

Copulas in Kriyol: approaching a complex case of intralinguistic variation

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Goals

- To introduce Guinea-Bissau Creole (Kriyol)
 - Group of Upper Guinea Creoles (UGCs) of Atlantic creoles
- To provide an overview of the paradigm of copulas in Kriyol
- To look at intralinguistic variation
 - Brief comparison with the other UGCs
- To discuss superstrate vs. substrate influences
- To address the diachronic perspective

Guinea-Bissau Creole

- Kriyol is the language of national identity and the lingua franca in Guinea-Bissau
 - Mostly spoken as L2; L1 in urban areas (e.g. in the capital city Bissau)
- Kriyol is inserted in a multilingual setting
 - Official language: Portuguese (spoken by about a 1/4 of the population, mostly as L2)
 - 23 *national languages* belonging to Atlantic (e.g. Balanta, Manjaku, and Papel) and Mande (e.g. Mandinka and Soninke) - (source: Ethnologue)
- Superstrate: European Portuguese (EP)
- Substrate: most likely Mandinka (Mande) and Wolof (Atlantic)
- Other contributing languages (substrate/adstrate): Balanta, Diola, Manjaku, Mankanh, Papel (Atlantic)

The Upper Guinea Creoles

- The following creole languages belong to the Portuguese-related Upper Guinea Creole group (UGCs)
 - Capeverdean Creole varieties (the variety of Santiago is the closest to Kriyol - SCV)
 - Kriyol (Guinea-Bissau Creole)
 - Casamancese Creole (Casamance region, Southern Senegal – CAS)
 - For the inclusion of Papiamentu in the UGC group, see e.g. Jacobs (2012) and Quint (2000)



The formation of the UGC

- A common protolanguage for the UGC is typically assumed in light of the high level of shared lexicon and grammatical features (e.g. Jacobs 2010; Quint 2000)
- Development of an UG pidgin from the mid-15th century on from the contact between Portuguese and continental Africans, which were predominantly Wolof and Mandinka speaking slaves
- Primary hypotheses regarding proto-UGC (cf. Jacobs 2010)
 - Insular hypothesis: the proto-language formed on the island of Santiago (Cape Verde) and spread to the continent through a luso-African trade network
 - Continental hypothesis: the proto-language formed in the rivers of Senegambia/ Guinea-Bissau and expanded through a luso-African trade network
- Casamancese Creole is a later offshoot of Kriyol (17th century)

Adapted from Truppi & Hagemeyer (2018)

The paradigm of copulas in Kriyol

- The paradigm of copulas of Kriyol consists of both verbal and non-verbal items
- Verbs: *sedu* 'to be', *sta* 'to be, to stay', and the past copula (*y*)*era* 'was/were'
- Marginal (verbal) copula: the past copula *foi* 'was/were' is used by speakers with high level of education, i.e. fluent in EP (see also Peck 1988)
- Non-verbal copulas: *i* (homophonous with 3SG subject clitic pronoun, also used as resumptive in topic-comment structures) and \emptyset (zero copula)

Sources for verbal copulas

- The derivation of some verbal copulas is straightforward
 - **Sta** < EP 3SG present indicative *está* from *estar* ‘to be, to stay’ (locative and stage-level copula)
 - (**Y)era** < EP 3SG past imperfective *era* from *ser* ‘to be, to stay’ (individual-level copula)
 - **Foi** < EP 3SG past perfective *foi* from *ser*
- **Sedu** may derive either from an infinitive or from a participial form
 - **Sedu** < EP past part. *sido* ‘been’ from *ser*
 - However, the lowering of a high vowel (/i/ < /e/) is unusual in Kriyol
 - **Sedu** < EP infinitive *ser* with deltatism of /r/ and epenthesis of final /u/ (Kihm 1994: 18f.)
 - The second hypothesis is the most plausible, also given that the equivalence between /d/ and /r/ is quite common in Atlantic languages such as Manjaku (ibid.)

Sources for non-verbal copulas

- The copula *i* presents two possible origins:
 - *i* > EP 3SG present indicative *é* of *ser*
 - *i* > Kriyol 3SG subject clitic pronoun *i*
 - On the basis of the striking similarity between topic-comment structures with resumptive pronoun *i* (1a) and copular clauses with *i* (1b), we assume that *i* has a pronominal origin (see e.g. Ichinose 1993; Kihm 2007)

(1) a. *Badjuda, i* *kumpra pon.*
 girl 3SG.CL buy bread
 ‘The girl, she bought (some) bread.’

 b. *Kil* *omi-s* (*i*) *piskadur(-is).*
 DEM man-PL COP fisherman(-PL)
 ‘Those men are fishermen.’

- Pronouns (personal or demonstrative) are quite common sources for copulas crosslinguistically (e.g. Sranan, Mandarin Chinese, Hebrew; see e.g. Stassen 1997)
- As the optionality of *i* in (1b) shows, copular clauses may display zero copulas; whether this is the consequence of copula drop or whether zero copula is a strategy in Kriyol, like in several languages of the area, is currently under study

Criteria underlying the copula selection

- Kriyol is a *split* language, i.e. it uses distinguished copulas for nominal and locative predication (cf. Stassen 2013)
- Criteria for the selection of the copula from the paradigm (cf. Stassen 1997):

- **Predicate type** operates a primary distinction between nominal (*i/∅*) vs. locative predication (*sta*); cf. (1b), repeated in (2a), vs. (2b)

(2) a. *Kil* *omi-s* (*i*) *piskadur(-is)*.
 DEM man-PL COP fisherman(-PL)
 ‘Those men are fishermen.’

 b. *Si* *kuku* *sta* *dentru* *di* *kila*.
 POSS.3SG kernel COP inside of DEM-LOC
 ‘The kernel is inside it [the fruit].’

- **Tense-Mood-Aspect properties** determine a further distinction within nominal predication: *i/∅* show up in bare contexts (perfective), whereas *sedu* co-occurs with (imperfective) aspect markers (cf. (2a) vs.(3))

(3) *Bu* *na* *sedu* *pursor*.
 2SG.CL CONT COP teacher
 ‘You will be a teacher.’

- If not indicated otherwise, all the Kriyol data presented here were collected during my fieldworks (2008-2009; 2012; 2013; 2018)

Property items vs. adjectives

- Kriyol displays both property items and adjectives
- Like in Kriyol substrate languages, basic properties are expressed by property items
 - In predicative function, property items such as *san* ‘be healthy’, *kumpridu* ‘be tall’, and *burmedju* ‘be red’ behave like verbs, i.e. they do not need any copula (4a) and can combine with verbal morphology such as aspect markers (4b)
 - They can directly modify a noun, whenever in attributive function (see (4a))

(4) a. *Omi* ***kumpridu.***

man be.tall

‘The man is tall / the tall man.’

b. *I* ***na*** ***san,*** *duensa* *na* *pasa.*
3SG.CL CONT be.healthy sickness CONT go.away

‘He is getting better, the sickness is going away.’

Property items vs. adjectives

- Kriyol adjectives do not describe basic properties and were borrowed from EP more recently (see Kihm 1994, 2000); actually, they are continuously borrowed from EP
- Like in EP, adjectives in predicative function behave like nouns, i.e. they are introduced by a copula (5a) and cannot co-occur with verbal morphology (5b)

(5)	a.	<i>Kil</i>	<i>badjuda</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>alema.</i>
		DEM	girl	COP	German
		‘That girl is German.’			
	b.	<i>*I</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>difisil.</i>	
		3SG.CL	CONT	difficult	
		‘It will be difficult.’			

1. Intralinguistic variation

- The variation analyzed below does not seem to depend upon geographical or sociolinguistic factors; however, a more detailed investigation is needed
- ***Sta*** is also used as stage-level copula with adjectives and (at least certain) property items (see also Kihm 1994) - (6a)
- EP also uses the locative copula *estar* for the expression of stage-level predication (6b)

(6) a.	<i>N</i>	<i>sta</i>	<i>duenti.</i>	(Kriyol; adapted from Kihm 1994: 91)
	1SG.CL	COP	be.sick	
b.	<i>Estou</i>		<i>doente.</i>	(EP)
	COP.1SG		sick	
	'I am sick (now).'			

2. Intralinguistic variation

- Within nominal predication, **sedu** is the only copula that can co-occur with aspect markers > locus for the expression of TMA
- **Sedu** may also be found in bare contexts, i.e. without aspect markers
- (7) with the interpretation (i) is not always judged as grammatical by native speakers; some speaker prefer interpretation (ii) with a different semantics; however, Ichinose (1993) assumes that bare **sedu** is used to give emphasis

(7)	(EI)	<i>i</i>	sedu	<i>pursor.</i>
	3SG.TOP	3SG.CL	COP	teacher
	(i) 'S/He is a teacher.'			
	(ii) 'S/He is a teacher since always/long time.'			

- Bare **sedu** may also occur with adjectives (see Kihm 1994)
- The variation in the distribution of copulas with adjectives needs to be studied in more detail

3. Intralinguistic variation

- The copula *i* may introduce property items, which are not expected to co-occur with the copula (8)

(8) *Kil* *ropa* (*i*) *burmedju.*
DEM cloth COP/3SG.CL be.red
'That cloth is red.'

- Whether *i* in (8) is a copula or a resumptive pronoun in a topic-comment structure is currently under study

4. Intralinguistic variation

- The copula *i* is sometimes found in locative copular clauses instead of *sta* (9); this seems to happen rarely

(9) [...] *pabia* *i* *na* *matu*.
 because COP in forest
 ‘[...] because it [the area that had been freed] is in the forest.’

- Alternatively, *i* in (9) could be 3SG.CL subject; if so, we have a copula-less locative structure

5. Intralinguistic variation

- Kriyol may express past tense in the following ways:
 - By adding the past marker **ba** after the nominal/adjectival predicate of a copular clause with **i/∅** (10a)
 - By adding **ba** after **sedu** (10b)
 - By using the suppletive form (**y)era** (10c), optionally followed by **ba** (the past marker does not seem to add any semantics to (**y)era**)
 - By using **foi** (speakers fluent in EP – perfective past reading like in EP) (10d)

- (10) a. *Abo* (*i*) *bon* *alunu* ***ba.***
 2SG.TOP COP good student PST
 ‘You were a good student.’
- b. *Dipus i* *ten ki* *Sanca [...]* *ke* ***sedu*** ***ba*** *rei.*
 after 3SG.CL have DEM Sanca REL COP PST king
 ‘Then, there is that Sanca [from Bolama], who was the king.’
- c. *Kil* ***yera*** (***ba***) *fidjus* *di regulu.*
 DEM COP.PST PST child-PL of king
 ‘Those were the king’s children.’
- d. *N* ***foi*** *jugadur* *di* *Bafata.*
 1SG.CL COP.PST player of Bafatá
 ‘I was a [football] player of Bafatá.’

1. Variation found in the other UGCs

- Locative copula for the expression of stage-level is found in SCV (11); whether it also happens in CAS is not clear from the available literature

(11) *Gosi* *li* ***sta*** *sosegadu.*
now here COP quiet
'Now it is quiet here.' (Baptista 2002: 81)

- CAS copula ***sedi*** (corresponding to Kriyol ***sedu***) may also occur in bare contexts; it yields an accomplished/resultative reading (12), whereas SCV ***ser*** (roughly corresponding to ***sedu/sedi***) only occurs with aspect markers (cf. Baptista 2002)

(12) *Pidru* ***sedi*** *bon* *soldadi.*
Pidru COP good soldier
'Pidru is/has become a good soldier.'
(adapted from Biagui 2012: 188)

2. Variation found in the other UGCs

- CAS also shows variation in the presence/absence of the copula *i* with property items/adjectives (13a)
- SCV does not have property items (“there are no verbal adjectives”, Baptista 2002: 102); predicative adjectives (virtually) always require the copula (13b)

- (13) a. *Ña* *tiya* *(i)* *beju.*
POSS.1SG aunt COP old
‘My aunt is old.’
(adapted from Biagui & Quint 2013)
- b. *E* *fla* *mundu* *e* *nganadu.*
3SG.CL say world COP deceived
‘He said that the world is deceived.’
(adapted from Baptista 2002: 102)

3. Variation in other UGCs

- With regard to past tense, CAS shows similar strategies to Kriyol:
 - *Yera ban*
 - *Sedi ban*
 - \emptyset + complement + *ban* (14)
 - It is not clear from the literature whether the structure with *i* + complement followed by the past marker *ban* is also possible, like in Kriyol

(14) *A-nos tudu \emptyset di la ban.*
1PL.TOP all COP of there PST
'We all came from there.' (adapted from Biagui 2012: 173)

- SCV has only one strategy for the expression of past tense, i.e. the past copula *era*

(15) *Vida era sabi.*
life COP.PST pleasant
'The life was pleasant.' (adapted from Baptista 2002: 29)

Copulas in Kriyol: what we know so far

Copulas	Predicate type	Aspect marking	Tense marking (past)
<i>i</i>	+N; + Adj; (+Loc)	no	yes
∅	+N; (+ Adj); (+Loc)	no	yes
<i>sedu</i>	+N; +Adj	yes	yes
<i>sta</i>	+Loc; + Adj	yes	yes
<i>(y)era</i>	+ N; + Adj	no	yes
<i>foi</i>	+N; (+Adj)	no	yes

Adapted from Truppi (to appear)

- **Aspect marking:** preverbal markers (*na* continuous; *ta* habitual; combination of aspect markers and verbs of movement such as e.g. *na bin*, CONT + come > specific future)
- **Tense marking:** past marker *ba* (after a verb/property item/noun/adjective/adverb)
- It seems that adjectives are subject to the same kind of alternation as nouns (*i/∅/sedu*); however, a more detailed study is needed

Substrate: Wolof

- Both Wolof (Atlantic) and Mandinka (Mande) display non-verbal copulas
- Wolof uses non-verbal copulas with nominal predicates (16a)
- With locative predicates, either a verbal copula (existential verb *nekk* – 16b) or a non-verbal copula (16c) may occur

- (16) a. *Xale yi nàppkat-a.*
 child D.PL fisherman-COP
 ‘The children are fishermen.’ (adapted from Torrence 2005: 226)
- b. *Ci kow lal bi la caabi ji nekk.*
 P up bed D.SG LA key D.SG COP
 ‘The key is on the bed.’ (adapted from Perrin 2005: 702)
- c. *Ma-a-ngi ci biir néeg bi.*
 1SG-COP-LOC.CL P stomach room D.SG
 ‘I am in the room.’ (adapted from Martinović & Schwarzer, to appear)

- Past tense is expressed by the independent past morpheme **woon**

- (17) *Sidi (l-)a woon.*
 Sidi COP past
 ‘It was Sidi.’ (adapted from Torrence 2005: 264)

Substrate: Mandinka

- Mandinka has non-verbal copulas in both nominal (18a) and locative predication (18b)

- (18) a. *Mans-óo le mu.*
King-D FOC COP
'It's the king.' (adapted from Creissels & Sambou 2013: 146)
- b. *Díndíŋ-ò bé búŋ-ò kónò.*
child-D COP house-D in
'The child is in the house.' (adapted from Creissels, to appear, p.24)

- Past tense is expressed by the independent past form *nŋ*

- (19) *Mandiŋk-óo-lu, wo-lú le mú nŋ jǎŋ*
Mandinga-D-PL DEM-PL FOC COP PST here
karammóo-lu ti.
marabout-D-PL OBL
'The Mandingas, it's they who were the marabouts here.'
(adapted from Creissels & Sambou 2013: 83)

Possible influences from superstrate and substrate

- Possible influence of the superstrate language, EP
 - Basic *split* between nominal (and adjectival) predication vs. locative predication
 - Locative copula used for stage-level predication
 - Presence of adjectives
- Possible influence of Wolof and Mandinka
 - Non-verbal copulas
 - Presence of property items
 - Basic *split* between nominal predication vs. locative predication (Wolof)
 - Marking of past tense by an independent monosyllabic marker (after verb/noun)
 - ...

1. Lines for future research: corpus-based study

- So far, we noticed a certain degree of intralinguistic variation in the distribution of copulas in Kriyol
- A large-scale annotated, translated, and searchable corpus of spoken and written Kriyol data is currently being built at CLUL (Universidade de Lisboa), based on the recorded audio materials and on written texts collected during my fieldwork in Guinea-Bissau (2018)
- A corpus-based study of copulas in Kriyol will allow a more systematic investigation of the distribution of copulas, of the frequency of occurrence of competing copulas in certain syntactic and semantic environments, of geographical, intralinguistic, and sociolinguistic variation, etc.

2. Lines for future research: UGCs and diachronic issues

- The systems of copulas of the three UGCs are quite similar, especially those of Kriyol and CAS
- Differently from SCV, Kriyol and CAS always were (and still are) in contact with their substrate and/or adstrate languages; this proximity explains the presence of non-verbal copulas in nominal predication and the marking of past tense through independent markers
- The further study of copulas in the substrate/adstrate will help understand the differences found in the systems of copulas of UGCs
- The diachronic study of the paradigm of copulas of Kriyol and the comparison with the other UGCs and with their substrate languages will help reconstruct the system of copulas of proto-UGC (the common ancestor of UGCs)

Conclusion

- Kriyol paradigm of copulas is the result of both superstrate and substrate influences
- The substrate had a strong influence on the emergence of non-verbal copulas and on the presence of property items
- Both superstrate and substrate may have influenced the basic split between nominal and locative predication
- The superstrate is responsible for the locative+stage-level pattern and for the presence of adjectives
- The system of copulas of Kriyol and its diachrony need to be studied along with SCV and CAS, since the three creoles share a common origin (proto-UGC)
- Copulas in UGCs need to be contextualized:
 - By comparing them to substrate and adstrate languages
 - By placing them into a diachronic perspective
 - By reconstructing the system of copulas of proto-UGC

Obrigadu!
N misti gardisi bos
pa atenson ku bo dan!

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