-viré*), while its presence expresses the idea of two events (as in the original French sentence).

As for me, I concur with Parkvall (2000) based on the arguments put forward by the different parties. In that respect, I want to recall another argument by Cérol (1992) who stated that the slaves continued to speak their languages, meaning that they played a prolonged role in their lives. Likewise, even nowadays, Creolisms are found in French, so why should Africanisms not be found in Creole? This calls then for a study on language acquisition and linguistic atavism.

## 4.6. Conclusion

More could have been said about SVCs in GC alone and even about GC compared to the African languages under study, such as for example looking at whether there are series of verbs with no coordination in GC that may not be considered SVCs, or looking at whether some series of verbs may or may not be considered SVCs, depending on TAM marking, as is the case in Tuwuli. However, the goal of this study was more modest, and the analyses proposed sufficed to show that the presence of SVCs in GC are indeed traces of the substrate languages.

The fact that I chose to compare GC to Tuwuli and Yoruba and that the comparison revealed overlaps in the use of types of SVCs between them does not necessarily mean that SVCs in GC derived precisely from these languages. The study could have been about any two languages spoken in West Africa, which is an area of interest for at least two reasons: (1) SVCs are pervasive there (Harley, 2005:432; Stahlke, 1970:60); (2) West Africa is precisely the area from where enslaved men and women brought to Guadeloupe and other places in the Caribbean came from (Debien, 1974:39-68). Finally, the above presentation about the controversy of the origin of SVCs in GC permits to draw a reasoned point of view regarding traces of the African origins of SVCs in GC.

# CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To complete the assessment of the African heritage in GC's verbal system, this final chapter recapitulates the main ideas, then it presents the conclusion of the study. It also proposes areas for further research.

## 5.1. Summary

This research work was born out of a will to both discuss the extremist view that the verbal system in GC is French and has no element of African origin and contribute to the debate on Africanisms in GC. It sought to investigate this substrate influence in the verbal system of GC, focusing on the areas of tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs.

The study of tense and aspect in GC expounded on its main markers for tense and aspect which, compared with expressions of the same in French then Ewe and Bambara, revealed that it shared more similarities with the substrate languages than with the superstrate language. Indeed, the French verbal system is inflected for tense and aspect, while GC, Ewe, and Bambara all use a system of preverbal markers in general to mark tense and aspect. Notwithstanding, the controversy lies around the origin of the preverbal markers in GC. However, the suggestion that they originated from French periphrastic constructions was challenged because, though the lexicon is borrowed from French in some cases, that lexicon was reanalysed or reinterpreted to suit GC's own system. Other suggestions attributing a French origin to the main preverbal markers in GC were also discussed, but the clues about an African origin seemed more plausible.

The next area of investigation dealt with negation. From a typological perspective, GC does not belong to the same class as neither French, nor Ewe, or Tuwuli. Once more, the lexicon of negation was unsurprisingly found to be a French loan. Nonetheless, the distribution of the negator in GC coincided with that of the negator in Ewe—partly, as Ewe has a second particle that is placed at the end of the proposition—and Tuwuli, i.e., it preceded the tense and aspect markers. This is evidence that GC did not replicate directly the French syntactic pattern, but reanalysed the French loan to fit its own pattern. Attempts to attribute the place of the negator in GC to French were rejected after analysis. Furthermore, GC, Ewe, and Tuwuli were analysed as strict NC languages, while French status as such is questionable. For all these reasons, GC was shown to be more closely related to the substrate languages than the superstrate language.

Finally, four examples of SVCs were described and analysed in GC and their composition could be identified with SVCs found in Tuwuli and Yoruba. Then it was shown that the arguments

put forward by the scholars who believe that SVCs in GC originated from the superstrate language could not stand in the face of the arguments put forward by those who believe in its substrate origin. Indeed, SVCs in GC cannot have emerged from French, as these constructions are not found in Indo European Languages. Conversely, they are pervasive in most West African languages, the area from which the enslaved Africans came from.

## 5.2. Conclusion

This brief overview of aspect and tense, negation, and SVCs in GC permitted to assess similarities between GC and the African languages under study in all these three areas. This did not come as a surprise, as the enslaved Africans kept their languages for a long time (Cérol, 1992); as no mention was found in the literature that they were ever taught to speak French according to the rules; as this could even have been a form of resistance on their part, since they used the French vocabulary but reanalysed it or reinterpreted it.

What is surprising is that, in spite of so many clues in favour of the substrate origins of elements in just one part of speech, some scholars still argue that these elements are of French origin. Yet, just because written evidence of these African languages spoken in the 17th century—at the onset of slavery in Guadeloupe—cannot be produced so that GC be compared to them should not be an obstacle, as some argue, that prevents these similarities found in more recent grammars to be used as a proof of Africanisms in GC. The fact is that the similarities are there. So, there are two possible conclusions: either these grammatical forms have always been there in the substrate languages, or they strangely evolved to be similar to GC. It seems that the first option is more reasonable.

What is certain is that GC was born of an unfortunate combination of circumstances, which forced a superstrate language to merge with substrate languages. Nevertheless, its speakers must not be affected to the same degree: for the masters who were free to go to their native country, it must be just an ad hoc means of communication, but for the enslaved Africans who had passed through the Door of No Return, it had become their language over the centuries. "The mother tongue of the Guadeloupean people came from the belly of death (the slave), from each of our mothers' bellies, our native country, our homeland, as the Elders would enjoy repeating" (my translation; Bébel-Gisler, 1983:42).

## 5.3. Recommendations

In the course of this exercise, it appeared that the voices who attribute a superstrate origin to the elements considered for tense, aspect, negation, and SVCs outweigh the voices who attribute a substrate origin to the same. Nevertheless, the analysis demonstrated that the supposition of the substrate origin of these elements was more plausible than their superstrate origin. Furthermore, this research project mentioned the scarcity of the literature that investigates Africanisms in GC. In view of this situation, it is therefore recommended that more emphasis be laid on research in this area to bring any traces of African heritage to light. This enterprise needs to be pursued in depth in other areas of the verbal system, but also in the other parts of speech. It is hoped that this brief study will inspire or revive the interest of Guadeloupean linguists willing to pursue this cause. And most of all, it is hoped that they will make their voices better heard because as the proverb quoted by the Nigerian novelist and poet, Chinua Achebe, goes: "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

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**APPENDIX**

**SUMMARY OF THE PHONEME INVENTORY OF GUADELOUPEAN CREOLE**

The following inventory is adapted partly from Cérol (1991:58, 9) and from *Le Créole de la Guadeloupe* (2009:5, 7).

**Vowels**

There are ten vowels in Guadeloupean Creole (GC): seven oral vowels and three nasal vowels, as shown in the table below.

|  |  | Front | Back | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Unrounded | Unrounded | Rounded |
| Oral vowels | Close | i |  | u |
|  | Close-mid | e |  | o |
|  | Open-mid | ɛ |  | ɔ |
|  | Open | a |  |  |
| Nasal vowels | Close-mid | ɛ̃ |  | ɔ̃ |
|  | Open |  | ɑ̃ |  |

The following are examples of words to show a correspondence between the above IPA vowel sounds and their spellings, written in bold letters.

| IPA sound | Example | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| /i/ | r**i**paj | race |
| /e/ | sip**é** | catch |
| /ɛ/ | b**è**f | cow |
| /a/ | k**a**bèch | head |
| /u/ | p**ou**kisa | why |
| /o/ | w**o**té | remove |
| /ɔ/ | lap**ò**s | post office |
| /ɛ̃/ | d**en**dé | palm nut |
| /ɑ̃/ | ch**an**nda | flee |
| /ɔ̃/ | z**on**g | nail |

**Consonants**

There are nineteen consonants and two semivowels in GC as illustrated below.

|  | Bilabial | Labiodental | Alveolar | Postalveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plosive | p    b |  | t    d |  |  | k    g |  |
| Nasal | m |  | n |  | ɲ | ŋ |  |
| Fricative |  | f    v | s    z | ∫    ʒ |  | r | h |
| Lateral |  |  | l |  |  |  |  |
| Approximant |  |  |  |  | j | w |  |

The following are examples of words to show a correspondence between the above IPA consonant sounds and their spellings, written in bold letters.

| IPA sound | Example | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| /p/ | **p**ijézyé | nap |
| /b/ | **b**wè | drink |
| /t/ | **t**ibè**t** | insect |
| /d/ | **d**ézò**d** | noise |
| /k/ | **k**enbé | hold |
| /g/ | **g**rafinyé | scratch |
| /m/ | **m**oun | person |
| /n/ | **n**iyaj | cloud |
| /ɲ/ | **gn**eng**n**en | gnat |
| /ŋ/ | zi**ng** | little |
| /f/ | **f**ifiné | drizzle |
| /v/ | **v**iktwa | victory |
| /s/ | **s**olèy | sun |
| /z/ | **z**òyé | pillowcase |
| /∫/ | **ch**anté | sing |
| /ʒ/ | **j**i**j** | judge |
| /h/ | **h**alé | pull |
| /r/ | **r**imèd | remedy |
| /l/ | **l**wen | far |
| /w/ | **w**oulo | kudos |
| /j/ | mi**y**èl | honey |