

# Bare Nouns in Creoles and beyond.

## A syntactic-semantic study of Kriyol Bare Noun Phrases based on a cross-linguistic comparison and the theoretical implications thereof.

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- 1) What is the distribution/interpretation of BNPs in Kriyol?
- 2) How does the BNP behave in Creoles?
- 3) Are there commonalities/differences in the behaviour of BNPs in non-Creole languages?
- 4) What does the interpretation of BNPs depend on? Which role does the Tense-Aspect system of the verb play in the derivation of the correct interpretation?

Working definition for **Bare Noun**: Noun Phrase lacking both determiner and any specification for gender and number (Kihm 2007). *Gatu*, “(the) cat”.

### Examples from Kriyol

- BNPs in subject position

*Sol sai*, Sun go out

*Tchuba tchiga*, Rain arrive

*Kasa ku kai bedju ba di mas*,

House C fall old Ant very

- BNPs in object position

*Bu pudi djudan ku mala?*

2sg can help-1sg with suitcase

*Alguin dia bu toka viola?*,

Some day 2sg play violin

*N'na bin dal libru*,

1sg Asp Post give-3sg book

- Plurals

**Gradient of animacy**: humans and (most of) animals cannot be massified, whereas inanimates (including plants) are easily massified (Kihm 2007:155).

*Katchuris pega ku n'utru*, Dogs fight with each other

**Specificity**: the speaker has a particular referent in mind (Kester and Schmitt 2007:139).

*Maria na laba si panus*, M. Asp wash her cloth-pl

- Determinate reference

*N'kansa na lei kil libru ku bu pistan*,

1sg begin C read Dem book C 2sg lend-1sg

*I João ku skirbi kil poesia*,

3sg J. C write Dem poetry

- Indeterminate

*N'misti pa bu skirbi un karta*,

1sg want C 2sg write Indet letter

*I un binhu di bibi fresku*, 3sg Indet wine C drink cool

### Bare Nouns in Creoles

Distribution: real uniformity only among bare singulars. BNPs can be found in both subject and object position in Kriyol, Capeverdean, Santomé and Brazilian Portuguese; object bare plurals in Papiamentu must be modified.

Interpretation: (non)specificity reading is common to all Creoles, in both subject and object position, sg and pl. The plural reading is available for all BNPs. As far as (non)definiteness and mass reading there is a quite great variability.

### Comparison with non-Creoles: Southeast Asian and Kwa languages

Distribution: bare nominals can occur in all syntactic positions.

Interpretation: bare nouns can be (in)definite and generic, singular and plural.

### Derivation of the correct interpretation: the role of the Tense-Aspect system and the relation with the Determiner Phrase.

Episodic and generic tense take part in the interpretation of a BN. Tense-Chain: a T-chain rooted in the complementizer node C associated with the reference or Speech time, continues with the Tense node T associated with the Event time and ends in V (Guéron in Baptista 2007:79).

The tense-chain expands its index to DP, therefore:

If T is 0-indexed => D will be 0-indexed => generic, non-anaphoric.

If T is 1-indexed => D will be 1-indexed => episodic, anaphoric.

Aspect: collaborates in the placing of the situation in the space and time of the discourse world.

### Methodological aspects

- Fieldwork
- Create Questionnaires
- Create Corpus

#### References

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