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GRAMMATICALIZATION IS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREELES ¹

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1. Introduction

Until about the mid-1990s it was taken for granted that grammaticization is among the restructuring processes that produced creoles from their lexifiers, in that they extended forms or constructions of the latter to new grammatical functions. Such developments include the following examples:

1) usage of a serial verb meaning ‘give’ after a head verb to convey a DATIVE or BENEFACTIVE meaning, viz., [NP₁ ‘buy’ NP₂ ‘give’ NP₃] in, for example, Saramaccan and Haitian Creole, which is interpreted as ‘NP₁ buys NP₂ for NP₃’;

2) using the preposition [fő-fí/-fu/pu] ‘for’ predicatively before a verb to express an OBLIGATION modal meaning in several English and French creoles, e.g., Sara bin fuh [fő kom come’ in Gullah and Sara te pou [pu] vini Haitian ‘Sara had to/was expected to’;

3) using stay before a main verb in Hawaiian Creole, or stop in Tok Pisin, as a DURATIVE marker;

or 4) extending the function of been in English creoles, or été/était in French creoles, as an ANTERIOR tense marker.

Except for identifying the origins and/or models of the constructions in the lexifier or in the substrate languages, nobody has seemed particularly concerned by whether such evolutions were internally-motivated (i.e., innovations guided by structural patterns specific to the emergent creoles) or externally-motivated. In the way that Bruyn (1996) reviews the state of the art (see below), the latter alternative involves cases where a creole has extended a strategy that was already developing in the lexifier, for instance, using gwine or a go in Jamaican, or go [gə] in Gullah, as a FUTURE marker, on the model of be going to/gon(na) + Verb in English. It also includes cases where a creole’s construction is patterned on some substrate language(s), such as the use of a verb meaning ‘say’ as a complementizer after verba dicendi and verbs of perception, consistent with similar uses of ‘say’ in several West African languages, in the case of Atlantic English creoles.

¹ I am grateful to Bernd Heine and Michel DeGraff for useful feedback to a draft of this essay. I assume alone full responsibility for the remaining shortcomings.
Bruyn (1996) and Plag (1999) seem to have taken to heart the discontinuity assumption about the development of creoles. According to this, these new vernaculars are not normal evolutions from their lexifiers, via modification during language “transmission” from one generation or group to another. Rather, they are considered as non-ordinary, \textit{a novo} creations from whatever was left of their lexifiers after breaks in their “transmission” to non-native speaking populations. Being true by-products of language contact, they include grammatical patterns “borrowed” sometimes from the lexifiers and sometimes from some substrate languages. They are therefore assumed to be true examples of mixed languages, which according to Thomason and Kaufman (1988) cannot be classed genetically. Therefore, argue Bruyn and Plag, cases of grammaticization in creoles that are patterned on similar developments in the lexifier or the substrate languages are only apparent cases of grammaticization. True cases of grammaticization should strictly be internally motivated.

As in Mufwene (2000a) and (2001), I argue below that the discontinuity assumption has no grounding in the histories of the territories in which creoles have developed. The evolutions of non-creole languages are also contact-based, at least at the level of coexistent idiolects and dialects, even if one chose to ignore the many obvious cases of language contact in the genesis and post-genesis histories of, for example, English and the Romance languages. Like other languages, creoles are outcomes of transmission with modification (i.e., “imperfect replication” in the language of Lass 1997)—the default in language “transmission” (Mufwene 2001). Break in “transmission” would entail that nothing was passed on to another group, including the lexical material attributed to the lexifier in the case of creoles. I submit that even in places such as Surinam where native speakers of the lexifier left the colony before a creole could develop, there was no break in the “transmission” of the lexifier. Continuity in the “transmission” of a language does not presuppose (constant) presence of native speakers in the community that uses it, as has been clearly demonstrated by the histories of pidgins and indigenized varieties of European languages all over the world.

I also assume that a language is transmitted piecemeal and not wholesale, which makes imperfect replication of its whole system the default condition even in cases of native competence. With regard to the “transmission” of linguistic fea-

\footnote{Like the phrase \textit{language acquisition}, the term \textit{language transmission} is being used here for want of a better term. Every new speaker of a language partly recreates it (Meillet 1929, Hagège 1993), based on the E-language they hear around them. No native speaker passively inherits a grammar that is passed on wholesale from other speakers. There would otherwise be no, or too little, room for language variation and change. Alternatively, there would be too many different systems (albeit overlapping ones) to absorb, consistent with the fact that every idiolect is somewhat different. To remind the reader of this terminological caveat, which I did not so clearly articulate in Mufwene (2001), both \textit{acquisition} and \textit{transmission} will be used between scare quotes in the rest of this essay. See also DeGraff (1999a:14; 1999b; to appear, section 7) for a complementary position on this topic.}
Grammaticization is part of the development of creoles

tures, every community provides from its speakers a feature pool (similar to a gene pool in biology) from which different speakers select different subsets of features to reconstruct a partial subset of the communal system (with internal variation). The competition and selection entailed by the feature-pool model fosters idiolectal diversity. This variation in the way a language is individually recreated (by every speaker) sometimes results in the restructuring of the communal system, where the attention of historical linguistics has primarily focused. Contact and the accommodations that speakers make to each other account for communal-level changes.

This position (elaborated in Mufwene 2001, Chapter 2) entails that the traditional distinction between internally and externally-motivated changes is simply sociological, not structural. The nature of the negotiations and accommodations that speakers make to each other do not change regardless of whether these processes are prompted by idiolectal differences that are xenolectal or independent of influence from other languages. Therefore, although it helps us determine whether a change was motivated by pressures from within a particular communal language or resulted from contact with another communal language, the distinction between internally and externally-motivated change sheds no particular light on the mechanisms of language change themselves. Although they are not exactly the same processes from one language-specific case to another, the mechanisms are of the same kind both in those changes assumed to be internally-motivated and in those which are said to be externally-driven. This assumption underlies my arguments below against Bruyn’s and Plag’s position that many cases of grammaticization in creoles are only apparent.

Grammaticization is a diachronic process. At the communal level of a language, it is subject to the observations articulated above. I submit that Bruyn’s and Plag’s position is disputed at least by the alternative conception of the development of creoles summarized above which assumes no break in the “transmission” of the lexifier and dismisses the discontinuity assumption. However, Bruyn and Plag provide me an opportunity to emphasize a point made in Mufwene (1996), viz., that research on the development of creoles can contribute to scholarship on grammaticization by showing that such processes need not be unilinear nor rectilinear. I show below that this position is consistent with that of Traugott (1999:210), who,

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3 No speaker knows their overall communal language (characterized in Mufwene 2001:2 as “ensembles of I-languages”), which realistically leaves room for misunderstandings among native, or fluent, speakers. What a speaker knows is a function of which other speakers they have interacted with and what they have discussed. It is also a function of their time. These limitations justify literate speakers’ dependence on reference tools such as dictionaries and grammars, which act as bridges among speakers and across time, although these references have often been given too much authority to legislate on speech.
contrary to Plag (1999), observes that “the study of contact languages can be particularly instructive for grammaticalization theory.”

Grammaticization can be internally or externally-motivated, with motivation originating in another language in the latter case. However, given the notion of feature pool presented above, this distinction has no bearing on the structural mechanisms of the restructuring qua system reorganization. Even if the speed of the process is allegedly faster in the case of creoles, speed in itself does not dispute the gradual nature of its development. The empirical foundation of the claim that creoles have developed faster than other language varieties have evolved is quite dubious after all. In the particular case of North America, for instance, Gullah has developed within the same time period as other American English varieties (Mufwene 2001). In any case, as far as creoles are concerned, it does not matter whether a grammaticization process originated in the lexifier or was influenced by some substrate language(s). It must, however, be consistent with the relevant morphosyntactic principles that already operate, or are concurrently emerging, in a language. For instance, usage of a go before a main verb in Jamaican Creole as a FUTURE marker is consistent with one of its principles for forming a DURATIVE construction, according to the pattern a + Verb. Likewise, usage of the preposition [fo/fi/fu] and [pu] as an OBLIGATION modal auxiliary in English and French creoles is quite consistent with the fact that, unlike their lexifiers, the grammars of these vernaculars allow predicate phrases that are not headed by verbs, as in Mary tall ‘Mary [is] tall’ and this book for you ‘this book [is] for you’. Such developments are indeed among the restructuring processes that have shaped creoles as structurally different from their lexifiers.

2. The Bruyn-Plag Position: How justified is it?

2.2.1. Bruyn (1996) starts her discussion quite strangely with the suggestion that there is a synchronic notion of grammaticization, which is applicable to the development of creoles. In her own words:

> Although grammaticalization is generally conceived as a diachronic process, it is possible to approach it from a synchronic point of view (29).

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4 For more on this definition of restructuring, see Mufwene (2001). The notion of ‘system reorganization’ is comparable to that of ‘gene recombination’ in biology, except that, thanks to the condition of “transmission/acquisition with modification,” there is room for modifying the forms, constructions, and principles selected from the lexifier and/or the substrate languages. Thus, grammaticization involves “recycling” of materials taken from extant systems. If creoles are truly mixed languages, it should not matter whether the input comes from the lexifier or the substrate languages.
With regard to creole languages, however, there are reasons to question the assumption that synchronic phenomena reflect a diachronic development in the way in which grammaticalization is normally conceived, namely proceeding gradually and language-internally (30).

Clearly, according to her, things that look like grammaticization in the development of creoles are quite distinct from similar processes that have been observed in other, non-creole languages. She then proceeds to observe:

The fact that ben does not function as either a particle or a lexical verb in the early stages of Sranan implies that there has been no language-internal development of a lexical item into a functional one. Rather, there must have been a kind of short-cut from the English participle, which has already some grammatical value, to the function of tense marker in the Creole language. To regard such a development as grammaticalization without further qualification would be unrevealing to the extent that in this case the process must be assumed to have taken place from one language into another, such that patterns of usage in English provided the starting point for a grammatical form in Sranan or other Creoles (30-31).

As far as Bruyn is concerned, the discontinuity assumption holds. It is not clear what she means by “short-cut from the English participle” been to its use as a tense marker in Sranan and other English creoles. All cases of grammaticization involve extension of the usage of a lexical item in new, grammatical function, regardless of whether the older uses are strictly lexical or grammatical. Auxiliary verbs in English have developed their grammatical functions from erstwhile lexical functions. The presumed genetic discontinuity from English to Sranan leads one to question the assumption that English grammar provided the material and partial model for using ben as a tense marker. How could the morpheme have been passed on from one group of speakers to another if there was a break in the “transmission” of the language? Break in “transmission”, or discontinuity, entails that nothing is passed on! Also, why should a language such as Sranan, which is identified as an English creole, be under the constraint of not patterning some of its grammatical constructions on the lexifier itself in order for these to count as internally-motivated? Does any normal speaker ever learn words of a language without paying attention to their patterns of usage, although its “acquisition” need not be perfect?

5 The conclusion that “there has been no language-internal development of a lexical item into a functional one” doesn’t of course follow if one assumes that creoles developed gradually from their lexifiers. The absence of ben from early Sranan texts (i.e., early 18th century) simply suggests that it had not yet emerged as an ANTERIOR marker or was simply not recognized as such by the authors of those texts. If creoles have evolved from their lexifiers by basilectalization (the formation or consolidation of a basilectal sociolect) — which seems consistent with Bruyn’s own observation about features missing from early Sranan texts — then the features considered particularly creoles are later developments (Chaudenson 1992, 2001). If we can extrapolate from Baker (1995a, 1995b), these features would have emerged at different stages of the development of the creoles.

6 Lest my critique is considered unfair to the discontinuity assumption, one must recognize that...
One of the diachronic questions arising from Bruyn’s comments is the following: How clearly different from its lexifier was Sranan, or any other English creole, in the early stages of its development? I summarize here a position that is elaborated in Mufwene (2000a, 2001). Creoles have not developed from erstwhile pidgins, contrary to an assumption that seems to underlie Bruyn’s position. Instead, as Chaudenson has argued in several works since 1973 (more recently in Chaudenson 1992, 2001), creoles have evolved continuously from closer approximations of their lexifiers, diverging further away from them as the plantation societies came to replace the homestead societies, as the substrate populations came to outnumber the European colonial populations and were segregated from them, as slaves born outside the colonies came to outnumber the locally born ones, as the local vernacular was transmitted to the bozal slaves (the newly arrived) not only by the creole slaves (the locally born) but also by the seasoned slaves (those who had been imported earlier and were already acclimatized to plantation life but were not native speakers. Creole slaves did not necessarily speak a creole vernacular. They often spoke closer approximations of the original lexifier, and sometimes the same colonial varieties as the European colonists (including the indentured servants they worked side by side with), especially during the homestead and early plantation stages of the colonies. This position is in fact consistent with the scenario that Bruyn (1996) herself presents, and has in other studies of 18th-century texts, about the development of Sranan. There is no evidence of an initial pidgin. The earliest texts are less basilectal than the later ones.

espousing it have not been consistent. Classifying Sranan as an English creole also presupposes that this vernacular has inherited a large proportion of its lexicon from English, thus by some unbroken “transmission” of the lexifier to those who restructured it through “imperfect learning” (borrowing here, for convenience, a term often used in the literature). In order to appear non-contradictory, such creolists have assumed that one can “transmit” or “acquire” vocabulary from a language without the grammar associated with it, as if the words were learned as part of a list, outside any particular constructions. To assume that grammar and lexicon can be thus separated, so that a language can inherit its grammar from one source but its grammar from other sources reveals a thorough misunderstanding of how one learns a language in the first place, with learns normally identified in particular constructions in which they are used, thus with some grammatical model even if the learn does not always infer a correct analysis. The position itself is also a consequence of another mistaken assumption, viz., that in communities where a language has not been in contact with other languages and is “transmitted” only to children, the latter “acquire” it perfectly. Accordingly creole children did not grow up in such settings and had to work out their own grammars. Both DeGraff (1999a, 1990b, to appear) and Mufwene (2000b, 20001) explicitly dispute this view, arguing that language recreation by every learner is always imperfect. (See also Lass’s 1997 notion of “imperfect replication.”) The difference between those cases of language “transmission/acquisition” producing creoles and those that do not is both a consequence of influences from other linguistic systems that bear on the restructuring process (a consequence of grammatical systems being osmotic) and the extent of divergence in the outcomes. The question of whether in the first place no contact is involved in the putatively “normal” cases is discussed in Mufwene (2001, Chapter 2), where it is argued that the basic form of contact takes place at the interidiolectal level, regardless of whether one or more communal language is involved..
This sociohistorical information is adduced here simply to undermine the discontinuity assumption and to underscore the fact that there was never a break in the “transmission” of the lexifier. Even after segregation had been instituted, the lexifier continued to be transmitted among the slaves by the creole slaves. The restructuring of this colonial vernacular away from the original, early colonial lexifier (i.e., its basilectalization) proceeded in the same way as the process that has made, for instance, American English and Canadian French more and more different from metropolitan varieties of the same languages, bearing in mind that the lexifiers were nonstandard varieties. The identification of some colonial vernaculars as creoles and their stipulation as separate languages (in relation to the standard varieties of the related languages rather to their nonstandard lexifiers) has had to do more with the race of the new speakers than with uniqueness of the restructuring processes themselves. The only other difference that matters is that in the case of creoles there was an additional contribution to the feature pool, viz., elements from non-European substrate languages. However, this difference does not boil down to presence versus absence of contact. Among Europeans, French, English, and other colonial languages that prevailed came in contact with other European languages, which also influenced their evolutions. Although the influence was mostly by congruence, in the case of American English, for example, these languages favored options that shaped its divergence from British English. The preconsonantal and word-final pronunciation of /r/ in American English may have been favored by the presence of this particular feature in continental European languages. Contact with continental Germanic languages has even introduced new syntactic peculiarities. Thus, in parts of the United States where German and Scandinavian presence was significant, one comes across such constructions as bring with, on the pattern of mitbringen > bringen ... mit (in German). Even in this case, the innovation is partially congruent with preposition-stranding in English.

Moreover, the development of creoles by basilectalization did not ipso facto replace in the same territories varieties that remained closer to the lexifier. Continua emerged early in the development of creole communities (Alleyne 1980, Lalla & De Costa 1990, Rickford 1987, Winford 1997) and only politics can dictate whether extreme varieties on a continuum should be treated as varieties of the same language or separate languages. In any case, many, if not most, speakers also were, and have been able, to glide up and down the acrolect-to-basilect continuum, using structures more typical of the lexifier and participating in the divergence of the emergent creole from it. Thus models from the lexifier were certainly not foreign to an emergent creole. In the kinds of speech continua that developed, there is no particular reason for interpreting the selection of such models from the lexifier as borrowings, certainly not under the assumption of gradual development without an antecedent pidgin. After all, creoles represented a natural evolution of their nonstandard lexifiers in novel directions, just
like their lexifiers themselves had evolved under contact conditions in directions that diverged them from their parent languages, which is more evident of the Romance languages but certainly true also of English, of Proto-Germanic, of Proto-Indo-European and all such cases (Mufwene 2000a, 2001).

Then Bruyn observes:

In Keesing’s (1991) discussion of grammaticalization in Melanesian Pidgin, he concludes that lexical borrowings from English can acquire grammatical functions that correspond to those in substrate languages (31)

As noted in the Introduction, I see nothing in grammaticization that inherently precludes borrowings from introducing a new structural pattern or function in a language. In the first place, it is odd that forms or constructions from the lexifier itself should be treated as borrowings. This position may have to do with the mistaken assumption that pidgins and creoles are abrupt developments, which presumably must have ended once they were identified as separate languages. However, such identification is a social process (Mufwene 2000b). There is no particular restructuring process, nor a combination thereof, that takes a language and changes it into a creole, independent of a particular contact ecology.

Even if one assumed, without justification in fact, that language boundaries are clearly delineated, and rigidly conceived, in contact settings, it is not clear why legacy of the lexifier or influence from substrate languages would entail that such cases of grammaticization in creoles are synchronic processes. “Borrowings,” as Bruyn identifies these cases, are part of language change under contact conditions and remain bona fide concerns of historical linguistics. Since creoles have been disfranchised as “mixed languages,” which contain elements from more than one parent, restricting grammaticization to those restructuring processes that are subsequent to their developments seems to be nothing more than a consequence of the discontinuity assumption, which has nothing to do with causation of change in a language.

Bruyn also notes:

Since patterns in substrate languages may have arisen through universal grammaticalization developments, it will often be difficult to establish whether something that looks like grammaticalization is the result of internal development in the Creole language, or of calquing of substrate patterns on lexifier forms, or of the convergence of universal conceptually based developments and features of the languages present in the contact situation (31).

Those universal paths of grammaticization which are presumably independent of language-specific systems are yet to be determined. There must definitely be some difference(s) between, on the one hand, evolutionary paths that languages tend to
follow (almost) uniformly because they are based on some principles considered uni-
versal and, on the other, some developments that are consequences of traits that are
specific to them. Even in this case, one must wonder why some languages select a
locative preposition or a verb meaning ‘be at a place’ for the PROGRESSIVE func-
tion (basically what Kiyansi, Bantu B85, does), whereas some languages select a verb
meaning ‘stay’ or ‘sit’ (what Kikongo-Kimanyanga does in the past tense) but not a
verb meaning ‘lie’. Nor is it clear yet why some languages select a verb meaning ‘want’
but some others select a verb meaning ‘go’, and yet a few others select a verb mean-
ing ‘come’, for the FUTURE function. We cannot in any case dodge the question of
whether there can really be universal paths of grammaticization which are not simply
statistical reflections of what languages of any, or some, typological affiliation tend to
do. Otherwise, why would some languages stray from these putative universals that
must guide all of them?

Bruyn also seems to muddle the debate about the development of creoles as
mixed languages whose structural features have been selected from both the lexifier
and substrate languages—an evolutionary development in which congruence be-
tween features of the lexifier and those of substrate languages seem to have played
an important role (Chaudenson 2001, Corne 1999, Mufwene 2001, and Thomason
& Kaufman 1988). She could of course make a convincing case by arguing that
creoles have evolved by restructuring processes that are different from those of
non-creole languages, but that demonstration remains to be provided. Every lan-
guage that has undergone some major structural change at some point or another
in its history has done so under contact conditions. For instance, Old English and
Old French developed under conditions of population and language contact. In the
former case different Germanic languages that need not have been mutually intelli-
gible came in contact with each other and with the Celtic languages. In the latter
case, (varieties of) Vulgar Latin came in contact with Celtic, Gaulish languages.
Even their developments from the Old X stage to Middle X stage were triggered by
other layers of population and language contact. The fact that historical linguistics
has not addressed the actuation problem but has been contented with formulating
rules of the form X → Y under particular structural conditions is not evidence that

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7 Unfortunately, she gives no examples of such “universal grammaticalization developments.”
8 See DeGraff (to appear, section 4.5) for a complementary discussion of Universal Grammar (UG),
where true universals would be specified. According to him and several sources he cites, UG is largely
underspecified and parameters are set in favor of some typological options provided by the primary
linguistic data produced by speakers of the lexifier, influenced as (several of) the constructions are by
the other languages spoken by non-native speakers. (This is my interpretation, based on the feature
pool notion presented above, of his more elaborate discussion.) As Michel DeGraff (p.c., September
13, 2001) has reminded me of, “the crucial point (…) is (…) that, in all cases, the language acquirer is
exposed to utterances, not to grammars, thus the ineluctability of language (re)creation.”
there were no ecological cause external and/or internal to the language that led to, or brought about, the relevant change.

Pace Thomason & Kaufman’s (1988) argument against Old Norse and Norman French influence on Old English, one cannot say for sure that the development of, for instance, the Great Vowel Shift and relative clauses introduced by WH and involving Piped-Piping would have been ineluctable in standard English without the contact of Old English with both Norman French and Latin. Although one can argue that usage of WH in relative clauses is also evident in German and Dutch, which would make Norman French influence just an accident of history, the fact that English alone uses Pied-Piping in this case suggests that there was much more role in the congruence of Norman French than Thomason & Kaufman are ready to admit. French influence on the English language is far from being contained only in its lexicon and phonemic system. Even the prevalence of nominal PLURAL marking, unlike in German and Dutch, must be a reflection of this particular contact with French. Bruyn’s stipulation to exclude from the category of grammaticization processes in creoles all those cases where either the model came from substrate languages or the new pattern developed thanks to some congruence between the lexifier and some substrate languages seems unjustified.

She then proceeds to consider the following data:

The patterns exemplified by (1-3) occur in the 18th century Sranan sources as well as in those from the later periods. What is particularly relevant is that PPs of the type na baka fu NP do not occur relatively more frequently in the 18th century — as would be expected to be the case if there had been diachronic development. This indicates that the occurrence of the various types of complex PPs in present day Sranan is not the result of a gradual process of grammaticalization of items such as baka from nouns in the direction of adpositions (34).

(1) \( na \ a \ oso \ baka \ ) \ [18th-20th century] 
   LOC the house back
   ‘behind the house’ or ‘at/in the back part of the house’

(2) \( na \ baka \ fu \ a \ oso \ ) \ [18th-20th century] 
   LOC back of the house
   ‘behind the house’ or ‘at/in the back part of the house’

(3) \( na \ baka \ a \ oso \ ) \ [18th-20th century] 
   LOC back the house
   ‘behind the house’

(4) \( baka \ a \ oso \ ) \ [20th century only] 
   behind the house
It is not clear why gradualness in the development of these strategies would presuppose a more frequent attestation of *na baka ju* NP in early Sranan text. The data presented here just illustrate layering (Hopper 1991) in the context of competition and selection discussed above. It is also debatable whether, in the first place, post-nominal *baka* in such Sranan constructions, as in (1), really functions as an adposition. It has syntactic characteristics of noun modifying another noun, as in *house front - front of a/the house* or *desk top - top of a/the desk*. The fact that the 18th-century texts do not show a higher frequency of post-nominal uses of *baka* for LOCATION is perhaps further evidence of the fact that creoles did not start from systems that were more different from their lexifiers and that the features that have caused them to diverge as much from their lexifiers as they do today are really later developments (Chaudenson 1992, 2001). We must also be cautious, because the earlier texts mostly prove that a creole was already emerging or in place; and they show what particular features were identified by a writer as particularly representative of a colonial vernacular. They are not really evidence of the statistical distribution of variants in earlier creole speech. I am still not convinced that a process is less diachronic or less gradual because it has occurred in less time than another (Mufwene 2001). Finally Bruyn concludes:

The historical investigation of certain aspects of Sranan suggests that there are two main dimensions along which developments in Creole languages may differ from ordinary grammaticalization in languages with a longer history: they may proceed at a higher rate, and they may be crucially determined by influence from other languages (39). She identifies what has happened in Sranan as “apparent grammaticalization” (40). I think I have already undermined this conclusion, which does not deserve more discussion at this point. Grammaticization in creoles appears to have proceeded as normally and as naturally as it does in other languages. Casting it aside as a process that is only similar but does not quite fit in what has been observed in other languages may lead us to miss the opportunity that the study of creoles is providing us to learn more about the mechanisms of grammaticization as a diachronic process and part of the restructuring that brings about change in a language. Certainly true answers to questions about language evolution cannot lie exclusively in non-creole languages. Sometimes creoles just suggest that the old order of business is not necessarily the right one.

2.2. While endorsing Bruyn’s position, Plag (1999:206) also claims that “grammaticalization is generally conceived as a unidirectional and gradual process.” I know of no case in the development of creoles where grammaticization has proceeded upstream, reverting processes that took place earlier in the lexifier or other (substrate)
languages. At least there is nothing that he brings up in his review to illustrate his observation. He may have intended 'unilinear' development and thus, like Bruyn, he may have wanted to exclude substrate influence as a legitimate contribution to grammaticization. He may also have wanted to argue against Mufwene’s (1996) argument that grammaticization can proceed in bifurcated paths, the case of the parallel evolution of the preposition for in English creoles both as a complementizer and as an OBLIGATION modal auxiliary as in the following Gullah examples:

(5) a. This bag (bin) fuh BB. ‘This bag is/was for BB.’ (PREPOSITION)
   b. We tell BB fuh come. ‘We told BB to come.’ (COMPLEMENTIZER)
   c. BB (bin) fuh come. ‘BB must/had to come’ or ‘BB is/was expected to come’ (MODAL)

As shown in Mufwene (1989, 1996), both grammatical extensions are concurrent developments from the purposive function of the preposition for in the lexifier, a function that creoles have also preserved (consistent with Hopper’s 1991 principle of layering). Such bifurcated evolution would not be limited to creoles either. In English both the complementizer that and the definite article the have evolved from the same distal demonstrative pronoun that, which still functions as such to date.

Like many other linguists who have claimed that creoles have developed abruptly from their lexifiers, Plag must have confused the speed of a process with gradual evolution either in terms of the several stages that a process must go through or in terms of how long it takes a process to pass from initial attestations in some idiolectal systems to widespread, universal usage in a communal system. I am not sure that this question has been sorted out in studies of other languages, for instance, how long it really took the Old English ancestors of the verbs will, can, shall and the like to individually grammaticize as auxiliaries. If linguists had not been too eager to identify creoles primarily with basilectal varieties (and then assumed, contrary to historical evidence, that basilects developed first), we probably wouldn’t have much motivation

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9 The examples are presented in eye dialect. Fuh stands for [fə], the normal pronunciation of the English for in this variety, as in many English nonstandard varieties, unless they are rhotic.

10 Warner (1993: Sections 8.5, 9.6, and 10) is informative, although not with all the details one would want to see for the kind of essay I am writing. The subject matter of the development of auxiliary verbs in English is a complex one, involving at least the following dimensions: 1) the basic grammaticization process in the usage of individual lexical items, 2) the widening of a class of verbs or verb-like items that already functioned as auxiliaries in Old English; 3) the spread of the defective-morphology peculiarity from the prototypes (qua first specimen) of this class to other members; 4) the geographical spread of the grammaticization process from some parts of England to others, and 5) the role of extant morphosyntactic properties of the relevant verb-like items in favoring their grammaticization as auxiliary verbs. Some of these considerations are part of the present discussion. The study includes no sociohistorical considerations. So we cannot conclude anything about the role of external ecology in this aspect of the evolution of English grammar. There is certainly nothing so far that inspires distinguishing in kind between grammaticization in English and in English creoles.
for assuming that grammaticization, from the point of view of spread throughout a population of speakers, was less gradual than in other languages. For instance, since not every Gullah speaker expresses the PROGRESSIVE with the preverbal marker duh [də], there is no particular reason for assuming that its evolution is complete already. Nor is there a better one for assuming that in Jamaican Creole preverbal a go as a FUTURE marker is an evolution more complete than gwain or vice versa.

Plag proceeds to argue as follows:

Assuming the correctness of Bruyn’s analysis of the historical development of the Sranan article wan as a true case of instantaneous grammaticalization, it is unclear how the notion of gradualness can be reconciled with her finding. If grammaticalization can indeed happen instantaneously, how can it be a gradual process? (207).

Independent of the fact that wan is probably not an article at all but only a quantifier that happens to be used where the lexifier sometimes uses an indefinite article, one-stage developments would not be unique to creoles. The transition from the Latin numeral quantifier unus to the Romance indefinite article un ‘a, an’ cannot have involved several intermediate structural steps, no more than there are in the evolution of the English indefinite article a/an from the quantifier one or of the definite article the from the distal demonstrative that. Also, there are no communities where all speakers participate concomitantly in the innovation of a new form, construction, or process. Such developments spread gradually within a population, being truly innovated by one or a few speakers and then copied by others (Mufwene 2001).

2.3. The reservations that Bruyn (1996) and Plag (1999) have expressed about grammaticization in creoles are contrary to the interest that veteran students of this restructuring process such as Traugott (1999) and Heine (forthcoming) have. Traugott (1999:210) observes:

The usual assumption is that these changes [i.e., grammaticization processes] are internal and embedded within a relatively homogeneous history — this is where the study of contact languages can be particularly instructive for grammaticalization theory.

Indeed, studies such as Mufwene (2001) question the incorrect assumption that there are any languages whose structures have evolved independent of any contact among its dialects and/or with other languages. The fact that there is idiolectal and dialectal variation within a language is already ground for assuming that contact plays an important role in the evolution of any language, especially since the locus of any mental representation of a language is the mind of every individual speaker. Anybody who interacts with other speakers and often has to accommodate their idiolects is an arena of lectal contact at the idiolectal, dialectal, or language level.
Traugott then proceeds to observe that “different uses will crystallize in different ways, even in a homogeneous situation, a process called ‘polygrammaticalization’ (Craig, 1991)” (211). Regarding gradualness, she adds:

The difficulty may be exaggerated. Reanalysis (innovation) itself is abrupt and not gradual (Hopper & Traugott, 1993, p. 36), and sometimes individual changes may follow one upon another in fairly short order, even in standard languages (e.g., the development of individual modal auxiliaries in the history of English). From the point of view of grammaticalization theory, what is gradual is typically accretion of properties that lead up to reanalysis (e.g., the processes that led up to the development of auxiliaries in English) and there may even be periods when the structure is somewhat indeterminate, especially as exemplified by blends (Tabor, 1994, chapter 6).

This statement is so well articulated that I will not even try to add anything to it. It will, however, help to explain briefly the respects in which I disagree with the conception of the development of creoles that Bruyn and Plag suggest and why I therefore reject their position on grammaticization in these vernaculars.

3. What is “Creolization?”

The issues discussed above stem primarily from how Bruyn and Plag seem to understand “creolization.” Although they are not quite explicit about it, they seem to espouse the traditional assumption that creoles have evolved from erstwhile pidgins, a view that they need to support the discontinuity assumption. This scenario is contrary to the history of Surinam and other creolophone territories, as shown below. The literature on pidgins and creoles have led both Chaudenson (1979-2001) and Mufwene (1990-2001) to endorse the traditional characterization of pidgins as reduced second-language varieties that developed in trade colonies, where they functioned as lingua francas between, in my view, economically egalitarian partners who met sporadically for trade. (Shifts in the balance of power would eventually lead to the development of exploitation and settlement colonies from these trade relations.) The trade partners interacted minimally and could therefore be contented with the minimal communication that a pidgin enabled to establish between them. After all, they had their native, or primary, languages to communicate with members of their respective ethnolinguistic groups.

Defined as above, pidgins as lingua francas cannot plausibly be situated historically in the homestead communities of settlement colonies in which plantation societies associated with creoles eventually developed. Having generally started as homestead societies — with family-size population clusters (see Dunn 1972) — social interactions in these colonial communities were intimate (despite race discrimination), relatively integrated, and marked by regular verbal interactions. Their creole children
of European, non-European, and mixed backgrounds alike — acquired their colonial vernaculars together and spoke similar idiolects (Berlin 1998). Although some of their parents (non-Europeans but also some Europeans) who did not speak the vernacular natively never developed native competence in it, at least all the locally-born residents did, variable as the colonial vernacular was.

The homestead communities also grew more by birth than by importation of labor, since most of the wealthiest European residents had not then accumulated enough capital yet for a generalized development of large plantations. Assuming pidgins to have developed in such settings is contrary to the working notion of ‘pidgin’ articulated above. The position is also inconsistent with the histories of the development of plantation settlement colonies, according to which plantation societies developed later than, gradually and non-universally from, the homestead societies. These histories suggest continuity in language “transmission” and the later development of creoles during the time when the mortality rate was high, life expectancy short, and the plantation populations grew more by importation of labor than by birth. It was also the time when the local vernacular was being transmitted to the newcomers as much by non-native, “seasoned” slaves as by native speakers. This demographic development fostered ethnographic ecologies in which, as one can observe today in the indigenization of European languages in former exploitation colonies, structures of the vernacular diverged farther and farther away from the original lexifier. The reason is that more and more of its “transmitters” were non-native speakers who themselves had “acquired” it from other non-native speakers. In the context of plantation settlement colonies, this process has been identified as “creolization.” Chaudenson (1973, 1992, 2001) identifies it more accurately as “basilectalization,” i.e., successive approximations of approximations of the original lexifier, which thus evolved in the direction of a basilect. The evolutionary similarity with the “indigenization” process (from which “creolization” differs primarily in having a nonstandard lexifier and in being “transmitted” in naturalistic, non-scholastic settings) suggests that there is no restructuring process in the development of creoles that is not attested in the evolution of non-creole languages (Mufwene 2000b, 20001). Like “indigenization,” the notion of “creolization” too identifies a social-recognition process by which a society identifies a particular colonial evolution from its lexifier as a separate variety, especially when it has resulted from its appropriation by speakers who are not (fully) of European descent.

11 The plantations did not universally replace the homesteads in the relevant communities, since not every farmer had enough money to become a planter. What should be understood by “transition from homestead to plantation societies” and that plantations came to be the overwhelmingly dominant employers of slaves and in some cases also of indentured servants. Thus there was no uniform language evolution in the colonies either, because patterns of social interaction on the plantations (where segregation was instituted early) were different from the homesteads (where there was no segregation despite the discrimination which changed the status of Africans from indentured servants to slaves for life within fifty years in 17th-century Virginia).
With this misconception corrected, we can now focus on grammaticization as part of the development of creoles and on how, consistent with the expectation stated above from Traugott (1999), our adequate understanding of the process in this context can enrich discussions of it in the broader literature.

4. Grammaticization in Creoles

As argued by Chaudenson (1979f) and by Arends (1989), as well as by several other creolists since then, creoles developed gradually, like the plantation societies themselves. Baker (1995a, 1995b) shows gradual development to be the normal progression even in the development of pidgins. His later (2001) study of Chinese Pidgin English shows that initial contacts of Europeans with non-Europeans during their mercantile expeditions around the world first depended on interpreters, who presumably acquired better command of the European language. It is thus later usage of these languages by more individuals who had less and less direct exposure to them during the apparently less sporadic trade contacts between Europeans and non-Europeans that led to more extensive restructuring, which produced pidgins. The reason for underscoring the gradual development of these colonial varieties is to show why it makes little sense to claim that grammaticization proceeded in a different way in the development of creoles than it did in the evolution of other languages.

There is yet an important gain from Bruyn’s and Plag’s discussions, viz., they unwittingly provide support for continuity in the development of creoles, showing that these vernaculars have not been created ex nihilo and their structures contain forms and/or functions that have been selected intact or slightly modified from their lexifiers and/or the substrate languages. Mufwene (2001) accounts for such developments by arguing that the makers of creoles selected their structural features, according to ecology-based markedness principles, from a feature pool to which both the lexifier and the substrate languages made contributions. In the vast majority of cases, the forms originated in the lexifier, since it was already selected by the new socio-econo-

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12 The focus of this paper makes it unnecessary to elaborate the implications of Baker’s finding. It is significant that both creoles and pidgins started with closer approximations of their lexifiers, with initial communication relying on a few non-Europeans who learned fairly well to communicate in a European language. Appropriation by larger groups seems to have entailed less control on the form that was being transmitted to, or appropriated by, new learners. This entailed more restructuring, especially in those contexts where interaction with native, or fluent, speakers was sporadic.

13 So far, I have been able to consider only some of the factors that determine markedness values relative to the ecology in which a language is being “transmitted”/“acquired,” for instance, simplicity, transparency, regularity, salience, and frequency. They are indeed among the factors commonly invoked in traditional studies of markedness, except that in the ecology-based approach none of them is universally relevant, and the values are determined relative to what else a particular form is competing with (Mufwene 1991). Some of the hierarchies used in optimality theory can also be used in the same spirit.
mic ecology as the local lingua franca and later as the vernacular, and it was clearly targeted by whoever intended to adapt to this new ecology. The substrate languages easily influenced selections of structural options which the lexifier shared with them. When particular modifications took place either because speakers did not replicate the targeted forms or constructions perfectly, or because they had to extend them to new communicative needs (e.g., expression of HABIT while the lexifier availed no specialized form/construction for it), substrate influence also helped shape the evolutionary trajectory of the lexifier. As is well known in research on second language “acquisition”, misidentification of forms and structures of the target language with those of the source language leads to reanalysis or misinterpretation of the targeted forms and structures, i.e., to restructuring of the system.\(^\text{14}\)

It is precisely in this context that grammaticization as adaptation of an extant form or construction to new uses is to be situated. In Mufwene (2001), I liken such grammatical adaptations to exaptations in biology or kludges in computing. They are unplanned, occur on the spur of the moment when a communication need must be met. Only repeated successful uses (call them copies at the population level, where they spread gradually) are they identified as instances of grammaticization in a language. In reality, however, the processes have been initiated at the idiolectal level, where they could very well be considered “idiogrammaticizations” (by analogy to idiolects). I need not go into the question of the relation between individual selection (at the idiolect level) and group selection (at the communal language level) in this paper. Suffice it to know that it is an important component of grammaticization, as of any diachronic process, at the level of communal language.

There are no group selections without individual selections and therefore no grammaticization processes at the communal language level without requisite idiogrammaticizations. Some of the individual selections converge or reinforce each other but some others don’t. Those that are congruent or reinforce each other define some of the evolutionary paths of a communal language. The non-congruous selections often die out without any consequence for the communal language. However, some converge with others into viable alternatives that remain in the language. They account for variation, which is very real and an important characteristic of any living language. An example of this is the fact that English has more than one strategy of relativization (viz., the complementizer strategy versus the relative pronoun strategy), more than one strategy for expressing FUTURE (with the auxiliary verb will + Bare Infinitive versus the complex “semi-auxiliary” be going + to + Infinitive), and more than one modal construction for ABILITY (can + Bare Infinitive versus able + to + Infinitive.

\(^\text{14}\) I argue in Mufwene (2000b) that the makers of creoles did indeed target their lexifiers, diffused as they are likely to have been. No particular target language in naturalistic language “transmission”/ “acquisition” (including those of native language) are devoid of variation.
versus capable + of + Gerund). Though some partial grammatical and/or pragmatic specialization may justify having the alternatives, none of them is especially correlated with any change in progress. We cannot just be surprised to find similar variation in creoles, especially when the lexifier itself provided variation which was sometimes, if not often, amplified by contact with the substrate languages, when they provided alternative structures and/or functions to the feature pool.

Studies of grammaticization based on noncreole languages have emphasized the importance of language-internal evolution. Their cross-linguistic comparisons have suggested “universal” paths of grammaticization, i.e., those that various languages, some of them genetically and/or typologically unrelated, have tended to follow, for instance, the tendency for PROGRESSIVE constructions to have developed from LOCATIVE ones, or for TEMPORAL markers to have been extended from LOCATIVE ones. Among the things that the hitherto limited research on grammaticization in creoles has revealed is that even these vernaculars follow more or less the same processes, with their makers making choices from among the options then available in the lexifier. For instance, as shown in Mufwene (1996), most Atlantic English creoles have selected go as the FUTURE marker, owing apparently to the option of expressing FUTURE with be going to (or be gonna) + Infinitive in English. Interestingly, they have done it in different ways. The makers of Jamaican Creole selected a DURATIVE construction of go, viz., a go + Verb, which translates the English be going + to + Infinitive, whereas those of Gullah grammaticized go by weakening it to [gə] (sometimes reducing it only to the velar consonant [g]) and combining it with the verb stem. Speakers of both Jamaican Creole and Gullah also use an alternative form of this construction that was available in the 17th and 18th centuries, viz., gwine + Verb, but neither of them uses the alternative gon(na) + Verb, which is attested in present-day nonstandard English vernaculars and AAVE. The reason is so far not obvious.

What is especially interesting here too is the fact that these creoles have chosen constructions that are consistent with the development of the relevant aspects of the rest of their grammars. Jamaican Creole has remained faithful to the fact that go itself must be used in the PROGRESSIVE, although it has not maintained a constraint often associated with the original English construction, viz., the requirement for the subject to be HUMAN or ANIMATE, hence capable of intentions. Its major change lies in the fact that it is perusing its own pattern of DURATIVE construction in this evolution, with the preverbal marker a instead of the suffix -ing.

The makers of Gullah saw instead the fact that go conveys the basic meaning of FUTURE, while also ignoring the INTENTIONALITY or HUMAN/ANIMATE SUBJECT presupposition associated with this auxiliary in some English varieties. Applying the principle that weakens the form of an auxiliary verb, they changed
its form to [gɔ]. In this particular case, there is no clue yet whether chance or some still unknown factor(s) in the sociolinguistic ecologies of Jamaica and coastal South Carolina bore on these divergent evolutions. It remains, however, that the makers of both varieties worked with materials that were available to them, following constraints imposed by the rest of their grammars that were emerging. We must bear in mind that loss of inflections and predicate serialization are among the restructuring processes that produced creoles as different systems from their lexifiers.

In the above cases, the creoles seem to have evolved without using any influence other than from their lexifier. One may thus be tempted to ignore the fact that several substrate languages use a verb meaning ‘go’ to express FUTURE and this congruence must have influenced the selection of **go** as a FUTURE marker. However, contacts in which some of the substrate languages do not express FUTURE with ‘go’ sometimes produced a different strategy when there was enough critical mass among speakers of substrate languages with their particular alternatives. Tok Pisin is especially interesting in this particular case, as it uses **bai** (< *by and by* in the lexifier) + **Verb** (Romaine 1988), consistent with the fact that several of the Melanesian and Papuan languages express the FUTURE with an adverb rather than with an auxiliary verb or an inflection. This is to say that structures of Atlantic English creoles could have been quite different, had the substrate languages been typologically different.\(^\text{15}\)

In principle, partial congruence between such a construction pattern and the **be going to** + **Verb** pattern in the lexifier would have favored the kind of **go**-based constructions attested in Atlantic creoles. However, Turkana is spoken in East Africa. Unless there are such constructions among western and Central African languages, one may have to be content with the usual kind of constructions with ‘go’ + **Verb** that have traditionally been adduced in the literature and are typologically closer to some of the creoles’ structures.

Frajzyngier (1984) also shows convincingly that the lexifier has exerted a strong deterministic influence in the development of creoles. He illustrates this with the development of a complementizer for non-purposive subordinate clauses from the verb **say** in Atlantic English creoles. He argues convincingly that the explanation cannot be wholly substrate, since Atlantic French creoles do not use a morpheme from either **dire** ‘say’ or **parler** ‘speak, talk’ for the same grammatical function. Indeed, colloquial and nonstandard English discourse avails common usage of **say** to report speech quotati-

\(^{15}\) Heine (1995:44) mentions a “Serial Schema” used by some African languages for FUTURE constructions. He cites the following example from Turkana, taken from Dimnendaal (1983:136):

\begin{verbatim}
ki-póni’ át-mát-a
we-go We-drink-PL
We shall drink
\end{verbatim}
vely as in the following examples (quoted from Chase 1943:4-5 and Dance 1978:33) which are repeated from Mufwene (1996, exx. 4 & 9):

(6)  
   a.  A man came to the door, says, “Hello, stranger. what’ll ye have?”
   b.  Jack says, Well, I’ll stop a little while, I reckon.”
   c.  “Well, now, King,” says Jack, “hit [it] looks like you’d be a-needin’ somebody with all your land…”
   d.  The old King sort of looked at Jack and how little he was, says, “Well, now, Jack, I have got a little piece of new ground I been tryin’ for the longest to get cleared…”
   e.  King says, “Think ye can clear that patch, Jack?

(7)  “This mine ... that’s yours... You take this one; that’s mine ... that’s yours.”
   He [the Deacon] went up there; he say, “Reverend, don’t you know so- something. Judgment Day comin’ fast, ’cause the Lord and the Devil down there in the graveyard dividing out souls.”
   Reverend say, “Brother, you know you wrong.”
   “Come on go down there.”
   So they went on down there; these kids were still countin’ ’em: “This mine ... that’s yours.” He [one of the boys] say, “Now, but it’s two at that gate; let’s go get them.”
   They [Minister and Deacon] say, “Ah, naw you don’t!” [Makes a gesture to indicate a hasty departure.]

There is no evidence of such extensive usage of dire (least of all parler) in French. Thus, although several, if not most, substrate languages of West Africa use a verb meaning ‘say’ to report speech quotatively in serial verb constructions, no Atlantic French creole has developed this particular strategy. This suggests indeed that grammaticization in creoles, hence the development of their grammars, still depends largely on options available in the lexifier itself and that the case of substantial inputs of models from the lexifier such as in Berbice Dutch (Kouwenberg 1994) and Melanesian pidgins (Keesing 1988, Sankoff 1993 and previous work) call for special external ecological explanations.

An examination of relative clauses in Atlantic English creoles may shed light on how the availability of models in the lexifier and substrate influence balanced their acts, bearing in mind that the determination to speak the lexifier (despite the concurrent restructuring of its system) already weighs things in its favor in the vast majority of cases. Both French and English creoles have selected relative clause options available in their nonstandard lexifiers. In the case of basilectal English cre-
25 Grammaticization is part of the development of creoles, genesis in nonstandard vernaculars is more evident in the fact that generally no relativizers other than the invariant *weh* [we] (< English *what/where*\(^{16}\)), which acts more like a complementizer than like a relative pronoun (Mufwene 1986), were selected to start relative clauses. The following examples are from Gullah:

\(8\)

\[\begin{align*}
a. & \quad \text{Da man (weh) Uh tell you come here laas meek} \\
& \quad \text{The man who/that I told you came here last week}
\\
b. & \quad \text{Every word (weh) Pa say} \\
& \quad \text{Everything that/which Pa said.}
\\
c. & \quad \text{Da man (weh) I meet he son laas week} \\
& \quad \text{The man whose son I met last week}
\\
d. & \quad \text{Da man (weh) everybody taller than him} \\
& \quad \text{The man that everybody is taller than.}
\end{align*}\]

Besides, *weh* alternates with the null complementizer and shows exclusive predilection for Preposition-stranding, the dominant, if not the exclusive, pattern in colloquial and nonstandard English. There are no cases of Pied-Piping in Atlantic English creoles. One may conclude again these are all cases of inheritance from their lexifiers, with or without congruent influence from the substrate languages. This observation is largely true and is indeed confirmed by the fact that Atlantic French creoles exhibit no Preposition-stranding. The reason is simply that no particular French vernacular other than Québécois, which developed concurrently with French creoles but in an ecology of contact with English, allows Preposition-stranding. Interestingly, however, French creoles do not Pied-pipe prepositions, either.\(^{17}\) Yet, Pied-piping must have been wides-

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\(^{16}\) In some nonstandard English dialects, *what* continues to function to date as a non-locative relativizer, as in *Are you the one what said it?* (Trudgill 1983:189). One of its alternative pronunciations during the colonial period was [wæt]. It should thus shock nobody that it seems to have merged with *where* into [we] or [wɛy] in Gullah and other English creoles. It is not clear why *that* is not used in English creoles’ relative clauses. It may have to do partly with the fact that is not not used to introduce complement clauses in general. Instead, *sɛ* (< *say*) is used for this function. However, like in the substrate languages, this function of the complementizer for complement clauses is limited to complements of verbs; it is not extended to relative clauses. Polyploidic input in the development of creoles, in the way both the lexifier and substrate languages contributed to the formation of grammatical features, deserves more attention.

\(^{17}\) Michel DeGraff (p.c., September 13, 2001), Pied-piping occurs in questions, as in (i), as opposed to (ii):

(i) *Ak ki moum mwen te ale nan sinema?*  
With WH person me ANTER go to cinema  
With whom did I go to the movie?
pread in colonial nonstandard French. It is the only option French allows regarding prepositions. Even today, in some dialects, relative clauses invariably start with the complementizer *que*, even when the relative NP is subject.

In Haitian Creole, relative clauses start with *ki* when the relative NP is a subject. However, when it is an object, including that of a preposition, the relativizer *ki* (< French *qui*), then yields to the null complementizer, as shown in the following examples provided by Michel DeGraff (p.c., August 2001):

(9)  a. *Men pwofesè* *ki* *te* *ekri* *liv* *sa* *a*  
Here professor WH ANTER write book this DET  
*Here’s the professor who wrote this book*

b. *Men moun* *mwen* *te* *al* *nan* *sinema* *ak* *li* *a*  
Here personj 1SG ANTER go LOCATIVE cinema with 3SGj DET  
*Here’s the person I went to the movie with*

c. *Men kaye* *mwen* *te* *ekri* *ladan* *li* *a.*18  
*Here notebookj 1SG ANTER write inside 5SGj DET*  
*Here’s the notebook I wrote in*

Substrate languages appear to have influenced these particular structural selections. Although some Bantu languages, such as Swahili, have relative pronouns, which agree in noun class with the antecedent head noun, the vast majority of West African languages start their relative clauses with a complementizer and use a resumptive pronoun where the object of a preposition has been relativized. This trend is attested is several of these creoles.

The conclusion drawn in Mufwene (2001, Chapter 2) is that a lot of recycling in the sense of using in novel ways or contexts materials and/or principles available to speakers contribute to language evolution. The ‘feature pool’ concept makes it possible to make language boundaries more osmotic than linguists have made them to be, at least as porous as they are to speakers who easily draw “matériaux de construction” (as Chaudenson 1992, 2001 calls them) from all the resources available to them. The-

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(ii) *Ki moun mwen te ale nan sinema ak?*  
Who did I go to the movie with?

18 According to Michel DeGraff, if he had to use an overt relativizer at all in constructions (9b-c), it would be *ke*, but not *ki*. However, he also makes the following cautious observation:  
My own impression is that the use of *ke* instead of the null relativizer may be more common with French-Creole bilingual speakers, but this is only an impression (not based on any serious sociolinguistic statistics).
re is no particular reason why we should expect grammaticization trajectories to be unilinear, limited to influence from only one language, when in reality language contact is a major and common factor in language evolution. Just because other studies of language evolution and grammaticization have ignored this factor does not entail that we must dismiss what creoles are bringing to our attention. Au contraire, this may be an opportunity to re-examine what role contact played, for example, in the development of the auxiliary verb and article and gender systems of the Romance languages.

5. Conclusions

It should be useful to conclude this discussion with a few last comments on Bruyn’s invocation of “universal grammaticalization developments” as an argument against identifying some restructuring processes as part of grammaticization in creoles. If one approaches grammaticization primarily from a typological perspective, comparing strategies used by various languages to express specific grammatical functions (e.g., Bybee et al. 1994, Heine 1993), it is not really clear that one can identify particular “universal grammaticalization developments” (other than tendencies) which do not amount to basic language universals. Indeed languages can be organized into types relative to their grammatical strategies, for instance those that use ‘go’, or ‘come’, or ‘want’ to express FUTURE. Since creoles are natural languages, there is no particular reason why they should be excluded a priori from such considerations, independent of the fact that there is nothing that would make grammaticization particularly interesting in this case. They can certainly fit in some of these types. At the synchronic level that has retained Bruyn’s attention, true universals of language, those properties that are shared by all, have received less attention than typological variation. Even research in theoretical linguistics that focused on properties of Universal Grammar had to turn to parametric variation.

Grammaticization has been of particular interest because it subsumes a subset of diachronic processes that account for how some grammars express some functions in the specific ways they do and how the emerging typology may shed light on the way the linguistic mind guides structural exaptations to meet the varying communicative needs of speakers. In this regard, creoles as some of the most obvious recent evolutions from their lexifiers are especially interesting because they highlight the inventiveness of their makers, who have recycled what they found in the lexifiers to express grammatical meanings that were significant to them. This is what makes Heine (in progress) particularly interesting.

In any case, even from the synchronic perspective in which Bruyn and Plag prefer to frame their discussions, there is a certain amount of interesting variation in the
ways that languages express particular grammatical functions. For instance, languages
that do not use inflections to express FUTURE vary depending on whether they use a
verb meaning ‘want’, ‘go’, ‘come’, or any other marker. A typological classification of
languages according to which particular strategy they use and how it evolved is infor-
mative. Since one cannot rule out a priori whether or not contact played a role in the
evolution of the relevant languages, there is no particular reason why similar evolu-
tions in creoles should be ruled out by fiat as “apparent grammaticalization[s]” simply
because the model was in the lexifier or in (any of) the substrate languages. One would
have to determine beforehand whether the rules that must be posited to account for
such exaptations in the development of creoles are different from those that have been,
or must be, posited for those adaptations attributed to language-internal evolution
in noncreole languages. If there are no (significant) differences in the restructuring
formulae, then one must consider whether there are (significant) differences in condition-
ing ecological factors that justify treating similar processes in creoles as only
“apparent grammaticalization[s].” So far there seems to be no compelling evidence for
treating as different restructuring processes the development of grammatical strategies
in creoles from forms and constructions available in their lexifiers or the substrate lan-
guages. That would preclude discussing the development of a classic topic such as the
“passé composé” in French (avoir ‘have’ + Past Participle or être ‘be’ + Past Participle)
as an instance of grammaticization, since it has evolved from Vulgar Latin, under the
kinds of ecological conditions that Bruyn and Plag would like to preclude as making
the development of creoles different. One would have to construe a different history of
the evolution of French to deny the role of contact and language shift. These are not ar-
guments in favor of invoking “creolization” in the evolution of French. This would be
just the opposite of one of the main theses of Mufwene (2001), viz., we could do with-
out this disfranchising term in order to focus more on those restructuring processes
which creoles share with the seemingly contact-based evolution of all other languages.
The Bruyn-Plag position appear to have been misguided.

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