Today

- Creole language syntax: the verb complex
  - Tense
  - Mood
  - Aspect
- A core TMA system for creoles
- Deviations from the core

Sources:
Big Questions regarding Creole Genesis

(1) What is/are the key forces serving as catalyst(s) in creole genesis
(2) Are creoles “special”?

**Universalist theories on creolization (in a nutshell):**
“There are universal patterns of linguistic behavior appropriate to contact situations...pidgins and creoles are alike because, fundamentally, languages are alike, and simplification processes are alike...human beings are biologically programmed to acquire Language rather than any particular language, and ... the programming includes an innate ability to dredge one's linguistic behavior of superficial redundancies.” (Todd, 1974)

**Substrate or superstrate theories:**
- Emphasize the contributions of a dominant input language
- Substrate theories: Creoles are relexified versions of a dominant substrate language
- Superstrate theories: Creoles owe both structural and lexical features to (a) dominant lexifier language(s)

**Gradualist theories:**
- Not theories per se, but a check of historical assumptions.
- Creoles are continuities of their input languages, reflecting gradual acculturation
What is predication?

The act of making a statement or assertion about some thing or idea.

Predicate:

-- one of the two main parts of a sentence (the other being the subject, which the predicate modifies). The predicate must contain a verb or other predicator. The verb requires, limits, permits other elements.

-- the part of a sentence that comments on the properties of a subject. ex. “big” in: “The man is big.” (predicative) vs. “The big man.”

-- an expression that can be true of something. Thus, the expressions "is yellow" or "likes broccoli" are true of those things that are yellow or like broccoli, respectively.
What is predication?

Stative and Non-stative verbs:

(Dahl, 1985) Most languages divide up their predicate phrases into at least two types of combinations, which from a semantic point of view often corresponds fairly well to a dynamic-stative classification of predicates.

~ “verbal” and “nominal” predicates
~ “non-stative” and “stative” verbs
~ regarding aspect, distinction is less developed or wholly neutralized in stative contexts.

**statives: (examples from Guyanese Creole)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noo</th>
<th>“know”</th>
<th>hav/gat</th>
<th>“have”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lov</td>
<td>“love”</td>
<td>laik</td>
<td>“like”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waant</td>
<td>“want”</td>
<td>fiil</td>
<td>“feel”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is predication?

Stative and Non-stative verbs:

In all languages, verbal lexemes show differences in compatibility with certain aspectual categories, explained by their differences in inherent aspectual meaning (Aktionsart). Aktionsart has to do with lexicon; aspect with grammar.

ex: Ai noo. I know (Guyanese Creole)
    Mi nuo. I know (Jamaican Creole)

An unmarked creole verb can indicate either a dynamic situation:

    “I learned” (PAST)

...or a stative one:

    “I know” (PRESENT)
What is predication?

Stative and Non-stative verbs:

In all languages, verbal lexemes show differences in compatibility with certain aspectual categories, explained by their differences in inherent aspectual meaning (Aktionsart). Aktionsart has to do with lexicon; aspect with grammar.

~certain aspectual categories behave differently in stative vs. non-stative predicators

~ verb meaning must be understood as related to place in the discourse.

~certain predicators seem to assume unexpected properties when used with different aspectual categories.
Tense, Mood, and Aspect

TMA Category:
The units that build up TMA systems, such as the simple past (-ed) in English and the imperfect (was).

We distinguish the dominant semantic features of a category from its prototypical uses.

e.g., English future tense
Dominant semantic features: time
Prototypical use: time + intention

I will go running at 8pm.
Tense, Mood, and Aspect

TMA Category:
Can be marked...

(1) morphologically as inflection on the verb
ex. I shopped. (English)

(2) lexically as an adverbial expression
ex. Mwa buve te. “I drink tea.” (Tai Boy)
Mwa buve te suə aven. “I drank tea yesterday.”
Dəmən mwa buve te “I will drink tea tomorrow
aweak ami. with my friends.”

(3) syntactically by an auxiliary or pre-/post-verbal markers
ex. If i bin smaat, i bin go stee hoom “If he were smart, he would have stayed at home.” (Guyanese)
Proposal for a core Creole TMA system

Main characteristics of the verbal complex in creole languages:

1. All use **free morphemes** rather than inflections
   -- morphemes phonologically resemble auxiliaries of the lexifier used as free particles, but tend to semantically and syntactically resemble the substrate
   -- in some languages these have been argued to be auxiliaries, and free words in others
2. Markers appear **preverbally**
3. All creoles have the following **minimum set of three markers:**
   -- tense  -- mood  -- aspect
4. Markers can be combined, but in a **particular order** (T-M-A)
5. Markers, and their combinations, **share semantic values**
6. Some languages have >1 marker for a category in (3)
The unmarked verb

Time relations in tense vs. TMA languages:
- “I ran to the store.”
- “I will be speaking on the effects of globalization.”
The unmarked verb

1.) In narrative constructions: note position in the discourse.

*Miskito Coast Creole* (Nicaragua, Creole English):

We *liiv* from der an *kom* doun hiir fo *stodi*. *Ai staat to* *pas* mai gried-dem…

“We *left* that place and *came* down here so I could *study*. I *started* to *pass* from one grade to the next…” (Holm 1988, p. 150)

2.) **Generic:** indicate a permanent state of affairs or actions

Him *a* di uona. Him *tek* dem an *put* dem an dis wie…die *kom* an him

“He *is* their owner. He *takes* them and *puts* them on the right path…They *come* and he

*liiv* dem all hiia an *guo* de.

*leaves* them all in that place and *goes* off.” (Holm, 1978)
Anterior

Signifies that the action of the verb took place before the event in focus. Can correspond to the English past or past perfect.

e.g.,

*Yoruba* (non-creole, Niger-Congo):

\begin{align*}
\text{Mo jeun.} & \quad \text{Mo ti jeun.} \\
1\text{sg eat} & \quad 1\text{sg \text{+ANT} eat} \\
\text{“I eat/ate”} & \quad \text{“I have (already) eaten”} \\
\text{or “I had eaten”}
\end{align*}
Irrealis

Distinguishes real from non-real events. Real events are events that have occurred or are currently occurring.

e.g., Guayanese Creole

(1) independently:
Fraidi awi go mek wan roti.
Friday 1PL +IRR make
“Friday, we will make roti.”

(2) in combination:
Awi bin go kom out seef.
1PL +ANT +IRR come out safe
“We would have come out alright.”
Nonpunctual (Aspect)

- Events occurring over a stretch of time or repeatedly
- Other expressions of aspect:

**Progressive Aspect:**
e.g., Bambara (non-creole, Niger-Congo)
(1) independently

*A bɛ na tobi la.*
He is sauce cook at
“He is cooking sauce.”

**Locative copula:**
A bɛ Bamako.
He loc Bamako
“He is (in) Bamako.”
Nonpunctual

(2) in combination (with other preverbal markers):

**Immediate future:**
e.g., Principe Creole (Portuguese lexifier)

E sa ke kasá.

3sg +IRR +NONP. hunt

“He is going to hunt right now”

(3)

**Compleitive aspect:**
e.g., Miskito Coast Creole

Ai don giv im a dairekshon.

1sg +COMPL give him INDEF. address

“I gave him an address.”
Deviation from the Core

(1) **Stative verbs pattern similarly to non-stative/dynamic verbs** (Negerhollands)—zero-marking on stative verbs get a past interpretation

ex. *Mi lob di fisi.* “I loved the fish.” (Saramaccan, not NH)

(2) **Serial completives exist for which a marker occurs not preverbally, but at the end of a sentence (ex1) or clause (ex2).**

   (Jamaican)

   ex1. *Im riid di buk don.*
   ex2. *Afta di jinal tief di monii don,*
   *dem did kaal i uot fi chaaj.*

   “He read (PAST) the book.”
   “Once the crook stole the money,
   they brought charges against him.”

(3) **Other common TMA categories:**

   -- **obligation:** must/should
   -- **deontic:** predisposition/necessity

   Im *(ha)fi trai.* “He has to/should try.”
   Im *mus traang.* “He’s got to be/is strong.”
   “*Im *(ha)fi traang.}
Deviation from the core

(4) Progressive aspect under decreolization:

In decreolization, we may see both morphological and syntactic marking.

e.g., *Nonpunctual marker “wa” vs. (-in) in Miskito Coast Creole*

Di gal no de briid.  Di gal, she did fiil laik she wa briidin,
“The girl isn’t pregnant.  The girl, she felt as if she was pregnant,

bot shi no ø briidin.
but she wasn’t pregnant”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marker, in order of occurrence within the verb complex:</th>
<th>NON-STATIVE</th>
<th>STATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>examples from Saramaccan Creole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Tense – not “point present”, but time of the event in focus/under discussion</th>
<th>SIMPLE PAST GENERIC</th>
<th>NON-PAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] ante.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
<td>Mi g-lōbi di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I ate the fish.”, also “I eat fish.” (generic)</td>
<td>[+] ante.</td>
<td>“I love the fish.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Mood – distinguishes real from non-real events. Real events are events that have occurred or are currently occurring. Non-real events include those that are imagined or conditional in the past or future.</th>
<th>UNREAL EVENT</th>
<th>UNREAL STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] irr.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
<td>Mi g-lōbi di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will/would eat the fish.”</td>
<td>o+</td>
<td>“I will/would love the fish.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Aspect – punctual vs nonpunctual continued action: durative, repeated (iterative), habitual</th>
<th>ENDURING EVENT</th>
<th>ENDURING STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] nonp.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
<td>A g-nyān di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am eating the fish.” also, “I habitually eat fish.”</td>
<td>tə+</td>
<td>“He is there.” (now, habit.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENDURING PAST EVENT PRECEDING SOME OTHER PAST EVENT</th>
<th>ENDURING PAST STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] ante., [+] nonp.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was eating the fish.” also, “I had been eating the fish.”</td>
<td>b+ tə+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He was there.” (not in textbook)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENDURING FUTURE EVENT</th>
<th>ENDURING FUTURE STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] irr., [+] nonp.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will be eating the fish.”</td>
<td>o+ tə+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENDURING UNREAL PAST EVENT</th>
<th>ENDURING UNREAL PAST STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+] ante., [+] irr., [+] nonp.</td>
<td>Mi g-nyān di fisi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would have been eating the fish.”</td>
<td>b+ o+ tə+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>