Louisiana Creole French

Part 2: Overview of Linguistic Features

Jonathan North Washington
jonwash@u.washington.edu

University of Washington
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General Properties

- Much like other [French-based] creoles:
  - SVO word order
  - Isolating morphology
  - Reduplication expresses emphasis (verbs, adverbs)

(1) 

```
To bras li 3iska li vini 3on, 3on, 3on
you mix it until it become yellow yellow yellow
```

"You mix it until it turns yellow."

- Compared to French, somewhat simplified phonology...
Comparison: Vowel phonemes

Parisian French

Oral

- i
- y
- e
- ø
- ø
- a
- a
- u

Nasal

- ë
- ë
- ë
- ë
- ë
- ñ
- ñ
- ë

Louisiana Creole

Oral

- i
- y
- e
- ø
- ø
- a
- a
- u

Nasal

- ë
- ë
- ë
- ë
- ë
- ñ
- ñ
- ë

(Partially from Valdman (1997, 74))
Comparison: Pronouns

- Pronouns across French-based Creoles
- Loss of non-masc 3rd-person pronouns
- More similar to each other than to French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>HMGT</th>
<th>RM</th>
<th>Guyana</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st sg</td>
<td>moi (je)</td>
<td>moin/man</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd sg</td>
<td>toi (tu)</td>
<td>ou</td>
<td>ti/to</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd sg</td>
<td>lui (il)</td>
<td>li/i</td>
<td>li</td>
<td>li</td>
<td>li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pl</td>
<td>nous</td>
<td>nous</td>
<td>ni/nous</td>
<td>nous</td>
<td>nous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pl</td>
<td>vous</td>
<td>zautes</td>
<td>vi/vous/ou</td>
<td>zautes</td>
<td>vous/ou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pl</td>
<td>eux (ils)</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>i/zautes</td>
<td>yé</td>
<td>yé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HMGT = Haïti, Martinique, Guadalupe, Trinidad
RM = Réunion, Maurice
(Table modified from Jourdain (1956, 102))
Verbs

- verbs do not vary based on person, number, tense
- tense marked by context or “particles”:
  
  (2) \[ \text{Li te } gê \ e \text{ far} \]
  
  s/he ANT have a car
  
  “S/he used to have a car.”

- aspect often marked by auxiliaries:
  
  (3) \[ \text{Li tôbe krije} \]
  
  s/he INCEP cry
  
  “S/he started to cry.”

- copulas often omitted
  
  mo swaf “I’m thirsty”, li fêb “S/he is weak”
Nouns

- In basilect, definite articles follow noun
  
  (4)  Mo sukuje dibwa je
        I    shake     tree     PL

  “I shook the trees.”

- Gender from French
  - In basilect, not retained
  - In mesolect, retained: e.g. ë vs. ĕn

- As in French, adjectives follow nouns, with some exceptions:
  - ë jemë krɔʃ “a crooked path”, dolo fre “cool water”
  - mo jër padna “my dear friend”, nuvɛl ane “new year”

- “Agglutinated” nouns...
Agglutinated nouns

- Agglutinative-like prefixes from lexicalisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisiana CF</th>
<th>French source</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ë divõ</td>
<td>un + des + vents</td>
<td>wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ë lide</td>
<td>un + la + idée</td>
<td>idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ë zõjõ</td>
<td>un + (de)s + oignon</td>
<td>onion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so latet</td>
<td>son + la + tête</td>
<td>his/her head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Many sources:
  - ‘le, la, les’ (def. article)
  - ‘un, une’ (indef. article)
  - ‘de, des’ (partative marker)

- High variation in lexicalisation:
  - ë lafr, ë zafëfr, ë nafëfr, ën-afëfr (‘une affaire’)

(assembled from Neumann (1985, 99) and Valdman (1997, 164))
References

