PREDICATION IN CARIBBEAN ENGLISH CREOLES

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Volume 10

Donald Winford

Predication in Caribbean English Creoles

PREDICATION IN CARIBBEAN ENGLISH CREOLES

DONALD WINFORD

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1. Preliminaries

This book is about predication in Caribbean English Creole (CEC) — a label which refers to a wide range of varieties of English-lexicon creoles employed in over twenty-five mainland or island territories throughout the Caribbean area. The label is not uncontroversial, since it might be taken to mean, first, that all of these varieties are identical in all respects, and second, that they are discrete systems that are easily isolatable from other varieties of English with which they coexist in each community. My use of the label thus requires some clarification. I begin in the next section by making a distinction between "conservative" and "intermediate" creole varieties in the Caribbean. The former label is by and large synonymous with the term "basilect" which is used to refer to the conservative (mostly rural) creole surviving in communities such as Guyana and Jamaica. I use the term “intermediate variety” in Alleyne’s (1980:181) sense, to include both the creoles used in communities like Barbados and Trinidad, which are closer in many respects to English than basilectal creoles, and the "mesolectal" creole varieties used in primarily urban areas of Guyana, Jamaica, etc. Since this book is concerned with basilectal varieties of CEC, very little will be said about the intermediate varieties of Barbados, Trinidad, etc. or about mesolectal varieties elsewhere. Henceforth, therefore, I shall use the label "CEC" to refer only to the basilectal or conservative varieties of Caribbean creole. Labels like "Jamaican Creole" (JC) and "Guyanese Creole" (GC) will likewise refer to the conservative varieties of creole used in these communities. If I wish to refer to less conservative varieties, I shall use modified labels such as "intermediate" or "mesolectal" CEC, JC, GC, etc.

In Section 2, I present further discussion of the relationships among the varieties as well as their distribution. Section 2.1 discusses the concept of the creole continuum, while section 2.2 focusses on the distinction between basilect and mesolect in communities such as Jamaica and Guyana, which are the primary focus of this

book. In section 3, I explain the reasons for my choice of (basilectal) Jamaican and Guyanese creoles as the basis of the treatment of predication presented in this book. The final sections of this Introduction discuss the scope of the present analysis, and the model of grammatical description that I employ, where suitable, to formalize more explicitly the workings of the grammar of predication.

2. Varieties of Caribbean English Creole

The Caribbean countries in which English and English-lexicon creoles are spoken are a highly diversified group, stretching from the Bahamas through the Greater and Lesser Antilles in a two-thousand mile arc down to the South American coast. The majority of them are small islands; only a few, including Belize in Central America, and Guyana and Suriname in South America, lie on the mainland. Most of them are former colonies of Britain and still part of the (British) Commonwealth, with English as their official language. Exceptions include Suriname - a former Dutch colony, which has Dutch as its official language, and several islands and mainland communities in Central America which are part of Spanish-official nations like Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

In its broadest sense, the label "Caribbean English Creole" will be used to refer to the English-lexicon creole vernaculars spoken in all of these communities, except Suriname. I will, however, frequently make reference to the Surinamese creoles throughout this book for purposes of comparison and contrast with CEC. All of these creoles arose in similar plantation settings at roughly the same period in history, beginning in the early to mid seventeenth century.[1] With the possible exception of Saramaccan (Holm 1989:438), they all arose out of contact between English and West African languages primarily of the (new) Kwa and N.W. Benue-Congo families (henceforth referred to as "Benue-Kwa languages")[2]. However, since the Dutch replaced the British as rulers of Suriname in 1667, the Surinamese creoles have had

1. Holm (1989:432-84) provides an overview of the sociohistorical background of both groups of creoles. Fuller details are available for Suriname in Rens (1953), for Jamaica in LePage (1960) and for Guyana in Rickford (1987).

2. My classification of West African languages follows that outlined in Bendor-Samuel (1989). "(New) Kwa" corresponds roughly to the "Western Kwa" subgroup of Greenberg's (1963a, b) "Kwa" family. The N.W. Benue-Congo languages correspond roughly to the "Eastern Kwa" subgroup of Greenbergs's "Kwa". Since creolists have traditionally used Greenberg's classification of Kwa which is no longer generally accepted, the reader is urged to consult Bendor-Samuel (1989) for a detailed discussion of current classifications of West African languages. Finally, it must be stressed that, while Benue-Kwa languages appear to have played a primary role in the formation of New World Creoles, languages of other families, including Mande and Bantu, also seem to have played a significant part.

quite different histories from CEC. They appear to be much more conservative, discrete systems than their Caribbean cousins, which have been under continuing influence from English over the centuries, resulting in significant change in their grammars. It will therefore be interesting to compare the two creole families from time to time to see which areas of their grammar remain similar, and which may have diverged. As Holm (1989:433) suggests,

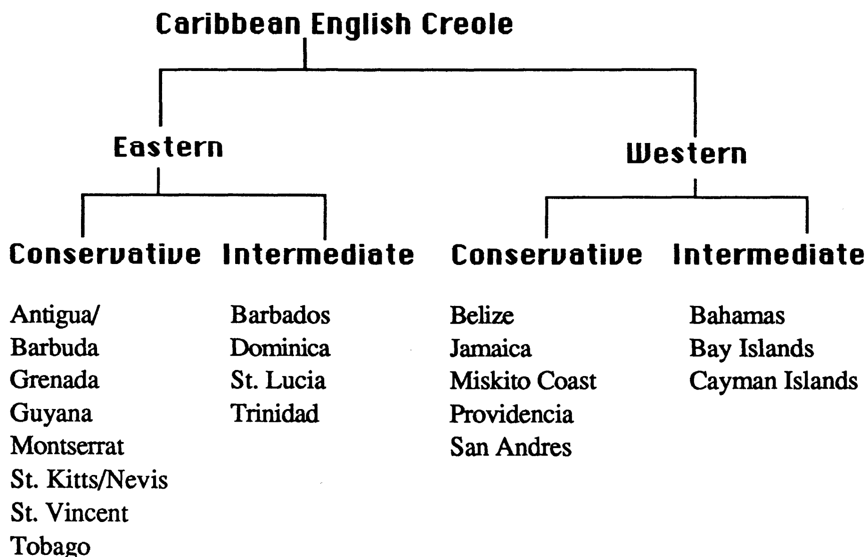
> ...the Surinamese creoles may provide something of a glimpse back in time: if we disregard the Dutch influence since 1667 (which has apparently done little to alter the basic structure of the language, despite considerable lexical borrowing), we may be left with something similar to the seventeenth century varieties of English creole spoken in other parts of the Caribbean area before prolonged contact with English.

The Caribbean communities with which I am concerned, and their creoles, are generally divided into two geographical groups - the Eastern and Western (see Holm 1989:444-85). This is a very broad distinction, which masks many significant differences within each group, as well as important similarities between them. It is important to our purposes to take these differences and similarities into account. In the first place, the communities in both groups must be further divided into those which preserve a highly conservative creole, and those whose most extreme creole is an "intermediate variety" (Alleyne 1980:) - one which more closely approximates English. The latter include Barbados, Trinidad, and other islands in the Eastern Group, as well as the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and others in the Western Group. Chart A presents a breakdown of communities in each group according to the nature of the Creole vernacular used. The list is not exhaustive; several small islands like Saba, St. Eustacius, etc. are excluded.

The distinction between conservative and intermediate creole communities is based on studies of the latter (Alleyne 1980; Christie 1983; Carrington 1981; Shilling 1978, 1980; Roy 1986; Winford 1972, 1980) which show that their morphosyntax and syntax differ in important respects from those of the conservative creoles. The closer degree of approximation to English found in the intermediate creoles can be explained partly in terms of the nature of the contact situation which gave rise to them, and partly in terms of continuing influence from English. For instance, the English-lexicon creole of most of the Windward Islands (including Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent) developed fairly recently, after their capture by the British from the French in the late 18th century. These creoles developed against a background of creole French and were the outcome of different contact situations from those which produced the conservative plantation creoles elsewhere in the Caribbean. Christie (1983:16) notes that "Dominican Creole English,

unlike JC, for example, was largely acquired via direct teaching," and that its original speakers were, for the most part, generally free agents not confined to large slave plantations. This seems to have been true of St. Lucia as well. This would explain why their English creole is a closer approximation to the superstrate than those in conservative creole communities like Jamaica. In both these islands, the majority of the population continues to use a conservative French-lexicon creole as the everday vernacular.

Chart A: Varieties of Caribbean English Creole.



In St. Vincent and Grenada, Creole French rapidly declined after colonization by the British, and has been almost completely replaced by a relatively conservative English-lexicon creole. The cases of Barbados and Trinidad are more complex. Neither of these communities preserves a conservative creole variety. This is perhaps surprising in the case of Barbados, which was settled by the British in 1627 and developed into a model plantation colony, with the usual massive importation of W. African slaves. Trinidad, on the other hand, resembles the former French colonies of the Windwards in many respects. Though it was a Spanish colony when taken by the British in 1797, the majority of its population spoke Creole French, which remained the dominant language until the turn of the century, when it gradually gave way to an English-lexicon creole. Some scholars claim that the intermediate

varieties in both Barbados and Trinidad are the result of decreolization of a former conservative creole (Cassidy 1980, 1982; Winer 1984), while others suggest that they emerged in the original contact situation due to social conditions that favored a higher degree of assimilation to English (Alleyne 1980:183, Hancock 1980). It is likely that both explanations are partly correct. There is growing consensus that the intermediate creoles throughout the Caribbean were the product of different demographic settings from those which produced the more conservative varieties (see Chapter 8 for further discussion). At the same time, contact between "basilect" and "mesolect" in communities like Guyana and Jamaica has led to significant transfer and overlap between the two (Rickford 1987:21).

I will be concerned from now on only with those communities in which conservative creoles are used. The general distinction I have made between Eastern and Western varieties will be retained, though it must be remembered that the similarities between them far outweigh the differences. To some extent, the intermediate varieties have played a role in distinguishing the two groups of conservative creoles. In particular, as we shall see, there has been diffusion of linguistic features from intermediate varieties like Barbadian creole across the Eastern creoles, which help to distinguish them from the Western ones.

Holm (1989:445) provides a brief sketch of some of the linguistic features which distinguish the two groups. However, he warns us that "while there is some socio-historical and linguistic justification for such a division, the reality of settlement patterns and their linguistic consequences is rather more complex and still in need of further research."

Attempts to draw clear boundaries between the two groups are in fact seriously hampered by the lack of analyses of all levels of linguistic structure. Very little work has been done on the phonology of Caribbean creoles in general, and there are consequently few comparative studies at this level, among them LePage (1972) and Wells (1987). On the basis of the available evidence, the salient phonological differences are to be found primarily in the vowel systems. For instance, the reflexes of SE /ei/ and /ou/ are respectively /ee/ and /oo/ in the Eastern varieties, and /ie/ and /uo/ in the West, though Holm (1989:445) notes that the latter can also be found in Leeward Island speech and sometimes in Barbados. So there appear to be differences within each group, as well as similarities between varieties in different groups. Wells (1987), for instance, finds sufficient grounds for grouping JC and GC together. Le Page (1958:63) suggests that "most of the consonantal features mentioned for JC are common throughout the region. The different dialects are, however, sharply distinguished by prosodic features." The full extent of the similarities and differences at the phonological level will be clarified only when more analyses of

individual creoles become available.

As far as the lexicon is concerned, the situation is just as unclear. So far only two scholarly dictionaries have been published for Caribbean creoles, the *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (DJE) (Cassidy & Le Page 1980 <1967>) and a *Dictionary of Bahamian English* (Holm and Shilling 1982). Hence comparative work on the lexicon is scarce. Le Page's (1978a) study, based on entries for the letters A D E G H and I in the DJE, reveals an overlap of only 13% in the creole vocabulary of Jamaica and Belize, both in the Western Caribbean, but a 25% overlap between Jamaica and Guyana, which is Eastern.[3] The degree of overlap is surprisingly small, and it is not clear that the results accurately measure the similarities across the creoles as far as peculiarly creole vocabulary is concerned. In this connection, Holm (1983:18) cautions us that many words which are widely distributed across the Caribbean "were not included in the DJE because of different criteria regarding how non-standard or distinctly local they are." And he quotes a personal communication from William Stewart to the effect that "regional word-lists from the Caribbean and American south tend to create a false impression of lexical insularity." In addition, it must be remembered that these comparisons do not include the bulk of the English-derived vocabulary in these languages, which they all of course share. For all these reasons, the available comparative work on the lexicon does not reveal a full picture of the similarities or differences between the two groups of creoles. Completion of the *Dictionary of Caribbean English* (Allsopp: forthcoming) will no doubt shed more light on this question.

At both the morphosyntactic and syntactic levels, it is clear that the similarities across conservative CEC varieties far outweigh the differences. Again, however, there are certain features that distinguish the Eastern and Western groups. These differences, it must be emphasized, are more often matters of selection of surface forms rather than differences in underlying categories or rules. For instance, *de* is used as the progressive marker in the Western group (though *a* is more common in Jamaica), while *a* is used in the Eastern group. The unmarked verb is used in Western varieties to express Habitual meanings, while *a* or *doz* has this function in the East, alternating in some varieties. The future marker is typically *wi* in the west and *go* in the East, though both groups use *a go* (alternating with *gwain/goin*) as a prospective marker. Hancock (1987:271) provides other examples of differences between the

3. As Holm (1983:19) points out, creole vocabulary includes *archaisms* (words once current in early English), *regional dialect words* brought by speakers of non-standard 17th-18th century dialects, *nautical words*, words from English that have undergone semantic shifts, category shifts or other processes of change such as compounding. Finally, there is a considerable African element in CEC vocabulary, including direct borrowings as well as loan translations or calques of various sorts.

two groups at the morphosyntactic level. Some of these, for example differences in pronominal forms or choice of *fu* vs *fi* as the so-called "infinitival marker", are only superficial surface differences; the underlying categories and semantic distinctions are essentially the same. There are no doubt other differences of this type that can be identified, but these suffice to justify the broad distinction between the two groups.

Attempts at classification to date have not made much appeal to syntax proper. Here again we are hampered by lack of data and analyses. Since I will be exploring similarities and differences in several areas of CEC syntax in some detail in later chapters, I will not devote much attention to comparison here. It will suffice to note that the conservative creoles in both groups show a remarkable degree of similarity in all of the areas of syntax to be discussed in later chapters - including passivization, serialization of various sorts, complementation, etc. in addition to others such as contrastive focus, question formation, etc. which do not fall within the scope of this book. We will see, however, that there are significant differences between the two varieties chosen as the basis for this book in certain areas of their grammar such as the verb complex. Fuller treatments of other varieties will no doubt reveal further distinctions both within and across the groups. Some of these differences may be due to specific influences in the original contact situations that gave rise to these creoles. Others may be due to varying degrees and types of external influence from English, from other indigenous languages, or from those languages, including other Caribbean creoles, introduced in one way or another into the community. Finally, of course, we must expect to find differences due to continuing internal developments and processes of grammaticization in each variety. We shall see several examples of these types of change - both externally and internally motivated - that have led to significant differences between the two conservative varieties of CEC analyzed here.

2.1 *The Problem of the Continuum*

At this point, we must turn our attention to a question that has posed considerable problems for analysis of the creoles used in communities like Guyana and Jamaica, and indeed throughout the Caribbean. This is the question of where the boundaries of the varieties lie. As is well-known, the continued co-existence of creole and a localized variety of English over many generations - hundreds of years in some cases - has led to extensive mutual interaction between the systems in contact. The result is the phenomenon referred to as the creole continuum - a spectrum of variation linking the more standard end of the range (the acrolect) with the conservative creole extreme (the basilect). The variety or range of varieties intermediate between these two extremes is generally referred to as the mesolect(s). The situation described here is to be found in all these communities which preserve a highly con-

servative creole. Essentially, they all pose the same problem - how to separate the local acrolect from "creole", and within the latter, how to distinguish the mesolect from the basilect. The two situations which are the major focus of this book Jamaica and Guyana - have figured prominently in discussion of this problem.

As Bailey (1966:1) notes:

> Most observers of language in Jamaica have encountered difficulty in distinguishing between the various layers of the language structure, and indeed the lines of demarcation are very hard to draw.

Rickford (1987:15) discusses the same problem for Guyana, posing among other questions about the viability of the continuum concept, the following:

> Do creole and standard represent discrete and sharply separated categories, or do they represent polar varieties between which there is continuous variation?

It is perhaps unfortunate that the question is posed in the form of a dilemma, as though the two positions were somehow mutually incompatible or irreconcilable. This certainly is the impression that one gets in reviewing arguments for or against either side. Thus De Camp (1971: 350) dismisses the common perception by many Jamaicans that there are only two varieties, the patois and the standard, as a "myth", and claims that "it is not practicable to describe the system in terms of two or three or six or any other manageable number of discrete social dialects." On the other hand, Roberts (1983:233) notes that the view which DeCamp rejects is in fact "believed intuitively by native speakers generally and supported by analyses done by native speakers (Bailey 1971, Tsuzaki 1971, Solomon 1972, Craig 1971)." Rickford also acknowledges this, but notes that there are other linguists from the same or similar communities (for instance Cassidy 1961, Craig 1971, 1980, and Rickford himself) "who have endorsed the continuum model in one form or another" (1987: 20).[4]

My own position is that the continuum concept is not mutually incompatible with the notion of creole and standard as co-existent systems. I provide three arguments in support of this view. First, I would challenge approaches such as DeCamp's which treat variation in the continuum as though it were intra-systemic, that is, part of one underlying grammar. This approach is taken to its logical extreme in Bickerton's (1973) analysis of copula variability in Guyanese creole, and his (1975) account of variation in tense/aspect. Both of these assume that an analysis can begin

4. It is interesting to note that both Roberts and Rickford cite Craig as supporting their respective (opposed) positions. In fact Craig adopts a "compromise" position similar to my own, which is that variation is possible between two systems that have different underlying grammars.

with an underlying set of basilectal rules and postulate a series of rule changes which "serve to establish an unbroken chain from a basilectal level whose underlying (semantic) structure is quite different from that of English, to an acrolectal level whose underlying structure is virtually undistinguishable from that of English." (Bickerton 1975:163). I have already argued elsewhere (Winford 1990) that this approach is misguided and that such "polylectal" grammars in fact tell us little about the nature of the systems in contact or their interrelationships, and indeed obscure the discontinuities that exist between them. It would appear, indeed, that "given the right set of social circumstances, even widely divergent rule systems can be linked in systematic patterns of variation." (Winford 1988a:94). The evidence presented in sociolinguistic studies of creole continua confirms the view that "it is possible for formal elements to be linked in regular patterns of socially determined variation even when they belong to distinct rule systems" (Op. cit., 98).

Creole continua therefore present a strong challenge to the claim implicit in some approaches (e.g., Labov 1980) that, for variation to be ordered along a continuous sociolinguistic dimension, it must be part of one grammar. Interestingly, Bickerton himself, while sticking to his conception of the continuum as a single system, rejects both DeCamp's (1971) and Labov's (1969) models of variation on the grounds that they "presume the existence of a large common stock of phrase-structure rules and transformations, which cannot be presumed in the Guyanese situation" (1975: 20).

My second argument takes issue with Rickford (1987:20) who supports the continuum model by suggesting that "Guyanese and Jamaican speech samples examined to date appear to be fairly well distributed across the continuum" - that is, if we take the community as a whole, there is no heavy concentration of speakers at any one level of the continuum. At the same time, however, he acknowledges that the proportion varies from one geographical area to another. We might note, first of all, that the distribution of linguistic knowledge across the (national) community is really a separate issue from the question of the relationship between the systems used.[5] The very fact that certain areas of Guyana or Jamaica have heavier concentrations of basilectal or other varieties suggests that the vernaculars of such areas may be relatively self-contained.

Sociolinguistic studies such as Edwards (1984) have in fact provided evidence of "focusing" in the creole vernaculars of both rural and urban communities in Guyana. Le Page (1978b) to whom the term is due, defines focusing as the emergence of clearly defined, fairly discrete norms of usage, and associates it particularly

5. For instance, the fact that knowledge of both Spanish and Guaraní is so extensive throughout the Paraguayan speech community does not mean that Spanish and Guaraní are parts of one linguistic system.

with rural and working-class communities in which there are close-knit social network ties and strong bonds of solidarity. This idea also finds support in my own sociolinguistic work on Trinidad (Winford 1972, 1980) which reveals a high degree of homogeneity in the creole vernacular used within working class peer-groups.

In this connection, the extent of individual speakers' command of the varieties in the continuum assumes some significance. On the one hand, the fact that segments of the community seem to command only a limited range of varieties, whether at the acrolectal, mesolectal, or basilectal end of the continuum, argues for some distinction among the systems. At the same time, the fact that many speakers have command of a wide range of varieties does not necessarily mean that one grammar is involved. The ability to switch from basilect to mesolect to acrolect is reminiscent of the code-switching behavior associated with bilingual situations. The fact that speakers often incorporate features from one system into another is arguably akin to the code-mixture phenomena typical of bilingual speech. Neither type of behavior is incompatible with the notion of co-existent systems.

I owe my third argument to Rickford himself. He suggests that a possible basis for analyzing the continuum in terms of discrete categories "would be the discovery that there were significant co-occurrence restrictions between features in different subsystems despite the general prevalence of variation." He refers to Sutcliffe's (1982) discovery that while JC phonological features are continuously spread over texts of British Black speech, "there is a midpoint on the range...below which certain accompanying JC grammatical features (continuative *a* and subject pronoun *mi*) disappear almost completely, constituting a relatively sharp dialect boundary." (Op. cit., 21).[6] I would argue that the same is true of creole continua.

It is to be expected, as Rickford (1987: 21) notes, that "the softness of the boundary between creole and standard varies according to the features one chooses for consideration." In general, features at levels "above" phonology do not lend themselves to continuous transition between creole and standard.

Recent work of both a purely descriptive and sociolinguistic type provides strong evidence that Caribbean creole continua are characterized by discontinuities between the systems in contact at the morphosyntactic level. Such work has added an impressive amount of data and analysis to those that were available to pioneering researchers like DeCamp and Bickerton, and it is therefore not surprising that their view of the creole continuum as a unified system has come into question. For in-

6. Such findings recall the well-known tendencies for certain variables - especially phonological ones - to show patterns of gradient stratification across a community, while others - especially grammatical ones - show patterns of sharp stratification (Wolfram 1969). My own research in Trinidad (Winford 1972, 1980) has revealed a similar distinction.

stance, substantial progress has been made in clarifying the structure of creole tense-aspect systems and their interaction with various types of predication, including copula structures. Work of this type has been done on JC by Christie (1986,1991) and V. Pollard (1988, 1989), and on GC by Gibson (1982, 1986), and Jaganauth (1987, 1988, 1990), among others. Comparisons of JC and GC tense-aspect have also been done by Mufwene (1984, 1986a) and Pochard & Devonish (1986). Increased understanding of creole grammar has been matched by more thorough sociolinguistic investigations, especially in the case of GC. (W. Edwards 1975, 1983, 1985); (Devonish 1978); (Rickford 1979, 1987). It has become increasingly clear from all these studies that radically different (and competing) grammars exist in creole continua. Edwards' work in particular reveals clear differences in the distribution of several morphosyntactic variables at different levels of the GC continuum. He reaches the conclusion that there are three varieties of Guyanese English, which he labels standard Guyanese English, Urban Creole English and Rural Creole English. He sees these labels as preferable to terms like "acrolect", "mesolect", and "basilect" which in his view are too closely associated with the conception of the continuum as a "seamless linguistic whole." (1984: 83).

Though there has not been a great deal of work done on syntactic variation proper, it seems reasonable to assume that there are sharp discontinuities between creole and standard at this level as well. Winford (1985) demonstrates that despite superficial similarities and some degree of alternation between forms like *tu* and *fu*, the grammar of *fu* complements in CEC is quite distinct from that of *for-to* complements in English. It would also be quite difficult to see how other creole syntactic operations like passivization, serialization of various types, contrastive focus and so on, could allow for continuous transition between creole and SE. The fact is that there is no overwhelming evidence for a continuous transition between creole and standard at either the morphosyntactic or syntactic level.

The "softness" of the boundaries between creole and standard also depends crucially on the level of the continuum, that is, what variety of creole and what type of community is involved. Thus the interaction between mesolectal varieties and SE, particularly in the urban centres of Guyana, Jamaica, etc., not to mention the situations in Barbados, Trinidad, etc., has resulted in far more fluidity at all levels of linguistic structure than one can find in rural communities where the everyday vernacular is a basilectal variety, and where contact with SE is less intense. Indeed, it seems clear from the available research (e.g. W. Edwards 1975, 1986; Singler 1987) that the immediate influences on basilectal creole come not from SE, but from the mesolect, whose speakers are more likely to be in contact with either SE speakers on the one hand, or basilectal speakers on the other. This raises the question of what

boundaries exist between basilect and mesolect.

2.2 *Mesolect vs Basilect*

It is clear, as Alleyne (1980), DeCamp (1971) and others have pointed out, that a simple dichotomy between creole and standard is not accurate for communities like Guyana and Jamaica. While native speakers do in fact distinguish broadly between acrolect and "creolese", "patois", or whatever label is used to refer to non-acrolectal varieties, the fact is that the latter is not a homogeneous entity. Moreover, native speakers are also aware of differences within the creole range of the spectrum, particularly those between rural and urban norms of usage (Rickford 1987:22). In Guyana, for instance, these two varieties are often referred to respectively as "country talk" and "town talk" (Devonish, pc 1990). Edwards (1975, 1986) has argued that rural vs urban provenance is in fact the most significant variable in determining sociolinguistic differences in the Guyanese community.

The above remarks suggest that mesolect and basilect exist as distinct and delimitable varieties in creole continua. But the situation is not that straightforward. Rather, it would appear that there is considerable overlap between the two at certain levels of linguistic structure, particularly the morphology and morphosyntax, balanced by significant differences at others, particularly the syntactic. Thus Gibson (1982), in her analysis of tense and aspect categories in GC, argues that the differences between basilect and mesolect are purely lexical and not grammatical. This view is supported by the fact that mesolectal morphemes such as *gon, did, doz, -in* and others have similar functions to basilectal forms like *go, bin,* and *a* and so on. But the functions are not identical in all cases, and there are marked differences in other areas such as negation and modality, as well as in the rules for forming complex auxiliary sequences. At the syntactic level, too, there are similarities as well as differences. Thus operations such as passivization and contrastive focus are quite similar in the two varieties, while others such as verb serialization and certain types of complementation (involving for instance *se* and *mek*) seem to be found primarily if not exclusively in the basilect. Rickford (1987: 21) offers a sensible solution to this problem of the relationship between basilect and mesolect:

> Although I agree with Gibson that positing shared underlying categories makes it easier to account for communication across the various nonstandard levels of the continuum, and that there is more overlap between basilectal and mesolectal subcategories than Bickerton (1975) had suggested,...there are undeniably some differences between basilectal and mesolectal varieties that cannot be reduced to alternative realization of common underlying subcategories.

The distinction between mesolect and basilect in a community like Guyana is aided by the fact that a relatively static social structure prevails, with sharp cleavages between rural and urban sectors, which to a large extent coincide with class and ethnic divisions as well. This has encouraged a fair degree of homogeneity or "focusing" (Le Page 1978b) in both urban and rural varieties of creole. In communities like Jamaica, which are relatively more fluid in social structure, rural varieties seem to be much more subject to urban influence, making for perhaps more overlap between basilect and mesolect. Even so, as Bailey suggests, there is a "hard core of (basilectal) JC speakers - the unschooled, ranging from pre-school children to the elderly, with the concentration at either end of the scale - living in isolated villages removed from the centres of culture" (1966:2). My own Jamaican consultants confirm this preservation of a conservative basilect in rural communities. Bailey also refers to the perception of creole as a distinct variety, as reflected in a consultant's comment that *im no waant i dat-de wie; a di jagwa taak im waan* ("She doesn't want it like that; she wants the 'jagwa' (creole) talk.")[7]

This book confines its attention to the basilectal varieties of creole spoken in communities like Guyana and Jamaica. These varieties, as already pointed out, are associated particularly though not exclusively with the peasantry and less educated groups in rural areas for whom they are an in-group language, a mark of solidarity and social identity. As such, they preserve a certain degree of autonomy, and can be analyzed as distinct, isolatable systems. This is not to say that they are homogeneous or discrete systems. There are, as we have seen, areas of overlap with mesolectal varieties. Moreover, the basilect itself is characterized by a certain amount of variability, particularly in morphosyntax, due primarily to continuing incorporation of forms from the mesolect. Whenever necessary, such variability will be included in the analysis to be presented in this book. The aim will be to account as fully as possible for the way basilectal grammar actually works.

3. Choice of varieties for present analysis

The varieties I have chosen to concentrate on - GC and JC - were easy choices for several reasons. In the first place, they are both representative in many ways of the varieties in their respective groups. This is partly a result of the strong historical connections they have each had with the other communities in their geographical areas. Most of the western communities were settled by English speakers around the mid-seventeenth century, beginning with Providencia in 1631, and Jamaica in 1655.

7. I have had similar experiences with Guyanese consultants asking their companions to speak the "real creolese" during tape recorded sessions.

Jamaica became a stepping stone for colonization of other communities, including Belize. Holm (1989:467) explains:

> As England's largest and economically most important island in the West Indies, Jamaica became the "metropolis" for the smaller British settlements in the Western Caribbean... the settlers and their slaves that went to these smaller colonies usually arrived there via Jamaica, making Jamaican (Creole) English the most important variety in the area.

These connections were responsible for the spread of JC influence throughout the area, resulting in a remarkable degree of similarity among the Western creoles.

The links between Guyana and the Eastern group were not as strong, perhaps, but equally important. The Leeward Islands were the earliest Caribbean colonies settled by the British, beginning with St. Kitts in 1624, Nevis and Barbuda (1628), Antigua (1632), and Montserrat (1633) (Holm 1989:450). Barbados was settled in 1627. English settlements in Guyana, on the other hand, began in the 1640's while the area was under Dutch control, but English military forces controlled the colony after 1796, and they were ceded to the British in 1814. During this period, however, there was an influx of settlers as well as great numbers of slaves from both the West Indies and Africa. Most of the English settlers who came to Guyana from 1740 on with their presumably English creole speaking slaves were from Barbados and the Leewards, particularly Antigua and St. Kitts (Rickford 1987:51). The English creole imported from these areas along with the slaves may have played a role in the formation of the creole which emerged in the Guyanese plantations.

In view of these historical connections and settlement patterns, the linguistic similarities within this group are not surprising. The varieties which most strongly resemble one another are the basilects of the Leeward Islands, Guyana and Tobago. Most of the Windward Islands, as explained earlier, were settled much later (in the eighteenth century) in different circumstances, and developed more intermediate varieties. Barbadian Creole is also an intermediate variety, and therefore not part of this basilectal group.[8] Guyanese creole is among the most conservative creoles in the group, and is easily the most closely studied of all. For these reasons, it was the logical choice for the present book. Along with the features typical of basilectal CEC in general, GC shares with the other Eastern creoles several mesolectal features which are gradually working their way into basilectal grammar. They include items

8. The reasons why no conservative creole survives in Barbados, which was among the earliest plantation colonies, are not clear. Scholars like Cassidy (1980,1982) argue that a basilectal variety existed in the island in the seventeenth century but was later lost through decreolization. Others such as Hancock (1980) maintain that the demographics of the contact situation resulted in an intermediate creole from the very beginning.

such as Habitual *doz* and its past counterpart *juuztu*; such features further distinguish the Eastern Caribbean from the West.[9]

This brief sketch of the historical links among the communities in each group partly explains the linguistic differences between them that were outlined earlier. These differences are reflected in those between JC and GC, which I have chosen as representative of the conservative creoles in each group. By the same token, the similarities between the two varieties reflect the great deal of uniformity that exists among all the conservative Caribbean creoles in practically all areas of their grammar.[10] Such similarities may be due to several factors, not the least that all of these creoles arose in very similar circumstances, involving the same kinds of plantation settings, and similar linguistic inputs from speakers of English dialects on the one hand, and (mostly) West African languages on the other. In addition, as indicated earlier, there has always been a great deal of migration between these communities throughout their history, beginning in the earliest days of colonization, and continuing to the present day. As Holm (1989:446) reminds us:

> most of the Creole-English-speaking territories in both the Eastern and Western Caribbean were maritime colonies bound by strong political, economic, and cultural links that facilitated the diffusion of linguistic features, making the British West Indies a single speech community in the larger sense of the term.

3.1 *Sources of Data*

Another consideration in my choice of these varieties was the fact that we know much more about them than about any other creoles in the Anglophone Caribbean and access to data as well as consultants is not a serious problem for either of them. There are numerous studies of each, sociohistorical, sociolinguistic and purely linguistic, as well as a considerable store of data in the form of published transcriptions of tape-recorded texts. I have relied heavily on all of these materials for this book. In addition, as acknowledged in the Preface, I have obtained a great deal of additional

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9. The spread of features like *doz* throughout the Eastern Caribbean appears to have owed much to Barbadian influence, which was strong throughout the early colonial period, and particularly so during the nineteenth century, when Barbados enjoyed much the same status in the East that Jamaica had in the West (Holm 1989:449). Hertzfeld (1983) notes that Barbadian influence extended even to Panamanian Creole in the West, which has features like *doz* as a habitual marker and the alternation of *woz* and *did* as Past markers.

10. This is admittedly an impressionistic judgment, though supported by the available literature. The full extent of the similarities will only be known when additional, and more comprehensive descriptions of individual creoles become available.

data from many consultants who are members of the two communities, some of them native-speakers of a mesolectal variety, others native-speakers of the conservative creoles. Several of my consultants are themselves linguists who have worked on Caribbean creoles. In the case of Guyanese creole, I benefitted further from fieldwork among recent Guyanese immigrants to New York City, all of whom grew up in rural villages in Berbice, and are speakers of a very conservative variety of GC. For JC, I obtained further data from recent Jamaican immigrants to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

On the whole I have placed as much emphasis on the use of intuitions about constructed utterances, and on the elicitation of utterances and interpretations of their meaning, as on the available texts, that is, published and tape-recorded data. This approach is based on the recognition that texts by themselves, however substantial, have serious limitations. In the first place, they often do not contain many perfectly acceptable structures that are crucial to understanding the grammar. Moreover, texts do not contain negative data - information about what cannot be said, or can be said only in certain contexts, nor information about the role of discourse factors in determining not just acceptability, but interpretation. My methods of data collection involved a variety of techniques, for instance, helping consultants to create utterances as well as contexts for use, seeking translations, determining not merely if a constructed utterance is "acceptable", but what it means, and under what circumstances it might be used. Such methods provided a great deal of valuable data to complement the texts.

4. Scope of the book

A major challenge in the planning of this book was to find an area that was at once fairly broad, and at the same time coherent - one that would shed light on basic aspects of the grammar, and allow for meaningful comparison across varieties. The area chosen - predication - involves a wide range of grammatical phenomena centering around the verb.

To a large extent, the types of behaviour displayed by verbs are a function of their lexical type. This determines, for instance, the number and types of arguments that they will combine with. Hence, much of the task of accounting for clause structure revolves around the determination of the subcategorization properties displayed by various subclasses of verbs.

Each of the following chapters of this book explores some aspect of the behaviour of verbs (or verb-like predicators) and the constructions in which they occur. Chapter 2 introduces the verb complex of CEC and presents the various sub-

classes of auxiliary verbs which express categories of Tense, Modality and Aspect. In explaining the semantics and use of these categories, it will be necessary to recognize that full lexical verbs may display varying degrees of stativity or dynamism. The stative/non-stative distinction is relevant both to the different interpretations imposed on certain auxiliaries with different main verbs, as well as to restrictions on certain combinations of auxiliary and main verb. Such restrictions are not absolute, since many verbs show flexibility along the scale of stativity, while pragmatic factors often allow the constraints to be relaxed.

Chapter 3 attempts to provide an explicit formal account of the combinatory possibilities among the auxiliaries themselves. It turns out that a certain subclass of auxiliaries - those which mark Tense and Imperfective aspect - display different properties as a group from others, which appear to have fuller semantic or lexical content; the latter include modals, completive *don* and in GC copula *de* . At the same time, several auxiliaries display individual subcategorization properties which must be taken into account to explain the permissible sequences.

Chapter 4 examines phenomena such as passivization and the closely related use of causative verbs, which involve notions such as transitivity and valence. Here again the different semantic properties of verbs relate closely to their different types of behavior. For passivization, the question of degrees of stativity once more assumes importance. But equally important are the "case frames" or thematic roles associated with verbs, that is, the way they characterize the noun phrases with which they occur in terms of semantic functions such as "Agent", "Experiencer", "Patient" and the like. Closely related to passivization is the alternation between transitive and intransitive uses of causative verbs. Both phenomena involve changes in valency of the same item, and both relate to the fact that a fairly wide range of CEC verbs are ambi-transitive.

Chapter 5 examines the status of the predicators which function in copular and attributive types of predication. The former involve copula forms like equative *a* and locative *de* which are treated as a special set of idiosyncratic verbs. Attributive predication involves the use of predicate "adjectives" and adjective phrases, and presents a more complicated picture. While all the items in question are clearly adjectives in their function as modifiers of nouns, they behave essentially like intransitive verbs in their predicative function. Moreover, some of them also function as transitive verbs. Here again, the notion of degrees of stativity becomes relevant to explaining the behaviour of different types of attributive predicates.

Chapter 6 deals with serial verb constructions, those in which two or more verbs (and their arguments) are linked in the same clause. Such constructions are of various types, and have been classified according to various criteria, for instance, the

kind of argument sharing, or the type of linkage or juncture between the verb phrases, or in terms of the semantic functions associated with particular verbs. For all types, however, there is a clear relationship between the verbs involved which can be defined in terms of their semantics and subcategorization properties. In this sense, verb serialization, like other syntactic phenomena described in this book, can be explained in terms of which subclasses of verbs have the option of entering into specific types of construction.

The subject of chapter 7 is complementation, an area which involves a rich range of structures in which clauses function as arguments of verbs, and in some cases, adjectival predicates. Two broad types are distinguished - those which involve full finite clauses as complements, and those which involve, for the most part, reduced clauses. The former include complements to "factive" and related verbs, as well as causative *mek* and perception verbs. The latter include complements introduced by, or containing, the particle *fu*. Here again, the patterns of complementation depend closely on a division of predicates in terms of their subcategorization properties.

To sum up, the areas of predication explored in this book, involving as they do the lexical type of predicates and their related argument structure, lend themselves particularly well to a unified treatment based on subclassification of verbs. In the next section, I discuss how this treatment can be made more explicit by use of a formal framework.

5. A framework for formal analysis

This book is intended to be a pre-theoretical description of the facts of CEC predication. There are several formal studies in which the facts of creole grammar are used as the medium for exposition or defense of some theory of syntax. But this is not one of them.

One, perhaps unavoidable, consequence of using a language to exemplify a theory is that many points of detail about the workings of the language itself tend to be overlooked or ignored. This is true, of course, even of descriptions not directed toward justification of some particular model. Many claims made in the published literature about particular aspects of CEC and other creoles have not been fully tested against an adequate body of data, or indeed against the intuitions of native-speakers. One finds, for example, statements to the effect that "predicate adjectives" are really stative verbs, or that only activity verbs passivize, and so on. But when one seeks details of the actual behavior of different subclasses of predicate adjective, or verbs, they are not to be found. For reasons such as this, my primary emphasis in this book is to elucidate the grammatical phenomena themselves, and to provide the

broadest possible account of their operation.

This objective, however, cannot be accomplished simply by stating the facts. In order to further elucidate the workings of the grammar, and the problems associated with its analysis, some use of the methods of descriptive linguistics is necessary. As Kilby (1984: 4) reminds us, "it is only by trying to meet standards of explicitness and adequacy that any reasonable descriptive linguistics can result." The formalism I employ, however, will remain very much secondary to the informal description and will be used only to supplement the latter and make it more explicit where necessary or useful.

The framework chosen for the more formal analyses offered in this book is that of Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (GPSG), as outlined in Gazdar et al. (1985) and elsewhere. My use of this formalism is meant simply to add some degree of explicitness to statements about CEC predication. The full details of the principles and technical apparatus employed in this theory need not be discussed here. It will suffice to present only a brief sketch of those aspects of it that are relevant to our present purposes.

GPSG, like other contemporary syntactic theories, evolved in part out of the tradition of generative grammar which developed from the work of Harris (1951) and Chomsky (1957). This shared ancestry is reflected in a core domain of concepts and terminology which GPSG has in common with other theoretical models. This sharing is particularly evident in the syntax; like other theories, GPSG subscribes to principles of X-bar Theory - the idea that phrase structure can be described in terms of head-and-complement relations, the head of a structure being the part that gives it its essential character. The other theoretical development which feeds GPSG is the model-theoretic truth-conditional semantics developed in the work of Montague (1970) and others. GPSG has taken these two approaches and modified them extensively to yield a new and explicitly formal approach to syntactic description.[11] As Hukari & Levine (1986: 139) explain,

> The GPSG fusion of phrase structure with model-theoretic semantics rests on two pillars: in the syntax, the development of an explicit theory of syntactic features and their distribution in the phrase structure trees expressing syntactic representations; in the semantics, the elaboration of a theory of types which maps the objects of the syntactic component into set-theoretic objects of higher-order logic, along with a translation principle that guides the compositional semantics.

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11. A detailed comparison of GPSG with two other contemporary theories, Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) and Government/Binding Theory (GB), can be found in Sells (1985). The standard introduction to GPSG is Gazdar et al. (1985). A more recent exposition and evaluation of the theory is to be found in Hukari & Levine (1986), which actually appeared in 1990.

Though the syntax and the semantics are closely meshed in GPSG, it is possible to treat them separately (Hukari & Levine 1986: 139). I will be concerned only with syntax from now on.

For present purposes, a closer look at some aspects of GPSG syntactic theory will suffice. As noted already, the notion that a phrase can be defined as a projection of (the features of) its head is crucial in GPSG, since information about the head determines much of the distribution of syntactic features. GPSG recognizes two X' levels, and defines the major categories Noun, Verb, Adjective, and Preposition in terms of the primitive features [N] and [V] as follows:

(1) a. +N -V = Noun
b. -N +V = Verb
c. +N +V = Adjective
d. -N -V = Preposition

Minor categories include determiners, complementizers, particles, etc. which do not participate in the X-bar scheme (Sells, p. 83). In addition to these, GPSG employs a variety of other syntactic features, all of which play a crucial role in the syntax, specifically in the definition of syntactic categories, and in the rules and principles which license syntactic representations. All syntactic theories use features to differing degrees, but only GPSG and its close relative Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (C.Pollard, in press) are based on "an explicit theory of syntactic features and their distribution in the phrase structure trees expressing syntactic representations" (Hukari & Levine 1986: 139).

Like other theories, GPSG views syntactic categories such as NP, VP, AP, and PP as projections of the major categories N, V, A, and P respectively. A significant difference is that GPSG defines S as a projection of V, and distinguishes VP from S via the feature [SUBJ], that is by positing that VP is [-SUBJ] and S is [+SUBJ]. All syntactic categories in GPSG are defined in terms of features, or more precisely, feature-value pairs. Thus the category VP, or V^2, is actually an abbreviation for the set:

(2) {<N, ->, <V, +>, <BAR, 2>}

Note that "Bar" is itself a feature. The category V would be identical except for a BAR value of zero. Much of GPSG is concerned with defining and constraining the notion of "possible syntactic category", but the details of this need not concern us here. Syntactic features encode various kinds of information that are crucial to the "rules" which expand parent categories such as S, VP, etc. into their daughter cate-

gories. These rules – or regulatory principles – make up the heart of GPSG syntax, and include

(3) a. Immediate Dominance (ID) rules
b. Linear Precedence (LP) rules
c. Metarules
d. Feature Instantiation Principles.

Earlier phrase structure grammars typically consisted of a set of phrase structure rules such as

(4) VP -----> V NP.

Such rules encode two kinds of relations, those of immediate dominance, and those of linear precedence. GPSG separates these two aspects, and accounts for them with distinct ID and LP rules. It is to be noted that GPSG is a monostratal theory, employing only (the equivalent of) phrase structure rules, unlike, for instance GB, which distinguishes different levels of syntactic representation and employs a generalized transformational-type rule of Move-alpha.

The role of ID rules is to specify the relations between a parent category, that is, a left-side category such as VP in (4), and its daughter categories; in other words, such rules define constituency - what can be constituents of what. LP rules handle the linear order of categories. For our purposes, there is no need to explore LP rules further. ID-rules constitute most of the rules in the syntax, and are of two types, non-lexical ID rules, and Lexical ID rules. Examples of the former include the following, which expand S and NP respectively. For convenience I shall use S instead of the more precise V^2[+SUBJ].

(5) a. S ----> X^2, V^2[-SUBJ]
b. NP ----> Det, N^1.

It should be recalled that symbols like S, NP, etc. are abbreviations for sets of feature-value pairs, as discussed earlier. The symbol X stands for any grammatical category; in rule (5a), this allows for NP as well as non-NP "subjects".

Lexical ID rules differ from those in (5) in that they introduce a lexical head, represented by "H" in the following examples.

(6) a. VP ----> H[1], NP
b. VP ----> H[2], NP

H[1] and H[2] are abbreviations for heads – here verbs – of SUBCAT values 1 and 2 respectively. The SUBCAT value captures the subcategorization properties of the relevant lexical item; for instance, a value of 1 will be associated with just the class of verbs that are intransitve, while a value of 2 will be associated with just those that take a single object. In short, the subcategorization properties of the relevant head are represented in the ID rule itself. In addition, the lexicon contains entries that specify which verbs are V[1], V[2], etc.[12] For example, verbs like *run, sigh*, etc. will be entered as having a SUBCAT value of 1, while *hit, pick, buy*, etc. will have a value of 2. The SUBCAT value on the head specified by rules like (6) and the associated lexical entries ensure that only the correct items are introduced by the ID rule. Note that this eliminates the need for context-sensitive rules of lexical insertion. To illustrate, rule (6b) together with the S-expansion rule in (5) will generates strings like

(7) a. John hit the ball.
    b. Mary bought a book. etc.

Note also that it is quite possible for a verb to have more than one subcategorization, each corresponding to a separate though related lexical entry, as we shall see in Chapter 3 and other chapters. Thus a verb like *sing*, which may take either a single NP argument ("sing a song") or an NP and a PP ("sing a song for me"), will be introduced by two different ID rules and have two lexical entries.

A brief explanation of the use of the symbol "H" in rules (6a-b) may be useful. The symbol refers to any (lexical) category such as V, P, etc. of which categories like VP and PP are projections. Certain Feature Instantiation Principles referred to in (3d) ensure the proper matching of heads and their projections. These include the Head Feature Convention (HFC) and the Foot Feature Principle (FFP), details of which need not concern us here. Such conventions ensure that features such as N and V, and other features, are shared by heads and their projections. Hence "H" in rule (6) can only be a verb.

This brings us to the question of how different constructions might be related to each other. Such relationships were accounted for by transformations in earlier transformational grammar, and are handled by "Move-alpha" in GB. The same job is performed by "metarules" in GPSG. However, metarules are not to be confused with transformations. The latter "are structure-dependent mappings between sets of phrase markers, while metarules are mappings from the set of ID rules into the set of ID rules" (Hukari & Levine 1986: 153). In other words, metarules operate on

12. Further information on lexical entries can be found in Gazdar et al. (1985:34 and *passim*).

existing (lexically-headed) ID rules, to yield additional ID rules. A typical example is the passive metarule for English, which has the form

(8)

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VP        ---------> W,    NP

               \| |/

VP[PAS]   ---->  W,  (PP [by])
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Here W is a variable over any categories in a relevant ID rule. The metarule in effect says that for any VP rule that has an NP daughter, there is a new matching rule which expands a VP[PAS] as the same set of categories minus the NP. The new rule may optionally admit an agentive PP. Note that the feature [PAS] "passive" appears on the mother; the HFC ensures that the head will pick up this and other features. Several other metarules account for other well known relationships between sentence pairs, e.g. those involving extraposition, or “Subject-Aux inversion”, etc.

The above review of the syntactic component of GPSG is extremely simplified and sketchy, but provides all the information essential for the moment. Further details of the framework will be provided whenever they prove necessary or useful in explaining particular aspects of CEC predication.

One of the attractions of GPSG for an undertaking such as this is the fact that it is primarily a data-driven theory, very much concerned with explicit statements about the workings of a grammar. Wasow (1985:197) notes that GPSG in some ways "represents a return to a serious concern for observational adequacy", which involves "generating the correct set of strings for a natural language." This kind of emphasis is especially needed for little-studied languages such as CEC, to uncover the full details of their grammars.

A GPSG framework is also well-suited to the subject matter of this book. Like other theories, it recognizes that "clause structure is largely predictable from the semantics of predicates, that is, if you know what a verb (or a predicate adjective or noun) means, you can tell a great deal about what else will occur in a clause it heads" (Wasow 1985: 202). In GPSG such information is handled in the syntax by means of explicit lexical ID rules, which specify the subcategorization frame of the predicate, as discussed above. The use of GPSG formalism in this book is to be seen simply as an application of the framework to the data of CEC predication in order to achieve a certain level of explicitness.

Chapter 2
The Verb Complex

1. Introduction

An analysis of the verb complex is an obvious starting point for a discussion o the syntax of Caribbean English Creole (CEC) predication. The systems of tense modality and aspect (TMA) are central to the workings of the language(s) as whole. Moreover, creole verb systems have always been at the forefront of attentio in the published literature, forming a central part of discussions of the genesis o these languages, as well as of prototypical creole grammar and its implications fo the study of language universals. A great deal of the emphasis has been on the re markable similarities in the organization of TMA oppositions in creoles of differen lexical affiliation, in widely-separated areas of the world. The interest in such simi larities has grown significantly in the last several years in response to Bickerton' (1974, 1981) hypothesis that the prototypical ordering of the creole preverbal mark ers is 1. anterior, 2. irrealis, and 3. non-punctual (1981:58) - the famous TMA or dering that scholars such as Muysken (1981) suggest is a universal of natural lan guage.

The impression that this rather rich literature at first gives is that creole TM systems, and the CEC verb complex in particular, are well understood and thor oughly investigated. In fact, however, much of the discussion of these issues ha proceeded on the basis of rather cursory and peripheral analysis of particular lan guages.[1] This is unfortunately true, for the most part, of analysis of the CEC ver complex, to which I confine my attention from now on.

1. A notable exception is the collection edited by Singler (1990), which contains some usef studies of creole TMA systems. Also worth mentioning is the work done on the Haitian Creol verb complex by Claire Lefebvre and her associates at the Université du Québec à Montré (Lefebvre et al. eds. 1982; Lefebvre & Lumsden eds. 1989).

The goal of this chapter is to present a detailed description of the CEC verb complex, including an account of the semantics of the TMA markers themselves, and a fairly explicit statement of their combinatory possibilities. The general facts about the CEC verb system are well known, but they have been presented in a rather piecemeal fashion and for the most part in informal terms. My task here is simply to put the pieces together in as coherent and comprehensive an account as possible.

The only attempts at any "formal" treatment of TMA systems in CEC have been those of Bailey (1966) and Alleyne (1980) - the latter quite cursory by comparison with the former. Both accounts are presented in the general framework of early transformational generative grammar. This in itself is not a major shortcoming, though it does present problems, as we shall see. More important, however, is the fact that the analyses themselves leave a great deal unsaid about several aspects of the TMA systems in question - for instance, the basis on which particular TMA categories are postulated; the combinatory possibilities of the TMA markers, particularly those involving modal auxiliaries; the interaction between the markers and adverbial or other contextual specification of temporal or aspectual distinctions, and so on. Despite these shortcomings, both treatments contain valuable information which I shall draw heavily on in the course of this discussion.

More recent treatments have been much more thorough in their exploration of the semantics of CEC auxiliaries. Bickerton (1975) offers a detailed discussion (though not a formal analysis) of the TMA system of Guyanese Creole (GC) which still represents one of the most comprehensive accounts of the verb complex of any Caribbean Creole. Mufwene (1984, 1986a) offers some insightful analysis of time reference and "durative" constructions in GC and Jamaican Creole (JC), though he makes no attempt to provide a comprehensive account of their verbal complex as a whole. Gibson (1982, 1986) does make such an attempt, providing a wealth of detail on the GC verb. Like Mufwene, she presents her analysis within the frameworks established in the typological literature for describing TMA categories - a lead which the present treatment will follow. Approaches such as these, which take both semantic and pragmatic criteria into account, are especially valuable in charting the structure of relatively little-studied verb complexes such as those of CEC. However, as will be argued later, Gibson's analysis of certain features of the GC verb complex is suspect, or not well thought out.

The present discussion focuses primarily on GC and JC - the two varieties of CEC whose grammars have been most thoroughly investigated so far. As we shall see, there are differences between the two varieties, but they share much more in common than they don't, and a unified treatment is possible. The basic organizational pattern of these two systems also seems to be shared by other varieties of CEC

whose grammars have been at least partially analyzed in the literature.[2] However, there is clearly need for further work on several creoles which have not been studied very much, or not at all - e.g., the creoles of Antigua, Barbuda, Grenada, Nevis, etc.

The following account is organized into two broad parts. The first introduces the auxiliary items which operate in the CEC verb complex and discusses their semantics and typical uses. The second part attempts to provide a relatively formal account of the patterns of auxiliary sequencing permitted in CEC.

1.1 *The semantics and uses of TMA categories in CEC*

As is well known, CEC employs combinations of preverbal particles as well as modal and other auxiliaries to express specifications of tense, mood and aspect. In this respect, Caribbean Creoles reflect a basic fact about language which cross-linguistic investigation has revealed, viz. that there is a pervasive distinction between lexical and grammatical elements in predicate structures. The two types of morphemes have been variously referred to as lexical versus function morphemes, content words versus particles, and full words versus empty words, etc.[3] As typologists have reported, TMA categories are typically expressed by function morphemes, to the exclusion of practically all other notions. There has been a tendency in some of the literature (e.g., Comrie 1976) to restrict the term "TMA category" to those categories that are expressed morphologically, i.e. by inflection, excluding those that are expressed periphrastically, i.e. by auxiliaries and particles. But as Dahl (1985:22) points out,

> This would mean an unwanted delimitation of the field of inquiry, given the frequent cases of functional equivalence of syntactically and morphologically expressed categories across languages and even in one language - cf. e.g., the Latin "perfect" tenses, which are inflectional in the active voice but periphrastic in the passive.

Dahl's point is particularly applicable to the case of CEC, where TMA categories are never expressed inflectionally.[4]

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2. These include, for instance, Central American English (Holm 1983), Belize Creole (Young 1973), St. Kitts Creole (Cooper 1978), etc.

3. For further discussion of the distinction between "lexical" and "function" morphemes, see Carlson (1983: 69-71).

4. A reviewer of this book suggests that this view of CEC tense TMA particles as separate items rather than inflections may be an artifact of linguists writing the particles as separate orthographic words from the verbs. However, while the particles are to some extent clitic-like

Another issue that has been the focus of debate in the literature concerns the semantic content of function morphemes. It has been suggested (e.g. by Carlson 1983:71) that "in general, meanings seemingly associated with function morphemes should not be assigned to the morphemes themselves, but instead to the structures in which the morphemes appear." It is difficult to see how this would apply to TMA auxiliaries in CEC, which, as will become clear later, seem to have semantic properties of their own, related to the ways in which they function syntactically. While it may be true that the TMA markers, like other function morphemes, are more devoid of meaning than full lexical verbs, it is not the case that they are entirely "meaningless" as function morphemes are claimed to be. In the following sections, the semantics of the TMA markers will be discussed in some detail. Finally, there is the issue of the categorial status of TMA markers in CEC. Again, this may be related to a wider controversy in the literature over whether auxiliary verbs constitute a class distinct from the category of verbs. Thus Reuland (1983:104) takes issue with the claim by Pullum (1981) that there is no separate class of auxiliaries in English, and that AUX does not exist independently of V. Reuland rejects this conclusion, arguing instead that

> To the extent that grammars provide insights by also using categories consisting of grammatical formations which must be applied to lexical categories, Pullum's conclusion does not follow.

In the account of auxiliary order in CEC to be presented in Chapter 3 it will be argued that TMA markers can be treated as verbs along the lines of the Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (GPSG) treatment of English auxiliaries. This issue will be discussed more fully there, but for the present it can be pointed out that to claim that auxiliaries are verbs is not to suggest there is no distinction between them and full "lexical" verbs. Such a distinction will allow us to explain, for instance, a peculiar ambiguity in the use of the preverbal *don* as well as to distinguish quasi-auxiliaries like *staat, waan*, etc. from "true" auxiliaries like the TMA markers.

The discussion of the semantics of TMA categories will deal in turn with Aspect, Tense, and Modal categories. Following Dahl (1985:21), I shall use the term "TMA category" to refer to "the units that build up TMA systems, that is, things like the simple past in English or the imperfect in French." [5] As we shall see, it is by and

(see below), they function essentially like auxiliary verbs, each with its own subcategorization properties, as I argue in Chapter 3.

5. I also follow Dahl's (1985:34) convention of using uppercase denomination for a cross-linguistic category (e.g. PAST) and initial capitalization for a language-specific category - e.g. the Past tense in English.

large possible to identify such categories for CEC using a semantic, notional approach. This is not to claim that such an approach is entirely without problems, particularly where one attempts to distinguish precisely between tense, aspect and mood. Once more, Dahl suggests a workable solution to this problem, viz, the notion of the "dominant" semantic feature(s) of a category, as distinct from its "prototypical" use(s). For instance, the prototypical use of Future in English involves both future time reference and intention, but the dominant meaning is future time reference. It will be assumed throughout this discussion that we can determine what is dominant or basic and what is secondary in the meanings of the TMA categories of CEC.

Another question that needs to be discussed before we examine the TMA categories themselves concerns the interaction between grammar and lexicon in the expression of aspect. It is a well known fact that in all languages, verbal lexemes show differences in compatibility with certain aspectual categories. Such differences have been explained in terms of "Aktionsart" or the "inherent aspectual meaning" of different verbs. In general, it is assumed that "Aktionsart" pertains to the lexicon, while "aspect" pertains to the grammar. Although this may lead to serious problems in some languages (see Dahl 1985:27), the distinction is a useful one for CEC, and will be assumed throughout this discussion.

As far as "Aktionsart" is concerned, it is a general practice in the literature to distinguish between stative and non-stative verbal lexemes in CEC. This distinction played a crucial role in Bickerton's (1975) detailed analysis of TMA categories in GC, but led him to conclusions about the interaction between certain aspectual markers and different subclasses of verb which have been rightly challenged by several more recent studies. As we shall see, such differences in point of view are perhaps understandable in the light of the rather complex behavior of GC verbal lexemes. The stative/non-stative distinction is sometimes quite difficult to apply in practice for two reasons. First, there is the problem of the interaction between contextual influences and the "inherent meanings" of the verb. In many cases, predictions about the possible behavior of, say, a "stative" verb turn out to be falsifiable, given the appropriate discourse context. Secondly, and closely related to the above, there is a great deal of flexibility in how individual verbs may be used. This has led to claims to the effect that certain lexemes "change" from stative to non-stative status depending on the context or on the TMA markers that combine with them. In general, we shall see, such apparent inconsistencies can be accounted for without abandoning the basic distinction between stative and non-stative verbal lexemes.

This distinction is related to the more general cross-linguistic dichotomy between "dynamic situation" and "state". As Dahl (1985:28) once again points out,

> Most languages divide up their predicate phrases into at least two types of combinations, which from a semantic point of view often corresponds fairly well to a dynamic-stative classification of predicates. In the grammars of some languages this distinction shows up as one between "verbal" and "nominal" predicates, in others, as one between "non-stative" and "stative" verbs... In any case the distinction between the constructions tends to be of considerable importance for TMA categories, in particular for aspectual categories, in that these categories tend to be less developed or wholly neutralized in stative contexts.

This rather lengthy extract from Dahl has been worth quoting in full because it pinpoints an area that has posed problems for analyses of CEC TMA systems for some time, and suggests that they are by no means unique to these languages. As we shall see, certain CEC aspectual categories do "behave" quite differently with stative as opposed to non-stative predicators, while at the same time certain predicators in particular seem to assume unexpected properties when used with different aspectual categories. But these are no grounds for either claiming that the one category should really be analyzed as two (as Gibson (1986) does for GC Aspectual *a*) or for abandoning the dynamic-stative classification of predicative items (as Jaganauth (1988) seems to suggest).

A final question that must be mentioned is the relevance of discourse factors or context in elucidating the meanings of TMA markers. It has been suggested by Wallace (1982:208-9) that "one does not fully understand the meaning of a verbal category in a particular language unless one understands its place in discourse." Recent studies of Tense/Aspect in CEC such as V. Pollard (1988, 1989) and Jaganauth (1988, 1990) have paid close attention to the role of discourse-pragmatic factors in clarifying the functions of the TMA markers. My own approach will be concerned with discourse factors only to the extent that they contribute to our understanding of the dominant meanings of the TMA categories. Such core meanings must be distinguished from interpretations contributed by a given context of use.[6] Failure to make such a distinction, as Jaganauth (1990:1) argues, has led to disagreements among previous analyses concerning the characterizations of TMA markers, since, "depending on the particular discourse factors at work in any given body of data, the analysis will turn up one particular 'meaning' or another." The present analysis will be based primarily on the examination of sentences in isolation, which Givón (1984:10) notes "is a necessary preliminary step in identifying the inventory of coding devices which make up morpho-syntactic structure." However, I

6. The distinction being made here between core meanings and contextually determined interpretations is similar to that made earlier between "prototypes" and "secondary meanings." As Aijmer (1985:12) puts it, "the prototype functions as a focus from which other meanings can be derived by extension."

shall where necessary make use of discourse factors to clarify the core meanings of the TMA categories, and particularly to demonstrate the connections among different possible interpretations and uses of a particular category.

2. The TMA categories of CEC

2.1 *Tense, aspect and mood*

Before we examine particular categories, a brief discussion of the notion of tense, aspect, and mood is in order. As Chung & Timberlake (1985:202) explain,

> Tense, aspect and mood are all categories that further specify or characterize the basic predication, which can be referred to as the event. Tense locates the event in time. Aspect characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event. Mood describes the actuality of the event in terms such as possibility, necessity or desirability.

Semantically-based definitions such as these, while useful, do not always allow for clear distinctions between aspects, moods and tenses, since the notions often overlap in particular TMA categories. Dahl's notion of dominance, mentioned earlier, provides a possible solution. On this view, it is possible to identify a particular semantic notion as the dominant feature of a category, while allowing for the possibility that other, secondary meanings may be associated with it. Thus Dahl (1985:23) argues that, while

> the category PERFECTIVE (PFV) typically combines "perfectivity" and "past time reference", it is clear, however, that perfectivity is subject to less variation than past time reference, and there is thus good reason to regard PFV as a basically aspectual category.

Just as there is some overlap and interaction between tense and aspect, there is also overlap between tense and modality. Of relevance here is the status of Future markers like GC *go* and JC *wi*, which are both treated as modal auxiliaries by Bickerton (1975) and Christie (1991) respectively. Bickerton's view has been correctly challenged by Gibson (1986), who interprets *go* as a Future marker - an analysis which the present treatment accepts, and extends to JC *wi* as well. This is not to say, however, that *go* and *wi* do not convey modal meanings, as we shall see later. Like Future markers crosslinguistically, both of these auxiliaries have secondary meanings associated with certain types of modality. The same is also true of Past

markers *bin* and *(b)en*, which may be used to convey counterfactuality in conditional clauses, as in the following examples:[7]

(1) a. *If i bin smaat, i bin go stee hoom.* (GC)
b. *If im ben smaat, im wuda stie huom.* (JC)
"If he were smart, he would have stayed at home."

But, as in the case of *go/wi*, these modal uses are secondary, and are not sufficient grounds for abandoning the view that the primary function of *bin/ben* is to mark the category Past. These notions will be discussed further in the following sections.

Of the three categories under discussion here, mood is perhaps the most complex, and the most difficult to pin down. The function of mood is to characterize events or situations as either actual (realis) or non-actual (irrealis). As Chung & Timberlake (1985: 241) point out,

> Whereas there is basically one way for an event to be actual, there are numerous ways that an event can be less than completely actual. For this reason,...discussion of mood is concerned primarily with different types of non-actuality.

Languages may express these different types of non-actuality by means of various devices, including morphology and auxiliary verbs, as well as adverbials, intonation and other strategies. There is a tendency in the literature to reserve the term "mood" for only those categories that are morphologically expressed. Thus, "irrealis mood" would cover such categories as Subjunctive, Conditional, Hypothetical and the like (Chung & Timberlake 1985:241). But in principle there would appear to be no reason to restrict the use of the term so narrowly, and I shall accordingly use it to refer to all types of non-actuality, no matter how they are expressed in particular languages. As it turns out, in CEC practically all of the burden of expressing non-actuality is borne by auxiliary verbs.

Some linguists also draw a distinction between "mood" and "modality." Thus Lyons (1986:848) expresses agreement in principle with scholars such as Householder (1971:81ff) and Halliday (1970a,b) who "relate mood to the illocutionary force and communication role that the speaker is performing, and relate modality to the expression of notions like necessity and possibility." This distinction may well be of value or even necessary for certain languages, but it would appear that in principle no clear line can be drawn between these two aspects of non-actuality. In the following discussion, I shall assume that modality is best interpreted as a part of

7. In this and following chapters, it can be assumed that the sentences used as examples occur in both GC and JC, unless otherwise specified.

mood in the broadest sense, that is, as part of the grammatical expression of non-actuality. The term "modality" will be used in connection with the class of CEC auxiliaries which indicate notions such as obligation, necessity, permission, ability, possibility and so on. Further discussion of these and other aspects of modality in CEC will follow below.

Now that the chief assumptions behind the present approach are clear, we can examine the TMA categories themselves.

2.2 *Aspect in CEC*

As Comrie (1976:3) suggests, aspects are "different ways of viewing the internal temporal consistency of a situation." The basic aspectual distinction within the TMA system of CEC is that between Perfective and Imperfective. The former is literally (as well as in the usual linguistic sense) the unmarked category, instantiated in the stem of the verb. Imperfective aspect is marked by the particle *a*, and as we shall see, includes within its semantic range notions such as Progressive and (in Eastern Caribbean varieties of CEC) Habitual. There has been a fair amount of disagreement in the literature over the precise semantic content and function of both these categories. More consensus exists about the other aspectual markers, the so called "durative" *de*, and the completive *don*. Both of these, however, and the latter in particular, have posed problems of interpretation for all researchers which need to be resolved in the present discussion. It would be best, for the sake of clarity and comparison with previous analyses, to treat each category, and its corresponding marker, in turn.

2.2.1 *Perfective.*

Sentences such as the following exemplify typical CEC uses of the unmarked verb in a Perfective sense:

(2) a. *Mieri rait wan leta.*
"Mary wrote/has written a letter."
b. *Jan iit di mango.*
"John ate/has eaten the mango."

(3) a. *di pikni waant waata.*
"The child wants water."
b. *Sam lov di uman fi truu.*
"Sam truly loves the woman."

The sentences in (2) contain "dynamic" or non-stative verbs, while those in (3) contain stative verbs. As the translations suggest, the default interpretation of base non-stative verbs is "Past", while that of "statives" is "Present". This has led to some controversy over the "meaning" of the category expressed in such stem forms. Bickerton's (1975:28-29) suggestion that the stem form signifies "Past" with non-statives and "Present" with statives has been challenged by several researchers, particularly by Guyanese linguists. Jaganauth (1987:37) points out that GC statives are capable of referring to dynamic situations as well as stative ones, suggesting that a sentence like (4)

(4) *mi noo.*

may be glossed either as "I have learnt" or "I know". In this she follows Alleyne (1986:10) who attempts to bypass the stative/non-stative dichotomy by suggesting that stative predications express "both a Perfective of a dynamic event and a Resultative within the same form."

The position adopted here (as anticipated in section 1.2 above) is that there is a special class of stative verbs in CEC whose semantic properties are such as to modify and even neutralize the dominant meaning of an aspectual category. We shall see examples of this with all of the aspectual categories to be discussed in this section. The class of stative verbs is a relatively small one, including the verbs *noo* (know), *lov* (love), *waant* (want), *hav* or *gat* (have), *laik* (like) and others.

The stative/non-stative distinction is also highly relevant to the class of predicative adjectives, and will be discussed more fully in the section dealing with structures involving such items. Our approach will allow us to preserve the simple intuition that certain predicators involve change or process, while others do not. At the same time, it allows us to acknowledge that certain stative predicators may demonstrate substantial flexibility in the right pragmatic context.[8] This approach rejects Bickerton's (1975:30) view that the stative/non-stative distinction applies to propositions, rather than to specific lexical items.

The role of contextual factors in the interpretation of unmarked statives is illustrated in sentences like the following, from my TC data:

(5) *ai noo hi wen hi juuztu liv bai i faada.*
"I knew him when he used to live at his father's."

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8. Gibson (1982) and Jaganauth (1987) are especially informative on how various pragmatic and contextual factors interact with TMA categories, adverbials. and the semantic properties of the verbs themselves to produce a variety of "types of categories of verb predication." (Jaganauth 1987:35)

The rest of the context clearly establishes that the *hi* in question no longer lives at his father's, and that *noo* refers to a past acquaintance. Similarly, the following (elicited) examples reinforce the view that ø-marked statives can be neutral with respect to time reference, for which they rely on adverbial or other specification.

(6) a. *ai noo hi moda in dem deez.*
"I knew his mother in those days."
b. *ai noo hi moda fu a lang taim.*
"I've known his mother for a long time."
c. *ai noo hi moda sins mi smaal.*
"I've known his mother since I was little."

Without such specification, however, the default reading of unmarked statives, as already indicated, is "Present".

The cases of zero-marked statives that we have considered so far do not represent the typical use of the aspectual category of Perfective. Far more common are uses such as exemplified in (2), with dynamic verbs. Such uses parallel very closely the description offered by Dahl (1985:78) for the prototypical PFV:

> A PFV verb will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalyzed whole, with a well defined result or end-state, located in the past. More often than not, the event will be punctual, or at least, it will seem as a simple transition from one state to its opposite, the duration of which can be disregarded.

This also explains why there is such a strong tendency for PFV categories to have past time reference, an interpretation that is favored by the semantics of dynamic verbs. The close association between the PFV and punctuality will also explain Bickerton's treatment of unmarked verbs in GC as bearing punctual aspect. In this present approach, notions like "Past" and "Punctuality" are secondary features of the category of Perfective, whose dominant meaning is something like "totality" (Comrie 1976:16) or "boundedness" (Dahl 1985:76).

Another secondary extension of the Perfective in CEC is its use in generic sentences such as (7).

(7) *Tu an tu mek fo.*
"Two and two make four."

Bickerton (1975:30) attempts to distinguish this use of *mek* from that in (8)

(8) *dem mek i stap.* "They made him stop."