

What Can the Relabeling-based Theory of Creole Genesis Account For?

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The process of relabeling

a. /phonological representation/_i
[semantic features]_i
[syntactic features]_i

b. /phonological representation/_i /phonological representation/_j'
[semantic features]_i
[syntactic features]_i

c. /phonological representation/_j'
[semantic features]_i
[syntactic features]_i

HAITIAN

/gade/

to watch over
to take care of
to keep
to look
to imitate

FRENCH

/garde/

to watch over
to take care of
to keep

FONGBE

/kpón/

to watch over
to take care of
to keep
to look
to imitate

- Account

The relabeling of several substrate lexicons on the basis of a single superstrate language provides the creole community with a common vocabulary, a lingua franca, in a relatively short period of time.

The very nature of the process of relabeling accounts for the fact that creoles reflect the properties of both their source languages in the way they do.

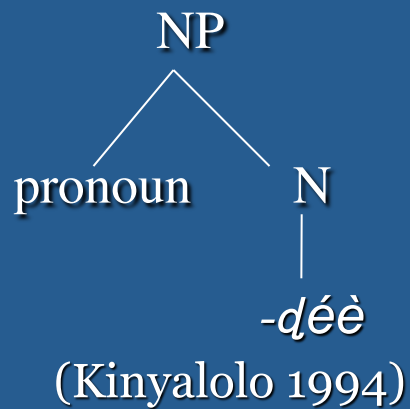
The way relabeling proceeds accounts
for a number of facts

Relabeling proceeds on the basis of superstrate forms.

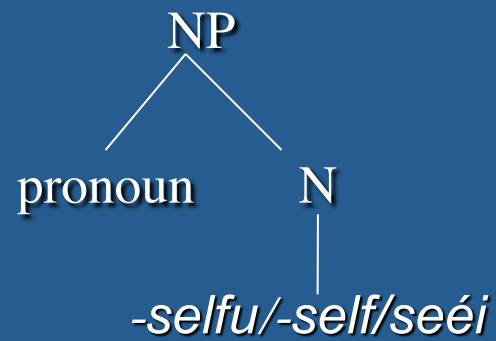
It is thus constrained by what the superstrate language has to offer as an appropriate form to relabel a substrate lexical entry.

--*self* anaphor

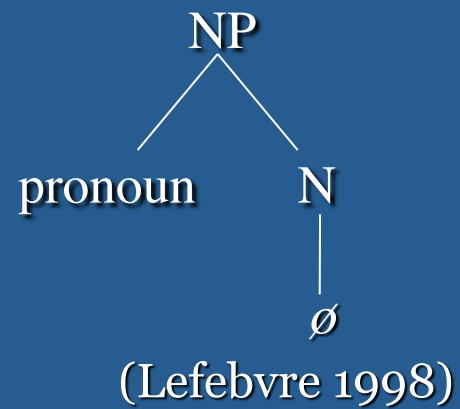
FONGBE



ENGLISH- or DUTCH-
BASED CREOLES



FRENCH-
BASED CREOLES



- Account

Relabeling accounts for the fact that creoles sharing the same pool of substrate languages but that have different superstrate languages may present differences that are attributable to differences between the superstrate languages.

Relabeling is semantically driven: the two lexical entries that are associated in the process have to share some semantics (Muysken 1981).

- Account

The fact that relabeling is semantically driven accounts for the fact that categories that are deprived of semantic content (e.g. operators, structural –as opposed to semantic—case) do not acquire a label at relabeling.

– Genitive case

àsón	[nyè	tòn]	éló	ó	lé
krab	[mwen	ø]	sa	a	yo
crab	me	GEN	DEM	DEF	PL

FONGBE
HAITIAN

‘these / those crabs of mine’ (in question / that we know of)

– Wh operator

Wá	děè	Jan	wá	ó	víví
Rive	ø	Jan	rive	a, fè	
arrive	OP	John	arrive	DET make	happy

FONGBE
HAITIAN

nú	nò	tòn.
	manman	li kontan.
for	mother	his happy

‘The fact that John has arrived makes his mother happy.’

(=(21) in Lefebvre 1994b)

The relabeling of functional categories proceeds
on the basis of free forms

– Tense, mood and aspect in Kriol and substrate languages (Munro 2004)

Gu-jandah Ø-marninyh-mi-ti-tji-ny.

NGALAKGAN

NC-stick 3sg-make- aux -RCP-PP

‘He made himself into a stick’

(Merlan 1983: 104-105)

Main mamai **bin oldei** gemp langa gemp.

KRIOL

POSS mother PST CONT live/stay G/L camp

‘My mum stayed (slept) at camp’

(AO58)

- Account

Since the relabeling of functional categories proceeds on the basis of free forms, the theory accounts for the fact that creoles tend to be isolating languages.

The way word order is established in creoles is derivable from how relabeling applies in creole genesis.

Lefebvre & Lambert's Proposal (2014):

- a. Relabeling may be linguistically context-bound, in which case it triggers the superstrate word order, and this word order appears in the creole.
- b. Relabeling may be linguistically context-free, in which case relabeled lexical items may associate with substrate structures, and the substrate word order appears in the creole.

Example of linguistically context-bound relabeling: Determiners

	N	DEF	FONGBE
DEF	N	<i>là</i>	FRENCH
	N	DEF	HAITIAN
	N	DEF	FONGBE
<i>this</i>	N		ENGLISH
DEF	N		SARAMACCAN

Example of linguistically context-free relabeling: Demonstratives

	N	DEM	DEF	PL	FONGBE
	N	DEM	DEF	PL	HAITIAN
[DEF.PL DEM.PL]	N.PL				FRENCH

Example of linguistically context-free/bound relabeling: Numerals

Numerals may occur in isolation: *one, two, three*, etc.

They may also occur with nouns: *two books*.

Our proposal on word order predicts that there should be two possible word orders for numerals in creoles.

- In the first case, numerals occurring in isolation would be able to associate with the substrate nominal construction available in the incipient creole; hence, the order of a noun and a numeral in the early creole would reflect the word order of the substrate language.
- In the second case, a numeral occurring with a noun would trigger the superstrate word order in the creole.

Fa d'Ambô (Post 2013) has postnominal numerals following the word order of its substrate languages (N NUM) rather than that of its Portuguese superstrate (NUM N).

In Santome (Hagemeyer 2013), low numbers may occur postnominally, as in the substrate languages. This position appears to be rare, however, as in the synchronic data, numerals are mainly prenominal, as in the superstrate language.

- Account

The way relabeling applies in creole genesis determines the word orders of the creole

Relabeling and L2

The relabeling-based account of creole genesis is a further development of the second language acquisition approach to creole genesis. It is congruent with the Full Transfer/Full Access model of second language acquisition where Full Transfer can be restated in terms of relabeling.

(Sprouse 2006)

Relabeling and other processes

The relabeling-based account of creole genesis states that, by its very nature, relabeling cannot be the only process in creole genesis.

Other processes that play a role in language change in general, such as grammaticalization and leveling, also play a role in the development of creoles.

These processes interact with relabeling.

(Lefebvre & Lumsden 1994; Lumsden & Lefebvre 1994)

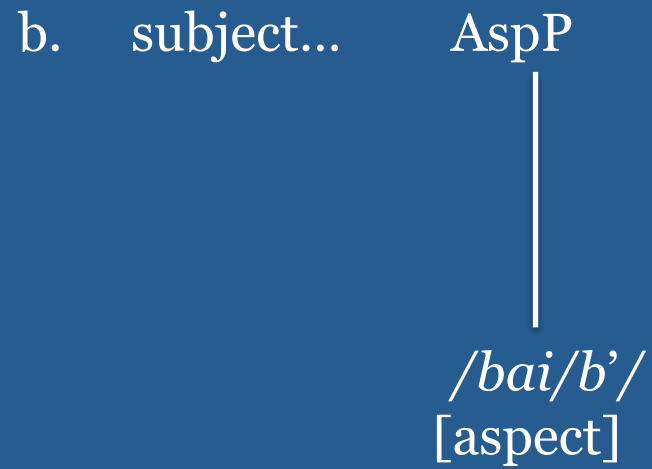
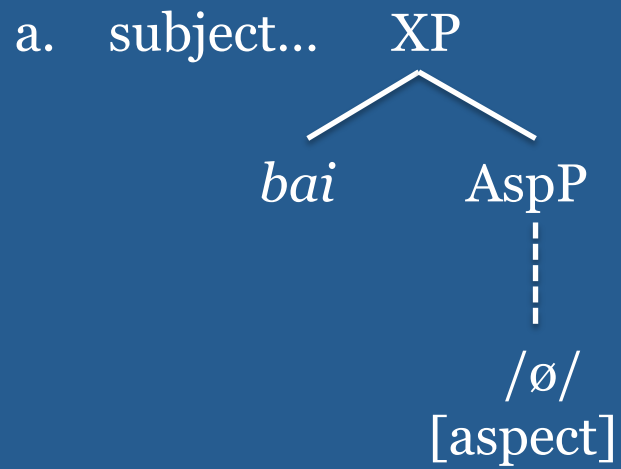
Relabeling is hypothesized to apply when the early creole community is targeting the superstrate language.

When speakers start targeting the incipient creole, other processes such as grammaticalization and leveling may apply.

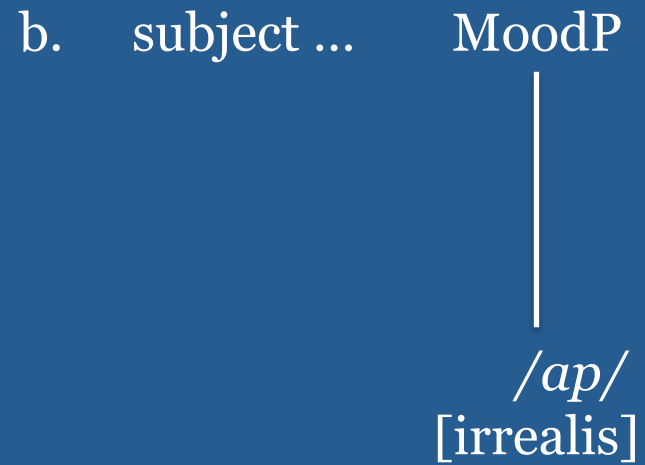
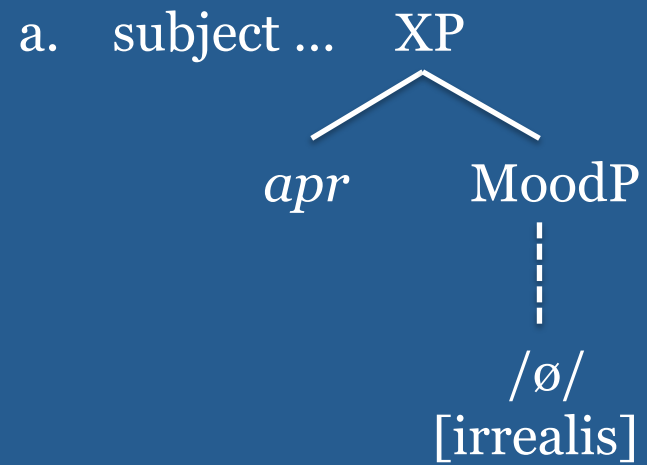
These are thus hypothesized to apply on the relabeled lexicons.

Grammaticalization

- In the relabeling-based account of creole genesis, grammaticalization is hypothesized to provide a label for a lexical entry that could not be relabeled, either because there was no appropriate form in the superstrate language, or because it had no semantic content.
- The original lexical entry that was not relabeled may be signalled by a periphrastic expression. The periphrastic expression may later become the phonological representation of the functional category in question through grammaticalization.



(adapted from Sankoff 1991)



(=(39) in Lefebvre 1998:128)

- Account

The postulated link between relabeling and grammaticalization accounts for the fact that, in their further development, creoles develop lexical entries that manifest the properties of their substrate languages even in situations where the substrate languages have ceased to be spoken.

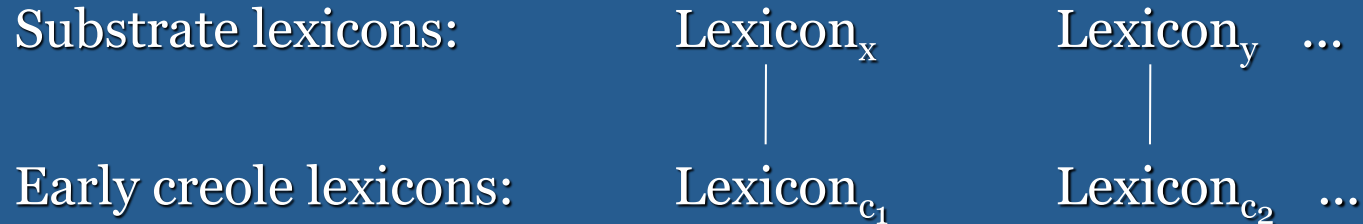
Leveling

Relabeling is a cognitive, hence an individual, process.

Situations where creoles emerge involve several substrate languages.

The product of relabeling is thus not uniform across the creole community.

In relabeling, speakers of various substrate languages reproduce the idiosyncratic semantic and syntactic properties of their own lexicons.



The variation created by the relabeling of several lexicons may (but need not) be leveled out with time.

– The expression of comitativity and conjunction

- Substrate languages

		Comitative preposition	Conjunction of NPs	of Adj's
FONGBE	<i>kpódó</i>	+	-	-
GENGBE	<i>kú</i>	+	+	+

- Hypothesised early Caribbean creole lexicons

	Comitative preposition	of NPs	Conjunction of Adjs
Lexicon ₁ (= FONGBE)	+	-	-
Lexicon ₂ (= GENGBE)	+	+	+

- Modern creole languages

		Comitative preposition	Conjunction of NPs	Conjunction of Adjs
HAITIAN (= FONGBE)	<i>(kòl)ak</i>	+	-	-
PAPIAMENTU (= GENGBE)	<i>kú</i>	+	+	+

- Account

The proposal that dialect leveling operates on the output of the various relabeled lexicons involved in the formation of a creole provides a principled explanation of the fact that

- some creole lexical entries may not have exactly the same properties as those of each corresponding lexical entries in the substrate languages
- several different substrate languages may contribute features to a given creole. The competition is not always won by speakers of the same relabeled lexicon.
(see also Siegel 1997).

Four variables may interfere with the output
predicted by this theory

- The relative homogeneity of the substrate languages plays a role in defining the importance of leveling in a given situation.

The more similar the substrate languages, the less important the role of leveling (e.g. Caribbean creoles).

Conversely, the more disparate the substrate languages, the more important the role of leveling (e.g. Hawai'i Creole).

- The amount of exposure to the superstrate language when the creole is being formed plays a role in defining a creole as more or less basilectal/acrolectal (e.g. Haitian versus Louisiana creole; Mauritius versus Reunion creole) .

- Whether speakers of a developing creole still have access to the substrate languages may play a role in the degree of their influence on the developing creole (e.g. Solomon Island Pijin as spoken by Touo and Lavukaleve speakers; Terrill & Dunn 2006).

- Whether speakers of a developing creole still have access to the lexifier language may play a role in the degree of its influence on the developing creole (Martinican Creole versus Haitian).

Conclusion

- The relabeling of several substrate lexicons on the basis of a single superstrate language provides the creole community with a common vocabulary, a lingua franca, in a relatively short period of time.

- The nature of the process of relabeling accounts for the fact that creole languages reflect the properties of both their source languages in the way they do.

- The way relabeling applies in creole genesis accounts for
 - the fact that creoles sharing the same pool of substrate languages but that have different superstrate languages may present differences that are attributable to differences among the superstrate languages;
 - the fact that categories that are deprived of semantic content do not acquire a label at relabeling;

- the fact that creoles tend to be isolating languages;
- the facts pertaining to word orders;
- the fact that, in their further development, creoles develop lexical entries that manifest the properties of their substrate languages even in situations where the substrate languages have ceased to be spoken;

- The proposal that dialect leveling operates on the output of the various relabeled lexicons involved in the formation of a creole provides a principled explanation of the fact that
 - some creole lexical entries may not have exactly the same properties as those of each corresponding lexical entries in the substrate languages
 - several different substrate languages may contribute features to a given creole. The competition is not always won by speakers of the same relabeled lexicon.

Is there a better theory?

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