This hour

- Creole language syntax:
  - serial verb constructions:
    1.) characteristics
    2.) theoretical treatments
    - evidence favoring uniformity in creoles
  - evidence from constituent fronting:
    1.) Declarative contexts
    2.) Interrogative contexts
    3.) Relative clause contexts
    - evidence favoring diversity in creoles
Serial Verb Constructions

A syntactic phenomenon common to many African and Asian languages. In this construction, two or more verbs can be juxtaposed in one clause, sharing the same subject and tense-aspect-modality categories, while only one of the verbs is marked for these categories and conjunctive markings are lacking. Serial verb constructions typically express the consecutive or simultaneous aspect of the actions of the verbs.

Languages (non-creole) exhibiting serialization:
Niger-Congo (North and South)
   Kwa
Austro-Asiatic
   Khmer
   Mandarin
   Japanese (literary)
Serial Verb Constructions

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Languages (non-creole) exhibiting serialization:
Ewe: “Kofi brought the table.” (Sebba, 1987)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kofi</th>
<th>de</th>
<th>pono</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>baae.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kofi</td>
<td>take_PAST</td>
<td>table</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>come_PAST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Serial Verb Constructions

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Languages (non-creole) exhibiting serialization:
Mandarin: “I travel from Shanghai to Beijing by airplane.”

I sit airplane originate Shanghai
arrive Beijing travel.
Serial Verb Constructions

A syntactic phenomenon common to many African and Asian languages. In this construction, two or more verbs can be juxtaposed in one clause, sharing the same subject and tense-aspect-modality categories, while only one of the verbs is marked for these categories and conjunctive markings are lacking. Serial verb constructions typically express the consecutive or simultaneous aspect of the actions of the verbs.

Languages (non-creole) exhibiting serialization:
Japanese (literary):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>降る</th>
<th>→ 降り続ける</th>
<th>出来る</th>
<th>→ 出来上がる</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>furu</td>
<td>furi-tsuzukeru</td>
<td>dekiru</td>
<td>deki-agaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to fall (eg. rain)</td>
<td>to keep falling</td>
<td>to be made</td>
<td>to be completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Characteristics

1.) two or more verbs
2.) verbs share the same subject
3.) at most one expressed direct object
4.) one specification for tense/aspect
5.) only one negator
6.) no intervening coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction or complementizer

Possible Models:
Kwa languages closest, although some Indo-European languages have partially analogous constructions:

e.g., French
Viens prendre ta lettre
“Come take your letter.”

e.g., Ibo
ó gbàrà ósó gáá áhyà
“He ran go market.”
Phrasal Verbs vs. Serial Verbs

Jamaican:  
**Bring di letta come.**  “Bring the letter to me.”

cf. Phrasal Verb
1. A type of verb consisting of a sequence of a LEXICAL element plus one or more PARTICLES.

2. Particles may be one of several subtypes:
   (a) prepositional.  e.g., He *got up* at six  (up, out, through)
   (b) adverbial.  e.g., She was *taken aback* by the news.  (aback, ahead, along, apart)

3. Semantic and syntactic unity (phrasal verbs only).
   (a) * He *got* at six.
   (b) **Bring di letta.**  (but meaning is changed)

4. Substitutability (phrasal verbs and serial verbs)
   (a) He *rose* at six.
   (b) *Tyai* di letta.
Theoretical Treatments

Handled lexically or syntactically?

A. **Lexical interpretation**
   - Valdman, “Ensembles lexicalisés” or phrasal verb
   - combined meaning isn’t always deducible from the sum of their parts
     - e.g., Haitian: mennen vini, “to bring”, lit. “lead come”

B. **Syntactic interpretation**
   - syntactic unit with differentiation of semantic function:
     1.) verbs in series as adverbs or prepositions
     - *Jamaican*: He run go (a) market
       - He ran (to) market
### Theoretical Treatments

**Handled lexically or syntactically?**

Types of meanings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directional / locational</th>
<th>go</th>
<th>come</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kyari di ball kom.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>take</th>
<th>give</th>
<th>say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John <em>kuk di fish come gi mi.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>finish</th>
<th>return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In <em>studi di buk finish.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspectual</th>
<th>pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Mieri sliip lang pass mi.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Theoretical Treatments

Handled lexically or syntactically?
B. Syntactic interpretation, cont.

2.) argument construction I: instrumental function

Ndjuka: a teke nefi koti a meti
He take knife cut the meat

3.) argument construction II: serial ‘give’ meaning ‘for, to’
--verb meaning ‘give’ occurs second
--give as dative: Sranan: Kofi tjari den fisi kon gi mi
   “Kofi brought the fish for me.”
--give as benefactive: Kofi go na Paramaribo gi mi
   “K. went to Paramaribo for me.”
Theoretical Treatments

Handled lexically or syntactically?

B. Syntactic interpretation, cont.

4.) argument: serial ‘say’ meaning ‘that’
   --verb meaning ‘say’ also occurs second
   --to introduce a quotation:
   --with verbs of thinking (e.g., “know”, “believe”)
   --to introduce a sentence complement (“that”)
   c.f. Ewe kroipi “say”, also Sranan tak(i), Saramaccan táa

5.) aspectual
   e.g., JC Mieri sliip long pass mi.
   -- indicates iteration or duration of action indicated by verb

6.) degree
   e.g., JC In study di buk don.
   -- highlights the extent of the event indicated by the verb
Theoretical Treatments

If handled syntactically, then:

**Coordination**?
- enumeration of two distinct events
- evidence for: temporal order of events
- evidence against: no perceived separation of events
- evidence against: no island effects

**Subordination**?
- one event, with a second occurring on the occasion of the first
- evidence for: extractability of elements (“What Edgar cut __?”)
- evidence for: close semantic relation between verbs
- evidence against: serial verbs do not show same government properties

**Adjunction**?
- one verb is adjoined to the other V1 to V2 or V2 to V1
- evidence for: object of V1 often more referentially prominent
- evidence for: adjunct extraction in WH-questions
  (e.g., “How 1SG fell the tree throw?”) “how” > manner of cutting, not manner of falling)
This hour:

- Creole language syntax: Fronting
  - Declarative contexts
  - Interrogative contexts
  - Relative clause contexts
Fronting

• Definition: realization of a constituent in the first position of the sentence

• Derives from observation that certain phrases occur in initial position, though they might be expected to occur elsewhere:

  (1) I find fronting fascinating.
  (2) (a) Fronting, I find fascinating.
  (2) (b) Fronting, I find ___(empty category) fascinating.

• Typically find fronting of information already active in the discourse, or background information. i.e., serves to reactivate, or newly emphasize, a topic.
1.) **Topicalization:**
- Non-verbal expression
- No additional marking

*Example: Saramaccan*

```plaintext
Feledi mi si a di djai (NP)
```

Freddy 1SG see LOC the garden

“Freddy, I saw (ec) in the garden.”

- **Main or embedded clauses**

*Example: Mi meni taa a di djai mi bi si en*

1SG think [that LOC the garden [1SG +ANT see 3SG]]

“I think it is in the garden that I had seen him (ec).”

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**Declarative Contexts**
Unbounded (originates in embedded clause, but surfaces in initial position of the main clause)

\[ e.g. \textit{Di gwamba Kofi sabi taa mi njan} \]

The meat  Kofi know  that 1SG eat

“The meat, Kofi knows that I eat (ec).”

2.) Cleft: fronted element + marker

• Marker or “highlighter” = equative copula

\[ e.g. \textit{Jamaican} \]

\[ A tief im taan \]

It’s thief 3SG turn

“It’s a thief he turned into.”
Declarative Contexts

3.) XP + focus particle
  e.g. Saramaccan ‘de’
  *Di buku de mi bi ta lesi.*
  the book there 1SG PAST NONP. read
  “That book there I have been reading.”

4.) Predicate cleft (predicate doubling):
Movement of a (stage-level) verb to clause-initial position, leaving copy behind
  e.g. Haitian ‘se’
  *Se mache Jan mache al lekol.*
  FOC walk John walk go school
  “John walked (did not run) to school.”
4.) Predicate cleft (predicate doubling): Movement of a verb to clause-initial position, leaving copy behind. 4 types:

a.) prototypical

b.) temporal adverbial clauses
e.g. Haitian (note: unmarked)
\textit{Rive} Jan rive Mari pati.
arrive John arrive Mary leave
"As soon as John arrived Mary left."

c.) clausal adverbial clauses

"Because John arrived Mary left." (same sentence as in b.)

d.) bridge (factive) clauses
e.g. Haitian (note: unmarked)
\textit{Rive} Jan rive a fe li kontan.
arrive John arrive DET make 3SG happy
"The fact that John arrived made her happy."
Interrogative Contexts

1.) WH-movement (question formation)
   
e.g. Jamaican
   \textbf{Wu} \ yu \ tink \ se \ *gowe/im \ lik \ (ec)
   who \ 2SG \ think \ that \ leave/3SG \ hit
   “Who do you think *left/he hit?”

Relative Clause Contexts

1.) relative clause to phrase-initial position; clause becomes a predicate of the head NP or antecedent
   
e.g. Saramaccan
   \textbf{di womi} \ di \ mi \ wooko \ ku \ \textit{en} \ (possessor \ NP)
   the \ man \ REL \ 1SG \ work \ with \ RP-3sg
   “the man I worked with”